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CHRISTIANITY AND EDUCATION IN AFRICA

An AJET Editorial

Missionary efforts have played a great role in introducing Christianity and education into the African soil despite difficult times. In the following articles the authors describe these experiences. The discussion touches on aspects of growth and development, theology, higher education, contemporary books to reflect and contextualization.

In the lead article, Dr. Jacob Kibor narrates *the growth and development of Africa Inland Mission and Africa Inland Church in Marakwet, Kenya* in which the first missionaries to the area experienced difficult beginnings. Despite these difficulties, for example, opposition from the local people and sickness, the ministry of the church expanded through medical work, education and Sunday school for children. This Sunday school served as link between the missionaries and the families. With time, there was a phenomenal growth in the church, which came as a result of trained ministers and construction of new church buildings, which attracted many.

The next article by Dr. Timothy Palmer attempts to relate Martin Luther's *theology of the cross* to theology of glory that is observed in the African continent especially the Northern part of Nigeria where the author served for many years. This theology of glory is depicted in symbols and pictures of the cross, misuse of resources for personal gain and glory and prosperity gospel. His discussion on the theology of the glory reflects failures in the history of the church during the Medieval and Reformation period.

Dr. Paul Bowers, in the third article provides a list of *twelve notable books for Christian reflection in Africa*. Each book title is followed by an evaluative summary on what the book is about. Dr. Bowers challenges reader to be current on what is published in and about Africa, concluding emphatically that "very much being written and published about Africa and about African Christianity these days that deserves thoughtful awareness" (152).

Following the survey on books about Africa, Dr. John B. Laba looks at the history of *Christian Higher education in Africa* in as far as Baptist missionary movement is concerned. In the midst of formal education in which both boys and girls were accorded equal education, the missionaries helped provide more training of those who would be teachers. There were many opportunities of growth, but these did not come without difficulties such as anti-intellectualism, declining influence of the church, finances, problem of brain drain and a few advocates for the cause of higher education.

Dr. Timothy D. Stabell takes us into *rethinking contextualization and the gospel in Africa*. In this article the author argues that evangelical approaches to contextualization have often focused too exclusively on subjective culture, while tending to ignore questions of social justice. He then surveys the various models of contextualization suggested by Stephen Bevans, looking at some of the strengths and weaknesses of each of these general approaches. Finally he proposes an alternative evangelical “synthetic” model.