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**CONTENTS AND CONTOURS OF AN AFRO-CARIBBEAN EMANCIPATORY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:
A PROPOSAL FROM A PAN-CARIBBEAN, LINGUISTIC AND POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE**

By

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Introduction

Historically, the Caribbean region owes its identity formation principally to Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Nestled within this rectangular network of relationships, the Caribbean is home to four major linguistic groups, a plurality of Afro-Caribbean religio-cultural and Christian traditions (Henry 2003; Nettleford in Hall 2006: 6-7; Murrell 2009) including, in some cases, some Indo-Caribbean ones, and an almost “happy-go-lucky” people--a “carefree native” as perceived by some rather condescending westerners (Roberts 1997: 4). The region also represents a kaleidoscope of cultures and complexions (Sunshine 1985: 7; Lai 1998; Arbell 2000). In verity, the word, Caribbean, covers “a multitude of skins” (Yorke 2013b).

To complicate matters further, we should not overlook the well-organized way of life of our Amerindian ancestors in the region as well---long before Christopher Columbus, the Italian who got himself lost at sea while navigating in the name of the Spanish Crown in search of gold and other “goodies” in India in the East, accidentally landed on Caribbean shores. Nor should we

become oblivious to the “studied assault on the Amerindians and their way of life which Columbus’s arrival triggered, amounting virtually to genocide “(Thompson, 1994:111; LaFleur *et al.* 1996). It is against this backdrop which makes writing anything about this vibrant rainbow-like region, called the Caribbean, an exceptionally difficult task—a region named after the indigenous, war-like, pre-Columbian people group called the Caribs (or Kalinago) (Shepherd 2006: 131).

Currently, the Caribbean encompasses Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone and Netherlanderphone (Dutch-speaking) islands. In the case of Anglophone Belize and Guyana, and Nederlanderphone Suriname, the Caribbean also incorporates portions of the Central and South American mainland as well (Nettleford in Cobley 1995:1-2; Lampe, ed. 2001; Aub-Buscher and Noakes, eds. 2003).

Another popular nomenclature by which the region is known, especially its Anglophone sector, is that of the West Indies (Roberts 1997: vi). Supposedly, this is a throw-back to the cartographical error which “discoverer” Columbus made in mistakenly thinking that he had arrived in India (out East among the East Indians) when in fact he was lost at sea way out West. And so the peoples of the region are considered Indians in the West or, simply, West Indians.

The region has a population of some sixteen (16) million. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as a pan-Caribbean organization, is one in which Heads of State and Government meet from time to time as they seek, through various CARICOM-sponsored Organs and Structures, to help advance the cause of regional integration. This is especially crucial in light of the unrelenting hurricane-like forces of globalization which tend to be inimical to the sustainable economic and other development of relatively small island states such as most of the Caribbean islands are (Lewis [Patsy]2002).

CARICOM traces its official genesis to 1973 with the Treaty of Chagaramas which was signed in the Anglophone Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Other smaller sub-regional groupings include the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) with its official origin dating back to 1981 and based on the Treaty of Basseterre, the capital of St. Christopher (or St. Kitts) in the Federation of St. Christopher (or St. Kitts)-Nevis in the Eastern Caribbean (Harris [Timothy] 2008).

Statistics suggest that approximately 70 % of the contemporary Caribbean are comprised of people of African descent. (Harris [Timothy--in personal correspondence], 2008). Such people are part and parcel of what is now a large and vibrant African diaspora induced, for the most part, by the European-driven West, Central and even Southern African Trans-Atlantic slave trade in which Africa, the Motherland, was robbed and raped of its many sons and daughters who were then taken, “kicking and screaming”, to the various sugar, cotton, rice, tobacco and other plantations throughout the Americas—including the Caribbean. That is, most of those

who are of African descent in the Caribbean point to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade as opposed to the mainly Arabic-and Islam-driven East African slave trade which has spawned an African diaspora as well but moreso in the “Asia’s” of the world—in places like China, India, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan (Harris [Joseph] 1971).

In terms of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, for example, Yasus Afari, the Jamaican dub poet, has this to say:

The diabolic trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the slave plantation systems institutionalized in the African diaspora and in Africa, constituted the African holocaust which is undoubtedly an unprecedented crime against humanity. In fact, over one hundred million (100,000,000) Africans died during, or as a direct result of the hellish torment and misery of the journey/middle passage across the Atlantic, in addition to those who died, and continue to die, as a result of European colonialism and neo-colonialism (Yasus Afari 2007:8).

