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## Culture the Language for Doing Religion in Africa

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper discusses culture as a language for doing religion in Africa. Culture put religious message into a new context of the traditional philosophy of the people. It does this by first discussing religion in African setting. It also tackles the essential instruments that guides religion in the attempt to propagate its doctrine in all contexts. The second section discusses the unstatic cultural context of religion. It also analyzes culture as the vehicle through which the word of God roots itself in the life of the people. Third section addressed the word of God in a cultural context. Religion as a discipline always seeks to communicate its doctrines in the peoples' own cultural setting. It uses communication thought forms that are hidden in peoples' beliefs, metaphor, symbols, proverbs, and myths. The effective religious communication among the African people only sink in the people when clothed in a culture. The philosophy of culture in presentation of the biblical teaching. To communicate religious faith, we must identify community's cultural communication terms (thought forms). In every community, cultural language is used to express special religious analogy.*

**Keywords:** Language, culture, context, religion, African dress, theology, ManGod

### **1. Introduction**

Language is a cultural product that is developed by a community for the purpose of communication and expression of the experiences of the culture that has developed it and religion is part of African culture. Symbols are connected to peoples' cultures in which they have been developed. Religious doctrines are propagated in cultural dresses of the people. In every culture, language is used to express special religious analogy. For an example, the local word in a language gets special religious meaning for the purpose of expression of peoples' thoughts, and experiences in the process of explaining a religious reality (Mugambi, 2009).

This paper is seeking to examine the language and context of doing religion in Africa. In order to understand the relevant way of communicating religion, we are going to explore: culture and religion in African setting; metaphor, symbol, and myth; the changing context of religion; putting the religious message into new context and the philosophy of culture. Religion as a discipline always seeks to communicate God to the people in their language. The thought form of the African people is hidden in their beliefs, metaphor, symbols, and myths. The effective communication among the African communities is done culturally (Mbiti, 2010). To communicate Religious faith to the people we must identify their cultural terms of communication; and use their thought forms in order to appropriately propagate religious beliefs to them. The Africa Religious Scholars (ARS) have a task to communicate the doctrine of God to the people using their forms of communication.

The context of the people is rooted within their culture. The cardinal challenge to ARS is the continuous change of the contemporary contexts after a given time. Culture itself is dynamic in the sense that it changes with time. John Parratt commenting on communicating theology noted that there is no statement of faith that must remain as it was; but they should be "re-created, restated and reinterpreted" in each different age and context if they are to be understood without changing the content (Parratt, 1996). The religious faith need to be restated in order to make it relevant and meaningful to any given generation in language which they can understand.

The most relevant language for studying religion in Africa is the use of figures of speech, metaphors, symbols, proverbs, poetry and others (Mbiti, 2010). The use of these visual materials makes religion practical and relevant to the African people. They help in creating the mental pictures of the concept of Deity(ies) when used appropriately. They are helpful when we allow religious sacred materials to inform them. To communicate effectively let us use the language of the people that is making use of culture of the African setting.

#### *1.1. Culture and Religion in African Setting*

The dwelling places of the peoples is the context of their religion. Humanity lives within a specific historical, social, political, and cultural context. This forms a 'given' context within which humanity must live the reality of life and practice their religion. We cannot run away from the cultural history that forms peoples' religious environment. Religion like any other discipline is always practiced

within a particular context. Religion exist eternally and emerges from that condition and it cannot avoid reflecting on the historical and cultural context in which it is done it is always in the making as it adapt to the new and ever changing historical context (Partridge, 2005).

The origins of Christian religion illustrate this. The Christian faith arose within a particular historical context that of the Palestinian world of the Roman Empire (Greco-Roman World). The founder, Jesus, belonged to the same world and expressed himself through the thought forms of his world. The terms and ideas that Jesus used in his teaching such as, Messiah, Son of man, the Kingdom of God, covenant, law, and eschatology were determined by the religious and cultural experience rooted on his socio-historical background and of his followers.

