

Decolonizing Theology and Kerygma: Reimagining African Identity in Evangelical Preaching

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Abstract

This research explores the issue of decolonizing theology within the context of African evangelical preaching by focusing on reimagining the African identity. Arguably, missions in the colonial era influenced the theological and kerygmatic perspectives and practices within African evangelical churches, often resulting in the marginalization or erasure of indigenous African cultural and spiritual expressions. This study examines how African evangelical churches can reclaim and revitalize their theological frameworks to embrace a more authentic and contextually relevant understanding of African identity in preaching. The library research investigates the historical roots of colonial influence on African evangelical churches, examining how Western theological frameworks were imposed and how they continue to shape preaching and religious practices. It looks at the role of cultural expressions, languages, and contextual realities in shaping theological perspectives and how African evangelical churches can integrate indigenous cultural and spiritual elements into their preaching practices. Further, the study examines the potential challenges and tensions that may arise in decolonizing theology, including syncretism, power dynamics, and the negotiation of diverse theological perspectives. By embracing a decolonial theological framework, African evangelical churches can foster a more inclusive, culturally grounded, and contextually relevant expression of Christian faith that affirms and celebrates African identity.

Keywords: Decolonizing Theology, African Identity, Evangelical Preaching, Colonialism, Postcolonial Period, African Theology, Contextualized Preaching



Introduction

Colonialism left an indelible mark on African evangelical churches, profoundly shaping their theological perspectives and practices. The imposition of Western theological frameworks during the colonial era resulted in the marginalization or erasure of indigenous African cultural and spiritual expressions within these churches. The first generation of African theologians from the 1960s to 1980s recognized that Africa had suffered from the colonization of the mind and the theological mind in particular (Ross, 2022). However, recently, Africans have been challenging and dismantling these colonial legacies, aiming to decolonize theology and reconstruct a more authentic and contextually relevant understanding of African identity in evangelical preaching. Decolonization involves reversing the colonial legacies of inequality and the Westernization of Christianity that perpetuated unequal power relations and marginalization of the local cultural and religious contexts (Chifungu, 2022). This research examines the process of decolonizing theology within African evangelical churches by focusing on reimagining African identity. It looks at the historical roots of colonial influence on African evangelical churches and how these churches can decolonize their preaching.

Several studies have examined the significance of reimagining African identity, like the works of Mugambi, J. N. K. (2005), Kä Mana, E. (2017), and West, G. O. (2009). This paper investigates the role of cultural expressions, languages, and contextual realities in shaping theological perspectives. It examines how African evangelical churches can integrate indigenous cultural and spiritual elements into their preaching practices. Furthermore, the research explores the potential tensions and challenges that may arise in decolonizing theology, including syncretism, power dynamics, and the negotiation of diverse theological perspectives. By embracing a decolonial theological framework, African evangelical churches can foster a more inclusive, culturally grounded, and contextually relevant expression of Christian faith that affirms and celebrates African identity. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader conversation on decolonization, postcolonial theology, and the transformative potential of contextualized preaching in African evangelical churches.



The Influence of Colonialism on African Evangelical Churches

The influence of colonialism on African evangelical churches has profoundly affected their theology, preaching, and the marginalization of indigenous African cultural expressions. By examining the historical background, we can gain insights into these dynamics and understand the lasting impact of colonialism on African Christianity.

During the colonial era, European powers largely controlled African territories, including their religious and cultural practices. This resulted in the imposition of Western theological frameworks and the suppression of indigenous artistic expressions within African evangelical churches. Kwame Bediako's *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (1992) explored how colonialism disrupted indigenous cultural expressions and imposed Western theological perspectives. He argued that this led to the marginalization and suppression of African cultural identities within the context of African Christianity.

Ogbu Kalu's work, *African Christianity: An African Story* (2005), provides a comprehensive historical analysis of the development of Christianity in Africa, including the colonial era. He highlights how colonial powers introduced Western theological perspectives and liturgical practices, often undermining local cultural and spiritual traditions. Elizabeth Isichei's book, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (1995), offers an extensive examination of the history of Christianity in Africa, including the impact of colonialism. She emphasizes how colonial powers used Christianity as a tool for cultural assimilation and control, suppressing indigenous practices and marginalizing African artistic expressions. J. D. Peel's work, such as *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (2000), explores the encounter between Christianity and indigenous religions in Nigeria. He highlights how colonialism influenced the development of African Christianity and contributed to the marginalization of indigenous cultural expressions. These references provide essential insights into the historical context of colonialism and its influence on African evangelical churches. They shed light on how colonial powers imposed Western theological frameworks, suppressed indigenous cultural expressions, and marginalized African identities within African Christianity.