In light of that horrible history, it becomes even more meaningful as to why Harris, the British-based but St. Kitts-born sociologist, is asking that we refer to this whole trans-Atlantic trauma we call the slave trade not only as a crime against humanity but the African Holocaust or, in Kiswahili, the African Maafa as well (Harris [Clive] 2008).

In addition, the vast majority of Caribbean people fall within the Judeo-Christian tradition although there are some religio-cultural traditions which have been heavily influenced either by African traditions such as Rastafarianism in Jamaica, Santeria in Cuba, Voodooism in Haiti, Winti in Suriname or by some more religious traditions of Asian origin such as in the case of Hinduism and Buddhism. Not to be overlooked are also a smattering of Jews and Moslems and, on a larger scale, a number of ardent adherents of Garifuna, a more indigenous phenomenon found mostly in Dominica and Belize (Bisnauth 1989; Miguel 1995; Chevannes 1995; Murrell 2009).

Because of the dominance of the Judeo-Christian tradition and that of our Afro-ancestry, emphasis will be placed in this discussion on what may be regarded as the contents and contours of an Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology—and from a pan-Caribbean, linguistic and postcolonial perspective. In addition, emphasis will be placed on the Anglophone slice and sector of the Afro-Caribbean and within that slice, Jamaica, with roughly half the size of the Anglophone population, will be foregrounded. This is not dissimilar to what we find in the volume edited by Levy in which we find a discussion of what is referred to as the African-Caribbean worldview (see Levy 2009). But before we embark on such a discussion, perhaps a word or two about the term, perspective, is entirely in order so as to place our discussion within its proper contextual and conceptual framework.

Perspective

In some Christian theological circles, it is now a truism (an axiom, as it were) that God may have made us in God's own image (Gen1:26) but that in our theologizing about who God is, we inevitably end up, to varying degrees, making God in our image as well--be it consciously or subconsciously.

The very nature of language; the limitation of the human imagination; the “imprisonments” imposed on us by culture, personality, gender, and upbringing; the particularities of our own socioeconomic and other contexts; and the presence of sin in the life of the believer, one who, according to the dictum of Martin Luther, the German Reformer (1483-1546), is *simul iustus et peccator* (saint and sinner at the same time) are all factors and forces that make what we see and say inevitably perspectival in nature (Yorke 1995).

In terms of the Christian community, for example, the present profusion of doctrinal formulations and the proliferation of distinct and discrete Christian churches or denominations worldwide—be it in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, Latin America, in the Caribbean or wherever, all of which derive their *raison d'être*, identity and impulse to engage in Christian mission and education, supposedly from the Bible--is clear empirical testimony, it seems to us, to the validity of this bold claim. As human beings, we seem able, ultimately, to see only “through a glass darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12--*KJV*).

Echoing Rudolf Bultmann, the German New Testament scholar, and others, our presuppositions, pre-understandings and biases of whatever kind impose limits on us which no amount of life experience or even formal education seems able to eradicate entirely. It is this “fact of life”, for example, which John Elliott captures in his own creative way. He writes: “All perception is selective and constrained psychologically and socially; for no mortal enjoys *the gift of ‘immaculate perception’*” (Elliott 1986:5).

Granted, we must also concede that those who now occupy “the Global South” such as in the Caribbean or those situated at the margins *vis-à-vis* the centre, the “Two-thirds world” *vis-à-vis* the so-called “First world”, have also been heavily influenced by those Christian theologians and others who are committedly engaged in seeing and saying things from the perspective of the oppressed, the poor, the powerless, women and the weak. We have in mind those Christian theologies often referred to as liberation theologies stemming principally from Latin America or those which we choose to refer to as Two-thirds World Christian theologies, pointing to the experiences and expectations of those who now constitute the vast majority of the world's population but who find themselves, for the most part, at its periphery or as pushed-aside people; or, like Jesus Himself, among the “despised and rejected” (Isa. 53: 1-3 [*KJV*]; also see Ching 1991; Yorke 1995: 4-6).

Felder, the African-American New Testament scholar, for example, makes the following pertinent observation:

European/Euro-American biblical scholars have asked questions that shaped answers within the framework of the racial, cultural, gender presuppositions they held in common. This quiet consensus has undermined the self-understanding and place in history of other racial and ethnic groups (Felder 1994: xi).