Religion is an integral part of culture because culture is the complete manifestation of the peoples' self-expressions and self-actualization. Religion is that part of culture that deals with the spiritual and ritual aspects of individual and communal life (Mugambi, 2004). Culture and religion work together. Religion cannot be done outside culture. Culture helps to understand the study of god(s). It makes religion meaningful and relevant to the given people of particular cultural contexts. For an example, it is very instrumental in the formation of the Christian faith and other religions in terms of development of religious doctrines. It opens up the eyes of religious scholars for better understanding of the doctrine of god(s) in the local terms of the given people. Cultures are both inherited and developed by the people; they undergo change and modification, and are transmitted. The technologies, values and ideas are passed on from one generation to another through culture of the people. People of every community always inherit certain cultural forms and values as part of their life experience. The cultures are dynamic and subject to change. Change usually comes from within and outside a given community (*Understanding Human Society, 2009*). It is important to recognize that religion is always done or reasoned out in the thought forms of a given culture. In this case there is no better culture for doing religion, but we can do it in relation to any given context. Culture itself is not evil because it is God given. In reality, God always reveals himself to people in the context of their cultural heritage. Jesus Christ in his incarnation identified with human culture in order to make God known to mankind (Weil, 2007). Jesus God who became one of us that is GodMan in a human form.

All religious scholars approach religion from within their cultural traditions. The African Religious Scholars have the same responsibility, to make religious faith relevant to their own people. It is important to express understanding of the Supreme Being in the language and thought forms of the cultural tradition of the people. It is high time we make Christian faith part of our culture as we root it in our cultural traditions; this is only possible if we relate culture to religious teachings and traditions. Religion in African cannot be relevant to the African situation without taking the cultural context seriously (Nthamburi, 2000). Let us make use of our cultural forms and symbols as we express our belief in Deity.

The cultural approach to study of religion should be focused to relate religious faith, African culture, and traditions of the people. All cultures are God given and they are part of the natural revelation of God to man. The African cultures provide a genuine limited knowledge of God to the peoples. In this case their concepts of God prepared a fertile ground for the coming of the biblical teachings. In Christianity, Paul confirming the same in Lystra and Derbe after the healing of the crippled man. The people in this town had the concept of God and how to worship him. Their concept of God was worth relating to the worship of the true God by turning to him. "...We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he left all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: he has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your heart with joy," (Acts 14:14-17).

God the creator of heaven and earth is the historical God. He has dealt with mankind at all times and in all parts of the world within the given cultural contexts. On the same ground, he has dealt with the African people through their rich heritage, and this is an evident that to some extent God is known and worshiped (Ellingworth and Dickson, 1969). The belief that God is the purifier and the protector of the individuals from enemies as known to African people is a confirmation that they knew the creator (Sawyer, 1987; Mbiti, 2010). The cardinal aim of the African Religious Scholars (ARS) should be to express Christian faith in terms that are relatable to a given society. It should be clothed with the indigenous cultural forms of the African societies. The communities in Africa can understand Christ as an ancestor because just as the human ancestor in Africa establishes a link between the spirit world and that of the living, so Jesus by his crucifixion and resurrection establishes a mystical link between God and Christian community. Nyamiti believes that in African the relationship between God and Jesus is clearly understood if regarded as one between ancestor and descendant than in a traditional Christian imagery of Father and Son.<sup>1</sup> In this case Jesus can be understood as the first ancestor by fulfilling all the characteristics of the ideal ancestor. He at the same time transcends above the ancestors. Let us now examine the use of metaphor, symbol, and myth in Religious Studies.

### *1.2. The Study of Religion in African Dress*

The quests for developing the study of religion in Africa need serious consideration of the kind of dress it puts on include metaphors, symbols, myths, and proverbs. This is because they expose the reality of life among the communities in Africa. The deeper issues of the African people are always communicated through them for wise and deeper understanding. There is a lot of influence by the religious teachings in the lives of the people when it is propagated in thought forms of the religious beliefs. The religious sacred books

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<sup>1</sup> Nyamiti's insight on Jesus as an African ancestor is applicable to the African people. It makes the teaching on the humanity of Jesus relevant to the African communities because it is easy to identify with him as the living dead who came back to life after death. Another insight on this is that the risen Lord revealed himself not to all people; but to his disciples and those that he decided to make himself known to. The ancestors were also known only to their particular family or community.