Historical Overview of Colonial Impact on Theology and Preaching

During the colonial era, Western powers significantly influenced African societies, including their religious beliefs and practices. Western missionaries played a crucial role in spreading Christianity and converting Africans to the faith, impacting the development of theology and preaching within African evangelical churches. Smith (2010) notes the imposition of Western cultural and religious beliefs on African societies during the colonial era. The European powers, such as Britain, France, Portugal, and Belgium, colonized various African regions and sought to establish political, economic, and religious dominance. These colonial powers often viewed their mission as civilizing and Christianizing the African population.

European missionaries arrived in Africa with their theological and cultural frameworks and interpretations of Christianity, which they imposed on the indigenous populations. They introduced Western liturgical practices, theological formulations, and biblical interpretations reflecting their cultural and religious perspectives. This profoundly impacted the theology and preaching within African evangelical churches, as the indigenous artistic expressions and spiritual traditions were often marginalized or suppressed, and the colonial period also witnessed the establishment of mission schools and seminaries that trained African clergy and church leaders. Further, Western theological perspectives heavily influenced the curriculum and teachings in seminaries and Bible colleges where church leaders were trained (Mapala, 2022). Consequently, this further perpetuated the dominance of European theological frameworks in African evangelical churches. Indigenous cultural expressions and spiritual practices were often seen as inferior or even pagan, leading to the marginalization and devaluation of African cultural identities and traditions. It resulted in a disconnect between African Christians and their cultural heritage, as they were encouraged to adopt Westernized worship and theological perspectives. The colonial era witnessed the imposition of Western cultural and religious beliefs on African societies, including their theology and preaching.

Smith argues that this colonial encounter marginalized and suppressed indigenous African spiritual practices and theological frameworks. Indigenous African religious beliefs often incorporated a solid connection to the land, ancestral veneration, and communal spirituality. However, these practices were often considered primitive or pagan by the European missionaries, who sought to replace them with Western perspectives and practices.



The influence of European missionaries led to a shift in theological perspectives within African evangelical churches. The teachings and principles of Western Christianity became dominant, thereby shaping the theological framework of African Christian communities. The authority of Western theologians and preachers was esteemed, and their interpretations of Scripture became influential in African theology. Mbiti (1969) notes that while colonialism brought significant challenges and disruptions to indigenous African religious practices, it also led to the reevaluation and reinterpretation of African spirituality and theology. He highlights the resilience of African communities in maintaining and adapting their spiritual beliefs and practices during the colonial period. He emphasizes the concept of “Africanization” in theology, which refers to incorporating African cultural values and expressions into Christian belief and practice. In addition, Mbiti suggests that African Christians sought to synthesize their indigenous thoughts with Christianity, resulting in a distinct African Christian theology. Mbiti’s perspective challenges the complete marginalization and suppression of indigenous African spiritual practices by arguing that African Christians found ways to reclaim and reinterpret their cultural heritage within the context of Christianity. This Africanization of theology and preaching was crucial in developing African liberation theology and affirming African cultural identity within the Christian faith.

In summary, Smith and Mbiti offer different perspectives on the colonial impact on theology and preaching in African societies. Smith emphasizes the marginalization and suppression of indigenous practices, while Mbiti highlights the resilience of African communities in adapting and Africanizing Christianity. By examining these contrasting perspectives, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics and transformations that occurred during the colonial era and their lasting influence on African theology and preaching. Indigenous African spiritual practices and theological frameworks were marginalized and, in some cases, suppressed (Mbiti, 1969), which led to a shift towards Western theological perspectives influenced by the teachings of European missionaries (Hastings, 1999).

Imposition of Western Theological Frameworks

European missionaries played a crucial role in shaping the theological landscape of African evangelical churches during the colonial period. Their influence extended beyond the



introduction of Christianity; they also introduced Western theological frameworks that prioritized certain doctrines and practices over others.

Elizabeth Isichei (1995) highlights the significant role of European missionaries in shaping African Christianity. They brought their theological perspectives and interpretations of the Bible, often emphasizing certain aspects of Christian doctrine while downplaying or disregarding others. This selective approach to theology influenced the formation of African theological thought within evangelical churches. J. Baur (2006) further highlights how European missionaries imposed their theological frameworks on African Christianity by promoting Western theological doctrines and rituals, often considered superior to indigenous African beliefs, techniques, and cultural expressions. This mindset led to labelling African cultural practices as inferior or pagan and retrogressive. The imposition of European theological dominance hindered the development and preserving a genuinely African theological identity. Musa W. Dube (2001) argues that the suppression of indigenous African beliefs and practices stifled the organic growth and expression of African theological thought. It created a theological landscape heavily influenced by Western paradigms, limiting the exploration and development of a distinct African theological identity.