Essentially, the point is this: because of our particularities, presuppositions, pre-understandings, and, therefore, our limited perspective on things, in other words, our “maculate perceptions”, we are being admonished as Christian theologians and others to avoid, as much as possible, making the pretentious claim that any one person or a homogeneous group of persons is capable of engaging in a reading of the Bible such as would make such a reading timelessly applicable in its appeal, all-inclusively embracing in its scope, univocal in its sound and universal in its reach.

In other words, our Christian theological reflections are not entirely neutral or innocent in nature but, instead, are informed and influenced by notions of both place and space (Blount 2007: 1-7)—be it captured in a geographically-sounding term like African, Asian, Canadian, Euramerican, European, Latin American, Caribbean or wherever; or a more people-focused fixation on black, white, feminist, womanist or any other (Grant and Patel, eds. 1990; Cone 2004; Punt 2007; Fiorenza 2008).

It is this basic conviction or presupposition which helps to create room and provides the rationale for the articulation of what is being termed here an Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology—one which is grounded in Afro-Caribbean experiences and expectations and one to which we now turn.

An Afro-Caribbean Emancipatory Christian Theology: A Proposal from a Pan-Caribbean, Linguistic and Postcolonial Perspective

In terms of the Afro-Caribbean, it is important to reiterate that the region is a rich multilingual region reflecting Dutch, English, French and Spanish influence and, at one time, Danish as well (Hall [Neville] 1992). It is a region in which the European High or H languages are the official languages along with their creolized counterparts such as Papiamentu, Jamiekian and Patwa in which Dutch, English and French serve as lexifier languages respectively. In fact, Haiti not only has French as an official language but Haitian creole as well—as does Curaçao in terms of having both Dutch and Papiamentu as official languages. Not to be overlooked are the strong lexical, syntactic, semantic and other influences which African languages have on such Afro-Caribbean languages or creoles as well (Roberts 1997; Warner-Lewis 2003; Devonish 2007).

This observation about the multilingualism of the Caribbean is of utmost importance, it seems to us, since a number of Caribbean scholars write about “the Caribbean” and/or Caribbean Christian theology when what they really have in view is the *Anglo*-Caribbean (e.g., see Davis [Kortright] 1990; Williams 1991; Reid-Salmon 2008; cf. Dick 2010a). Such scholars seem insufficiently respectful of, and sensitive to, the rich multilingual tapestry characterizing the region as a whole.

Granted, the Caribbean region is one which is relatively much easier to discuss than to define. At an event to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of Jamaica Theological Seminary, for example, Devon Dick, a Baptist minister and scholar, gave a lecture in which he made the following pertinent observation:

What is Caribbean? It is difficult to define Caribbean. There are many definitions for the Caribbean as there are Caribbean territories. Is the Bahamas and Bermuda part of the Caribbean? Is Puerto Rico part of the Caribbean? Should it be territories touched by the Caribbean Sea? One definition is ‘Pertaining to the sea and region of the western Atlantic bounded by South America, Central America, and the islands of the West Indies (such as Cuba and Hispaniola)... The countries that occupy the region of the western Atlantic bounded by South America, Central America, and the ...’. Then there is English, Spanish, Dutch and French Caribbean. How can we have a Caribbean Theology when we cannot even identify the Caribbean (Dick 2010a: 4-5)?

Not only is Dick’s opening question relevant, given the geographical imprecision of the term, Caribbean, but so is his last question as well especially in relation to the multilingual make-up of the region as a whole and our attempt to articulate what the contents and contours of an Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology should look like. Unlike what is generally done, such a theology ought to be, at least, pan-Caribbean, trans-linguistic and multilingual in its reach and relevance.