such as Bible, Quran etc. should be translated in the thought forms of the African culture and practices because religious doctrine is understandable when presented in the concepts, ideas, imageries, symbols, and metaphors in the form of the African cultural contexts without changing the meaning of the texts. Some of the biblical teachings such as the origin of evil and suffering is related to some communities in Africa who have a mythical story saying that God was at first very close to man but as a result of will to sin in man, man willfully chose to sin and God left man and this is the reason why there is evil in the world today (Mbiti, 1994). The concept of the power of choice is also found in the religious books, that is, the Bible and Quran. When this concept is used to relate the doctrine of sin, this particular community will be able to understand the principle of the will (power of choice). They will also be able to understand the origin of evil and suffering (Dau, 2003; Mbiti, 1994)).

The symbols speak beyond themselves, that is, to something else, and a reality which they stand for. They stand for reality in the power of which they participate. A language has power through symbols. There is a lot of meaning on the Christian religion, for an example, when it is presented to the people through the use of symbols. The positive use of symbols opens up deeper understanding of religious doctrine to the people. The beliefs and values (cultures) of African people are always expressed in metaphors, symbols, myths, proverbs, and songs. They are useful in communicating concept of the doctrines, and rebuking members of the community who have gone astray. In the times of war and victory they are used. This language is appropriate for studying religion. The religious faith becomes popular and authentic in faith when it expresses itself in the forms and language of the people. For an example, the African idioms and worldview are very useful for making Christian religion relevant (Parratt, 1996). People are longing to listen to the Religious teachings in their own language and cultural worldview. There is a feeling that biblical hermeneutics must be sensitive to cultural and religious perception of the people. Theology in Africa must be influenced by who we are and what our worldview is. It is the task of the religious institutions to demonstrate their faith in god(s) African cultural parts such as relating traditional dances, poetry, songs and myths, architecture art and philosophy to eternal word of God. This will enhance true African practice of religion in the continent.

The Bible is full of metaphors, symbols, myths and proverbs of the Jewish people. They were used to teach, rebuke, inform the Jews about God, how to live with others, the future kingdom, the church and others. John referred to Jesus Christ as the bread of life: 'I am the bread of life' or 'I am the light of the world'. He symbolized Jesus with the bread and the light. John used these symbols from the context of the Jewish people to relate the doctrine of God to the Jewish community. It is very important for ARS to identify cultural metaphors and symbols to make God known. The symbols used must be drawn from a particular context (culture). John borrowed from the Greek and the Jewish cultures. Paul also used metaphors or figures of speech, which he drew from the life and the world of his time. When he was explaining the meaning of salvation he used the 'redeemed' which he borrowed from the context of the slave market, which used to describe the 'redemption' or 'buying back' of the slave into liberty. He used 'justification' metaphor borrowed from the court of law, which meant setting free of the accused. The religious faith should be presented in a language and metaphors that African people can be able to understand.

In Africa, we have different social and political situations that require different metaphors. The same metaphors are necessary to be identified and used in the presentation of the contextualized religious doctrine. The contemporary ARS have a duty to propagate religious doctrine to the people in their context. The effective Religious Scholars in Africa should seek for symbols; and metaphors that are available and understandable within their own cultural and social context. The effective symbols communicate themselves to people's experience because they are commonly used, and people understand what they mean. These symbols speak to the intellects and perhaps to the heart and the experience of every person. For an example, the cross symbolizes salvation in the mind of Christians. It also signifies the meaning and the event of the crucifixion of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the beginning of the new life.

The effective religious scholars are those who understand the language and social context of their society. The expression of religious faith is more appropriate to the audience when it is presented to them in their cultural language of communication. The primary focus to all ARS should be to struggle to express religious faith in a contemporary and contextual way that will help persons to believe and experience diety(ies) in their lives and culture. For an example, the biblical or traditional Christian statements need to be reframed according to the given symbols, languages and the thought forms of the present context where the Church is planted. The African people need religious message that is presented in the given cultural context in relation to the understanding of peoples thought forms, symbols, and language. According to history cultures are not static but they keep on changing with time. It is the task of the ARS to notice the gradual change of the contexts and be relevant to their religious context. Let us look together the changing context of theology in Africa.