African evangelical churches still feel the consequences of this imposed dominance today. John Mbiti (1975) suggested that the disconnect between African Christians and their indigenous cultural expressions and beliefs resulted in a fragmented religious identity. Losing indigenous cultural and theological heritage has led to disconnection and alienation from their roots. However, there has been a growing movement to reclaim and celebrate African theological and cultural expressions in recent years. African theologians and scholars, such as Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1996), have advocated for a contextualized theology that integrates indigenous African perspectives and challenges the dominance of Western theological frameworks. This movement seeks to restore and revitalize African theological identity within evangelical churches.

Marginalization of Indigenous African Cultural Expressions

The impact of colonialism on African evangelical churches goes beyond the imposition of Western cultural and religious beliefs. It also involved marginalizing and suppressing indigenous African artistic expressions within these churches. Several scholars have



highlighted these dynamics and emphasized the lasting effects of colonialism on African Christianity.

Ogbu Kalu (2008) explores how colonialism marginalized indigenous African cultural expressions within evangelical churches. European missionaries discouraged or suppressed African cultural practices that they deemed incompatible with their beliefs. This resulted in the loss of valuable cultural heritage and disconnection between African Christians and their indigenous traditions. David Bosch (1991) also addresses the marginalization of indigenous cultural expressions within African evangelical churches. He emphasizes the loss of cultural identity and the dissonance experienced by African Christians encouraged to adopt Westernized worship and theology. This disconnection from their indigenous traditions has had a lasting impact on African Christianity. Lamin Sanneh (1989) further argues that the imposition of Western theological frameworks during colonialism hindered the development of a distinct African theological identity—the dominance of European theological perspectives marginalized African Christians’ theological contributions and unique cultural expressions.

African Christians and scholars have recognized the importance of reclaiming and celebrating their unique cultural and religious heritage to address these historical legacies. Mercy Amba Oduyoye (2005) advocates for a contextualized theology that incorporates African cultural perspectives and challenges the dominance of Western theological paradigms. African evangelical churches must engage in critical self-reflection and actively work towards decolonizing their theology and embracing indigenous cultural expressions. By doing so, they can foster a more inclusive and empowering religious environment that honours the rich cultural heritage of African Christianity.

Towards Decolonization

Decolonial theory, as defined by scholars like Anibal Quijano and Walter Mignolo, aims to challenge and dismantle the enduring legacies of colonialism in various aspects of society, including theology (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2000). Its relevance to theology lies in its ability to critically examine how colonialism has influenced and shaped theological frameworks (Quijano, 2007).



Critiquing Colonial Theological Frameworks in the African Evangelical Context

In the African evangelical context, it is essential to critically examine the impact of colonial theological frameworks and their limitations. Kwok Pui-Lan's critique of these frameworks sheds light on their inherent biases and the need for a paradigm shift in African theological discourse.

Western perspectives and ideologies have often influenced colonial theological frameworks in Africa, which have shaped the theological discourse to limit the diversity of African theological expressions. Kwok Pui-Lan (2005) argues that these frameworks have predominantly centred on Euro-American theological paradigms, neglecting African cultures' rich and diverse theological traditions and perspectives. This limitation has hindered the development and recognition of African theological voices, perpetuating a theological landscape that is predominantly Eurocentric. Moreover, colonial theological frameworks have marginalized indigenous knowledge and cultural expressions. They have often regarded African cultural practices as inferior or incompatible with Christian beliefs, suppressing and erasing indigenous theological perspectives. This disregard for indigenous knowledge has had a detrimental impact on African theological development, as it fails to acknowledge the wisdom and insights embedded within African cultural and religious traditions.

Kwok Pui-Lan (2011) further emphasizes the need to analyze colonial theological frameworks critically. By questioning and challenging the assumptions, biases, and power dynamics inherent in these frameworks, African theologians can pave the way for a more inclusive and decolonized theological discourse. This critical analysis calls for a paradigm shift recognizing the equal validity and importance of diverse theological perspectives and engaging with African Christians' unique experiences and contexts. African theological discourse should not be limited to merely reflecting Western theological frameworks. Instead, it should draw from the richness of African cultural and religious traditions, incorporating indigenous knowledge and engaging with contemporary socio-political realities. This paradigm shift promotes a more holistic and inclusive understanding of theology in the African evangelical context. The critique of colonial theological frameworks in the African evangelical context reveals their limitations in terms of limited diversity, marginalization of indigenous knowledge, and Eurocentric biases. By critically analyzing and challenging these frameworks, African theologians can pave the way for a more inclusive, decolonized, and



contextually grounded theological discourse. This paradigm shift enables the celebration of diverse theological expressions and fosters a deeper understanding of the African Christian experience.