Granted, this tendency towards “monolingual myopia” is not restricted to English-speaking Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians. The same phenomenon manifests itself, more or less, in other linguistic domains within the Caribbean as well—be it within the Francophone, Hispanophone or the Netherlanderphone domains. In terms of the Anglophone sector, for example, it was rather instructive to hear the various calls for recognition and greater inclusion emanating from the non-Anglophone sector of the region at the 35th annual meetings of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) held in Kingston, Jamaica in June 2009. Having its 35th annual meeting in 2009 meant that CSA dates back to the 1960’s and yet such strident calls for recognition and greater inclusion were being made. Such calls came principally from scholars hailing from the Dutch-, the French- and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

And to make the point, perhaps somewhat politically, some of the non-Anglophone scholars opted to speak in their official language rather than try to accommodate those who might have been monolingual English-speakers. Rather ironically, the theme for the CSA meeting was

“Centering the Caribbean in Caribbean Studies.” Of course, much credit ought to be given to the organizers of the conference itself in that, at least, scholars from the non-Anglophone sectors were present—suggesting, perhaps, that there was a shared recognition of this “shortsightedness” or “oversight” or, perhaps in the rasta talk of Jamaica, known for its creative wordplay, “undersight” (Cassidy 2007; Palmer 2010: 22ff.).

It was clear that some attempt was made to be much more inclusive. In addition, and given the existential congruence between Afro-Caribbean peoples and their Afro-Brazilian counterparts, it was also gratifying to see some Afro-Brazilian scholars present and participating as well—as was the fact that the CSA had held one of its earlier annual meetings in Salvador, Bahia, the center of gravity of the Afro-Brazilian community itself (Davis [Darien] 1999; Munanga and Gomes 2006; Filho 2008).

In terms of an Afro-Caribbean Christian theology which must be Christian and, therefore, having the Bible, the Book of the Church, at its very foundation, it should also be emancipatory in its tone, tenor and thrust (Davis [Kortright]). In spite of the multicultural and multilingual complexity of the region, it is fairly defensible to say, we think, that its shared socio-historical experiences of slavery induced by colonialism and, subsequent to that, oppressive forms of neo-colonialism, the devastating hurricane-like forces of globalization, the exclusionary pressures of marginalization and related feelings of powerlessness, all conspire against the peoples of the region to make them desire and deserve more meaningful forms of emancipation—be it psychological, economic, academic, environmental or any other in nature (Brereton and Yelvington, eds. 1999; Dayfoot 1999; Jennings 2007) .

Lest we forget:

Christianity came to the Caribbean as part and parcel of Spanish, French, British, Dutch, and finally, North American colonialism. The church went on to assist these powers in building colonial societies: it endorsed slavery, and helped to entrench racial and class divisions after emancipation (Sunshine 1992: 16; also see Turner 1998; Dayfoot 1999; Bolland 2003; and Hewitt 2012).

Historically, emancipation, made possible by both women and men alike, came for the slaves here in “the West” at different times. In Haiti, it was in 1804; in the Anglophone Caribbean, it was in 1838; in the Francophone Caribbean, it was in 1848; in the Dutch colonies, it was in 1863; in the US to the north, it was in 1865; and in Puerto Rico, it was in 1886. Afro-Brazilian emancipation came in May 1888.

Incidentally, this last-mentioned emancipation date (1888) came just after the Berlin Conference which ran from November 1884-February 1885. This was a conference at which, ironically, and in spite of the granting of so-called “emancipation” in the West (including the Caribbean) before that, we witness the arbitrary and rapacious carving up of Africa among

various European powers such as Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Spain. Such balkanization of the continent further facilitated Europe in its underdevelopment of Africa or, like a cricket ball, putting my own spin on that history, it gave rise to Africa and the Caribbean (at least) contributing to the overdevelopment of Europe (Rodney 1972; Mair 2007; Jagessar 2007; Yorke 2009; Yorke *et al.* 2010; Dick 2010a; 2010b).

Be that as it may, one can no longer describe the region as anything other than one in which there is an ongoing postcolonial drive to assert itself on the world stage and a concerted effort to march towards greater self-determination. It is little wonder, then, that the term, postcolonialism, has come to characterize the writings of not a few Afro-Caribbean scholars (Shepherd 2006; Lalla 2008) and even some non-Caribbean-born but Caribbeanist ones as well (e.g., Lee 2008).

Williams, one of the more well-known Jamaican Afro-Christian theologians throughout the Anglophone region, seemed a bit uneasy with the Marxist associations which the liberation theology emanating from Latin America usually conjures up in the minds of some and the less-than-tolerant attitude which such associations tend to trigger in the “powerful North” (i.e., the US). For that reason, he would wish to see the term downplayed a bit in such a theology (Williams 1991: 31-32).