### *1.3. The Unstatic Cultural Context of Religion*

Theology of a given religion must always be done in relation to the given context. Theology will never be meaningful to the people, unless it is done in dialogue with the religion, beliefs, and contemporary situations of the people's context. It is important to note that every community lives in a different specific historical, social, political and cultural setting (context) without changing the meaning of the message. The contexts of the people determine the communication of a religious faith that fits a given community. The relevant theology should always be done within a particular and specific context. The kind of theology that Africans need at the moment is that which can address the political, social-economics, health, corruption, and spiritual situation of the countries. There is a need for a theology that deals with practical life issues in African contexts. African theologians need to formulate a theology of HIV/AIDS, democracy, corruption, reconciliation etc. Theology cannot avoid reflecting the historical and cultural context in which it is done. Theology always finds it's meaning through the culture, because it is at all times in the making. The African theologians should understand that theology is not static, because it is always adapting itself and to the new and ever-changing historical contexts. For an example, the Christian faith was first founded within the context of the Palestinian culture of the Greco-Roman world. Jesus Christ the

incarnate God belonged to the world and expressed himself through the thought forms of the Palestinian cultural context of the Greco-Roman World. (Jeffers, 1999; Green and McDonald, 2013).

Christian faith should always be propagated in a particular context without changing the content of the message. The Kikuyu cultural concept of worship of *Ngai*, the God who created Mount Kenya, gives an understanding of a deity who needs to be known and worshipped. There is diversity of cultures which need relevant communication of the word of God in their contexts. Culture affects and shapes the expression of the religious doctrine. Christ himself propagated the Gospel in the cultural context of the Jewish people. He even used myths and symbols of that time. The African people can as well understand God and experience him in their context. The contexts affect how people feel, live, and the way they think of God. Humanities express their understanding of God and the world in the language and thought forms of the cultural tradition in which they have lived and grown. Zablon Nthamburi contributing on this says, "Theology in Africa is keenly aware that it can be relevant to the African situation without...taking the cultural context seriously. Human knowledge is largely shaped by cultural contexts. There is no knowledge that can be transmitted in a vacuum. Theology being our reflective understanding about God and our relationship with other people it must fully be influenced by who we are and what our world view is." (Nthamburi, 2000)

The doctrine of God should be clothed in the cultural terminology and background of the given people. The Christian theology in Africa should be re-stated or reframed and re-experienced by the given age in a particular context. Since the contexts in this continent keep on changing, the language and expressions of theology must change. The language used should be familiar to the people, because this will help them relate and understand the Christian faith. For example, in Kenya or East Africa Kiswahili gives more meaning to the word of God. All the languages spoken in African have symbols and forms of thoughts that determine consideration in any given context. The teachings of Jesus Christ must be translated or reinterpreted so that the language and terms that were of use then be relevant in the African context. It is the language that explains culture of the people. The language also changes with time. The context of doing theology in African need to consider the gradual change of the language and be appropriate. For example, the *sheng'* speaking in East African is very vital in order to minister to the youths effectively. *Sheng* language determines the context of the youths. The effective propagation of the Gospel demands that it be presented to the people according to the relevant contexts of the given cultural settings.

#### 1.4. The Word of God in a Cultural Context

There is a need for African theologians and the Church to experience Christian faith in our language and symbols. This will make the Christian traditions part of our cultures (life). The major confusion that brethren from the West brought to us to inherit was mixer of biblical teachings with their foreign cultural practice. This was only good for them because it was their own way of life in Christian faith. The church in Africa needs to explore and experience the Gospel truth in the language and the symbols of their own cultures. Zablon Nthamburi emphasized that God manifest himself in every culture.

"...God's glory extends to all humankind and is not limited geographically, socially or religiously, and culturally. It covers all people everywhere...it is evident that God has manifested himself in every culture and age. It is important... to find God in every age and culture, for God cannot leave himself without a witness. This also compels us to accept every culture as God-given and worthy of true reverence," (Nthamburi, 2001)

It is important for the church in Africa to note that cultures are God given gifts that should be used in the formation of the relevant theology. This will take center in the core values of the people's lives. Cultures help in the rooting of the Christian faith in the daily life of the people. In history of the church, the Gospel is always propagated in relation to the given culture. The Gospel is eternal truth that must be transmitted to the people in cultural forms. Jesus Christ the one who was God and man was incarnated and lived in this world in a cultural context of the Jewish. He identified himself with the world of his time and fitted himself very well in his cultural context. Language is a means through which culture and the Gospel is transmitted. We need language for effective ministry in the church. The deeper feelings in worship are expressed through the language of the people. When you know the language of the people you will be able to relate their cultural values to the Christian faith. The cultural values of a people are expressed through the language.