Reimagining African Identity in Evangelical Preaching

Decolonizing theology is a theoretical exercise and a vital tool for reimagining African identity. Decolonization can reclaim African narratives, empower marginalized voices, and renew a sense of cultural identity (Dube, 2001). The exploration into decolonizing theology reveals the profound relevance and transformative power of decolonial theory within the realm of theology. By critically assessing colonial theological frameworks and envisioning new possibilities for an African identity, we open doors to a future where diverse voices and narratives can flourish. Musopole (2022) underscores the need to entrench theological thinking and African worldview in preaching. This subsection explores how indigenous cultural expressions, African languages, and spiritual traditions can be embraced within theological discourse.

Embracing Indigenous Cultural Expressions in Theology and Preaching

The incorporation of indigenous cultural expressions within theology and preaching is crucial for the reimagining of African identity. By embracing traditional practices, customs, and art forms, we honour the rich heritage of African communities (Kalu, 2018). There is a need to utilize the indigenous cultural traditions of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual insight (Ross, 2022). This approach allows for a more inclusive and authentic theological discourse that resonates with the lived experiences of African congregations. Drawing on the works of scholars like Kwame Bediako, we can better understand the significance of embracing indigenous cultural expressions (Bediako, 1995). As Bediako puts it, we need a theology that “takes seriously these African realities and produces an integration of heart and mind, learning and discipleship, that liberates us as African Christians to share in God’s mission and transformation of the world” (Bediako, 2001).

Integration of African Languages and Contextual Realities

Integrating African languages in evangelical preaching is crucial for establishing a deeper connection with congregations and affirming their cultural identity. Mercy Amba Oduyoye’s



work provides valuable insights into the significance of linguistic integration in African theology and preaching.

In her book *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Oduyoye explores various aspects of African women's experiences within the theological discourse. She focuses on women's theology, language and cultural integration perspectives, which apply to the broader context of African identity and evangelical preaching. Oduyoye highlights the importance of utilizing vernacular languages to effectively communicate the Gospel in ways that resonate with African communities' cultural and contextual realities.

Some scholars have also written about linguistic integration in African theology and preaching. For instance, in his book *Theology, Language, and Power: A Reexamination of the Linguistic Turn in African Theology*, Dickson Kwesi explores how language shapes theological discourse in Africa and advocates for the use of African languages as a way to empower local communities and preserve cultural heritage. Also, Afe Adogame's work, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, examines the role of language in African Christian communities and the challenges and opportunities it presents for expressing faith. Further, Lamin Sanneh: Sanneh's book *Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West* delves into the importance of linguistic and cultural translation in spreading Christianity, particularly in African contexts. During the colonial period, translating Scriptures to vernacular languages laid a foundation for decolonized theology, but this process was never followed through to the end (Ross 2022). Scriptures were translated into many local languages, but the theological engagement did not utilize these resources, as concepts, worship services and writings continued to be expressed in foreign languages and thought forms.

Rediscovering African Spiritual and Theological Traditions

Rediscovering African spiritual and theological traditions is crucial in reimagining African identity in evangelical preaching. By studying and acknowledging the rich spiritual heritage of Africa, preachers can tap into a wealth of wisdom and insights (Mbiti, 1990). Preachers can explore the significance and relevance of African spiritual traditions to contemporary theological discourse. This exploration enables preachers to enrich their messages and create spaces for integrating African spiritual practices.



Reimagining African identity in evangelical preaching necessitates embracing indigenous cultural expressions, integrating African languages, and rediscovering African spiritual and theological traditions. Evangelical preaching should answer the questions that the local people ask. By doing so, African evangelical churches can cultivate a more authentic and contextually relevant understanding of African identity within their theological frameworks.

When we refer to theological traditions, we highlight the historical and established ways a particular religious community or denomination has understood and interpreted their faith. These traditions encompass various theological beliefs, practices, rituals, and teachings passed down through generations within a specific religious context. In the case of African theological traditions, they encompass the unique ways in which African communities have historically engaged with and interpreted Christianity, often incorporating indigenous beliefs, cultural practices, and spiritual expressions. These traditions reflect African peoples' lived experiences, cultural contexts, and spiritual insights and contribute to a distinct African theological perspective. However, African theological traditions were marginalized, suppressed, or erased during the colonial era. It resulted in a disconnection from indigenous cultural expressions, African languages, and the richness of African spiritual and theological traditions.