To the contrary, however, there are those like Booth, Burchell, Davis, Dick, Gordon and others who would insist that liberation or emancipation ought to remain a fundamental motif within Afro-Caribbean Christian theology as a whole. Dick, for example (quoting Beckford along the way), has this to say:

...liberation has to be centrally [sic] to Caribbean theology. As Robert Beckford, British theologian, stated in *Jesus Dread*, ‘Liberation is concerned with representing the interests of oppressed people in theological language and action. When applied to theology, it expresses a desire to know what God is doing about oppression, and what is the role of the Christian in God’s liberative work in the world. Liberation is both internal, concerned with mental emancipation, as well as external, concerned with social justice...’. The omission of liberation from Caribbean Liberation theology demeans the task and undermines the effort (Dick 2010: 4).

In terms of liberation, it is usually quite fashionable among Afro-Christian liberation theologians of whatever stripe (be they Caribbean, Latin American, African-American, African, Afro-British or AfriCanadian) to invoke the story of the exodus of the Old Testament and God’s liberating hand at work in the lives of ancient Israel as justification for grounding their theologies of liberation in that momentous event (see Exodus 15). However, from an Afrocentric or Africa-friendlier perspective, we find that hermeneutical strategy rather problematic and even ironic in that Egypt (Africa) is being imaged in that whole exodus event as the land of oppression rather than as one of liberation (see Deuteronomy 5: 12-15).

In stead, and in keeping with the Rastafarian tendency in Jamaica to use Babylon as a trope to signify the arch-oppressor (or in creative rasta talk, the arch-*down*pressor), perhaps it would be defensible to consider the experience of the Babylonian exile as being a far more appropriate one with which to justify the ongoing contemporary Afro-drive to experience emancipation, liberation or freedom from those factors and forces which seek to hold them captive.

As “Africans-in-exile”, in the language of Ngugi wa-Thiong’o, the outstanding Kenyan writer in exile himself, and referring to those in diaspora who are of African descent, the exilic experience of the people of Israel in Babylon seems to be a much better existential “fit” (wa Thiong’o 1993). For one thing, the motif of exile makes allowance for those who would wish to *remain* in diaspora or exile as some of the Israelites did and some African-descendent people would wish to do. The theme of exile also allows those who would wish to *return* to the Motherland as some of the Israelites did in the case of Babylon—or people like Edward Blyden, the eighteenth century Presbyterian Minister and Diplomat, Frantz Fanon, the Martiniquan-born, French-trained Psychiatrist and the first Algerian Ambassador to an independent Ghana in 1957, did as African-descendent persons.

In addition, this more robust interaction between Africa and its diaspora resonates with the amendment to the *Constitutive Act* of the African Union (2003—see article 3[q]) in which the African diaspora is now being considered the Sixth Region of Africa, the Motherland (Yorke 2012). It is also in step with the United Nations declaration of the current decade as the International Decade for People of African Descent, extending from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2024, as well as with the language of “Global Africa” which all of us as contributors to the on-going UNESCO-sponsored Volume IX General History of Africa Project are being encouraged to employ (Yorke, Forthcoming).

Unlike the oft-cited exodus event which really moves us in only one legitimate direction, i.e., *return* to the Motherland and not *remain* in diaspora, the exile allows both. The mere existence of both the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud of the Jews points to the themes of both *return* and *remain* in that some of the Jews opted to remain in Babylon while others chose to return to Jerusalem (see the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah). This *return-remain* scenario is not unlike what has tended to characterize the discourses of, and even debates among, Afro-Caribbean scholars and others in exile or diaspora like Marcus Mosiah Garvey, the Jamaican National Hero, or W.E.B. Dubois (now lying buried in Ghana) and Booker T. Washington, African-Americans.

Furthermore, Ham is correct, we think, in insisting that a contemporary emancipatory Christian theology should address issues of, “decolonization, identity, integration, development and education” (Gregory, ed., 1995: 3-4). In our view, a more wholistic understanding of liberation ought also to include *linguistic liberation* as well (Devonish 1986; Radis 2009:60).

Granted, we must concede that, historically, and perhaps rightly so, it was assumed that the region did not yet boast sufficiently developed Caribbean languages or creoles in terms of both prestige and number of speakers so as to warrant, for example, the translation of the Bible (or a portion of it) into those languages or creoles. However, times have changed and continue to do so in this regard.