John Parrat analyzing Nyamiti and Bujo's contribution on humanity of Christ confirms that the formulation of the doctrine of Christology in the context of African people is well understood when Jesus is considered as an ancestor. They pointed out that Jesus in his crucifixion and resurrection established the mystical link between God and the Christian community. They used the concept of link between humanity and God which is played by the ancestors. They called Christ our ancestors. Christ is related to ancestors because he fulfilled all the characteristics of the ideal ancestor, but at the same time he transcends all of them (Parrat, 1996).

It is the duty of African theologians to make the Gospel relevant in Africa by using cultural practices of the people in their own environment. The church has a duty to develop its own positive values, expressions, images and metaphors that will make Christian faith understandable to a particular community. Let us allow the Gospel to speak to the people in their context. The eternal Gospel truth is only meaningful when presented in the new context without changing its content. It is the duty of the African theologian to present the unchanging word of God to his people in their thought forms. The doctrine of God cannot be changed but it must take the shape of the people's cultural contexts in order for it to be meaningful at all times. The Christian theology has no limited time in its validity to truth. It only need to re-clothe the word of God in the peoples' culture: Luo, Gikuyu, Kalenjin, Maasai, and others. The valid Christian message that is significant for all people in all ages and cultures must be maintained at all times, as we work on providing theology that is relevant to the African people.

The important point is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has never existed outside a specific context. It must always put on the cultural dress of every community in order to be relevant and meaningful. Jesus himself presented the word of God in terms of the religious cultures and situations of his own time and place. Whenever we define the essence of Christian faith, we must do it in our cultural specific contexts. The eternal valid Christian doctrines can only be perceived and easily described to the Africans in relation to own historical language and cultures. The meaningful expression of the Gospel in Africa must be done in our context, by so involving the use of the local languages and dialects. It is a challenge to the church in Africa to identify concepts that can express: God, sin, salvation, forgiveness, regeneration, and so on, to be used in the formation of African Christian faith. We need to explore some of the African terms that can help us understand the doctrine of God. For example, the Luo community calls God *Obong'o Nyakalaga*, meaning the only one God whose presence is everywhere; and Jesus *Wuoi Ma Miderma*, meaning the only Son of God.

African Christian theology should involve exploration of the given original traditional way of life, language, and traditional beliefs of the people. The relevant Christian faith must be done in the experience of people's way of life. The valid expression of Christian faith in Africa demands that we formulate theology which will address the contemporary issues of life of the people. The appropriate Christian theology is always situational and contextual. It should meet us in our own situation and context. Considering Jesus Christ, he is the word of God for salvation to all mankind in all generations. Let us make the word of God relevant to African people without changing the content.

The concept of worship in Africa was not set on a specific day or season for an official worship: certain days of the week, month, year or even observing a set of principles. Religion in Africa is a way of life, and a culture. It permeates all areas of life. In this case religion and culture is one thing. In the same way, the church should cloth the Gospel in the culture of the people in order for it to permeate the whole life of the people within a given community. Every aspect of life among the African people is spiritual. The church needs to relate this concept to the Christian faith by helping Africans see the sense of identifying their everyday life with God. The traditional religions touch the deeper heart of the African people in a way that no other religion can capture. This is the reason why the Gospel need to be presented to African people using the thought forms that are expressed in African traditional religion (Nthamburi, 1991; Mbiti, 2010).

The concept of God's presence among the people was very real. The Luo community believes in *Nyasaye man kuonde duto kendo neno kinde duto* meaning God whose presence is everywhere and sees everything. Such concepts are very important in the propagation of the Christian faith to the Luo community. The traditional beliefs in Africa have a strong spiritual concept of God's presence in every situation. This concept is pointed out clearly by the current manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church as the one whose presence is everywhere. All African people attribute God to a deliverer who always fight for his people and deliver them in all areas of life. Considering the coming of the Christianity to Africa, the Westerns found already prepared ground for planting Christian faith. The task of a theologian is to integrate the Gospel into the indigenous cultures of the people (Mugambi, 2009). This is exactly what the early church did as the growth of the church kept on expanding to the Gentile communities. The council at Jerusalem met to discuss the cultural problem which they faced at the early life of the church. Luke recording Jewish cultural way of life which brought a strong challenge to the people and as he said, "Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into a sharp dispute and debate with them. So, Paul and Barnabas were appointed along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question...James...it is my judgment...that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God..." (Acts 15:1-35).

It is the task of the church to relate central values of African traditional heritage to Christian faith. The solidarity of the communal life among the African people should not be neglected in the formation of the African Christian theology. The theologians should not neglect the opportunity of involving themselves in the political and social problems of the contemporary life situations of the people. As we put the Gospel into context we must remember that we are called in to real spiritual commitment. Doing theology is focused on one's own life and the spiritual destiny of the other Christians. It is necessary for a theologian to commit himself to the situation and the contemporary issues of his/her time. He/She should participate in the social involvements of the given community in order to grasp the core values and relate them to biblical truth especially those that are relevant to Christian beliefs (Tashibangu, 1987; Mugambi, 2009).

#### 1.5. Philosophy of Culture in the Presentation of the Biblical Teaching

The Old Testament is not distinctly pointing out the word culture, but the idea about culture is evident from the time when God created man and woman as creatures of culture. Culture is as old as the creation of man. Man is the creator of culture. A society is the developer of its own culture. It is developed as a relationship a fair. The first chapters of Genesis indicate the cultural covenant that was to be lived and practiced in the social context by mankind. The cultural set up here was good. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good," (Genesis 1:31). The fall of Adam and Eve resulted to a disordered community and a culture of human pride. "...Come, let us built ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the face of the whole world," (Genesis 11:4). The intention of God, right from creation was to put in place a unique cultural system through man. The biblical practices in the life history of the Israelites especially the ornamentation of the temple or even the ideas of the covenant have very close relation to the neighboring cultures of the communities. God made himself known to the Israelites through the culture, which they found themselves in. God does not need a special culture in order to reveal himself to a particular community. "In the process of revelation God is not concerned to give his people a special culture; but to intervene and reveal his will so that institutions and practices that already existed could be reformed and become suitable vehicles for his glory."

(Elwell, 2001). God reforms cultures for a better use for his glory. It is supposed to be used as a means of furthering God's purpose in the lives of his people.

The New Testament explores Christian experience with Christ as a great application of culture. The language, terms and thought forms of the New Testament as used by the early church was influenced by the cultures of the nations. The writers of the New Testament used terms that were familiar to their cultural context. John used words like *logos* to express the transforming reality of the word made flesh; Paul respected cultural practices of the people (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33; Colossians 2:16; 1 Timothy 4:3-4). Cultures of the people are very important for the formation of the Gospel that which address the needs of the particular people.

It is evident for the church in Africa to consider communicating Christian faith effectively in the context of cultural expressions of the people. Generally, communities accept God's word when communicated through peoples' own cultural concepts of God. This enhance the understanding of the Gospel "until we all rich unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God," (Ephesians 4:13). Culture of the people is the central language for communicating the Gospel. It imparts the deeper understanding of the religious doctrinal thoughts to the people.

### 1.6. Conclusion

Context of the people is rooted within a culture. Cultures have language of symbols that have vital resources and rich insights for enhancing the religious doctrines that are useful for helping the people to understand the study of God and his transcendent in Africa. Traditional religions in Africa give insight on the contextual source for the African theology through the use of: symbols, myths, and proverbs, music and dance. Dialogue between the religious doctrines and culture will make theology meaningful Africa. Theology of a religion can be meaningful and relevant to the communities only when it is related to their beliefs and cultures. The formulated theology should be intellectually investigated and applicable in practical life. Let us formulate theology that is able to address the life situations in our world as they emerge (contemporary theology). Therefore, language and context of theology in Africa is very vital for the formulation of the relevant and meaningful theology.

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