In the Caribbean, the colonially imposed European powerful High (or H) languages, be it English, French, Spanish or Dutch, have already undergone the not-yet-fully-understood processes of pidginization and creolization. In fact, according to some sociolinguists, the Caribbean region is one of the best “laboratories” in the world in which to study the creolization of European languages (Wardhaugh 1992). According to statistics compiled by Wycliffe Caribbean, for example, out of a total of some 80 creoles spoken worldwide, approximately 30 of them are spoken throughout the Caribbean region as a whole.

Once considered cultural badges and baggage engendering feelings of profound shame rather than honor, Caribbean creoles are now emerging, more and more, as the mother-tongues of many and, therefore, the identity markers and tools with which many now choose to communicate in the region—including as far afield as those in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora found in Britain, North America (Canada and the US) and Europe. This identity-impacting linguistic phenomenon manifests itself not only among the uneducated and the unsophisticated but also among the elites in the domains of politics, the church, academia and the media (see Cooper 2017; Allsopp and Rickford 2012; and Campbell 2018).

One of the more recent domains in which linguistic liberation is being expressed is that of Bible translation such that the Bible, once *transported* into the region enrobed exclusively in one of the colonial languages of Europe and North America, is now being *translated* in the region as well. The United Bible Societies (UBS) and, at times, in partnership with organizations like Wycliffe Caribbean, is now contributing to this ongoing postcolonial effort through the medium of various organizations like the Bible Society of the West Indies (Jamaica), the Bible Society of Haiti, and the Bible Society of the (Dutch) Netherlands Antilles (Yorke 2013a).

In this endoglossic exercise, Caribbean creoles are being valorized in that greater prestige is now being conferred on them. In short, UBS, in particular, through its subsidiaries in the region, is not only contributing substantially to the ongoing march towards language retention and revitalization in the Caribbean as a whole but also to the linguistic liberation of Caribbean peoples as well. This Bible translation-driven endoglossic exercise is also entirely consistent with recent attempts to further valorize Caribbean creoles as expressed in the *Charter for Language Rights and Policy for the Creole-speaking Caribbean (CLRPCC)*. The CLRPCC was officially released in 2011 during an International Conference on Language Rights and Policy which was held at the University of the West Indies. The hope is that, in time, the CLRPCC will be ratified by the various parliaments throughout the Caribbean. Among other things, it calls for

the establishment of a Regional Council on Languages within the creole-speaking Caribbean (Yorke 2019 [Forthcoming]).

Only time will tell, however, whether or not Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians, in their determination to indigenize, contextualize or ground the emancipatory or liberating gospel in the Caribbean soul and soil, will make creative and constructive use of indigenous translations of the Bible currently available to them. So far, we have, for example, the complete Bible in Haitian Creole, the New Testament and some of the Psalms in Dominican/St. Lucian Patwa, the complete Bible in Papiamentu spoken in the (Dutch) Netherlands Antilles, and the New Testament in Sranan Tonga spoken in Suriname. Further, the Jamaica-based Bible Society of the West Indies published *Di Jamiekan Nyuu Testament*, the New Testament, in 2012 so as to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of independence of Jamaica from British rule.

We suspect that, for the foreseeable future, however, Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians, if their African counterparts are to serve as a guide, will continue to give mere lip service to their indigenous translations. Instead, we suspect that most, if not all, will continue to opt for the Bible, the basis of any meaningful Afro- and pan-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology, exclusively in its Euramerican linguistic manifestation. And unfortunately, that might well be true, for the most part, of those Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians who are working in all the linguistic sectors and sections of the Caribbean—be it Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone or Netherlanderphone.

Conclusion

Here, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter: the contents and contours of a pan-Caribbean Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology must be characterized by the following (inexhaustive) features: 1) it must be Bible-centered; 2) it must take cognizance of the harsh socio-historical and the rich Afro-religio-cultural experiences of Afro-Caribbean peoples; 3) it must be mindful of the contemporary economic, academic, gender justice-driven and other life-affirming expectations of a proud Afro-Caribbean people; 4) it must be a theology which eschews the pathology of parochialism and, instead, embraces a robust pan-Caribbeanism; 5) it must be a theology which is sensitive to the multicultural and the multilingual make-up of the region; 6) it must be a theology which seeks to foster linguistic liberation; and 7) it must be a theology which resonates with the existential realities of a African-descendent people in exile in that, unlike the exodus of the Old Testament, it makes allowance for the themes of both *return* (periodic or permanent) to the Motherland and *remain* in Diaspora.

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