Reengaging with indigenous cultural epistemologies and spiritual traditions is essential to decolonizing theology and reimagining African identity in evangelical preaching. It involves recognizing and valuing the diversity of African languages and incorporating them into liturgy, worship, and preaching. It also requires rediscovering and reclaiming African spiritual practices, symbols, and theological insights that have been marginalized or neglected. It has been recognized that many churches are still foreign in their spirituality, traditions, liturgy, confessions, songs, catechisms, and theology. Therefore, to decolonize theological education and preaching, there is a need to rewrite these statements of faith and rearticulate theology in light of the African worldview (Musopole, 2022).

By integrating indigenous cultural expressions of African languages and rediscovering African theological traditions, African evangelical churches can create a theological framework that resonates with African people's lived experiences and cultural contexts. This process allows for a more inclusive and holistic understanding of African identity within



evangelical preaching, fostering a deeper connection between faith and the diverse African communities it seeks to serve. As preachers integrate these aspects into their sermons, they create transformative spaces that honour African heritage, connect with congregations on a deeper level, and pave the way for a more inclusive and authentic evangelical preaching experience.

Navigating Challenges and Tensions in Decolonizing Theology

This subsection delves into the complexities of syncretism power dynamics, addressing potential criticisms and concerns arising in the decolonial project.

Syncretism and the Negotiation of Diverse Theological Perspectives

One of the challenges in decolonizing theology is the negotiation of diverse theological perspectives and the potential risk of syncretism. As we seek to decolonize theological frameworks, we encounter the need to navigate the delicate balance between incorporating indigenous beliefs and practices while remaining faithful to the core tenets of Christianity (Gathogo, 2017). This endeavour demands a deep understanding of the cultural and theological contexts and critical discernment in distinguishing between syncretism and genuine contextualization. Drawing on the insights of scholars like Jesse Mugambi, we can explore the complexities of this challenge and strive for an inclusive and authentic theological discourse (Mugambi, 1995).

Power Dynamics and the Decolonial Project

Decoloniality is an epistemological and political movement that attempts to undo the coloniality underlying structures of oppression and injustice (Matemba, 2022). It is about decentring European knowledge and restoring the place of African knowledge.

Decolonizing theology involves grappling with power dynamics that have historically shaped theological discourse. In decolonizing theology and preaching, power dynamics often relate to the historical and ongoing influence of colonial legacies and Western hegemony in shaping theological education, institutions, and the broader theological landscape. Colonialism played a significant role in establishing power imbalances between colonizers and colonized peoples. Western powers imposed their cultural, political, and religious ideologies onto colonized societies, often at the expense of indigenous knowledge systems



and practices. This resulted in the marginalization, erasure, or suppression of local beliefs and theological frameworks. Within theological education and institutions, power dynamics can manifest in various ways. Western theological perspectives and methodologies have historically been privileged and considered normative, while non-Western or indigenous theological traditions have been marginalized or seen as inferior. This creates an imbalance in the representation and validation of diverse theological voices, perpetuating a hegemonic power structure.

Furthermore, power dynamics can impact who gets to define and interpret theology, whose perspectives are centred or excluded, and whose narratives are prioritized. This can lead to a lack of diversity and inclusivity within theological discourse and limited opportunities for marginalized voices to contribute and shape theological frameworks. Addressing power dynamics in decolonizing theology requires recognizing and challenging the historical and ongoing influence of colonial legacies and Western hegemony. It involves empowering marginalized voices and creating spaces for diverse perspectives to thrive. This can be done through inclusive curriculum development, promoting multicultural and intercultural theological dialogues, and amplifying marginalized voices in theological scholarship and leadership positions.

Moreover, decolonizing theology involves critically engaging with dominant narratives, questioning underlying power structures, and decentering Western perspectives as the default or superior. It requires a commitment to dismantling oppressive systems and fostering equitable theological exploration and dialogue spaces.

Addressing Potential Criticisms and Concerns

In any transformative project, there will inevitably be criticisms and concerns. It is essential to address these in the process of decolonizing theology. Some situations may include accusations of cultural relativism, the potential loss of core theological principles, or the risk of perpetuating division and fragmentation (West, 2006). In the context of decolonizing theology and preaching, West's work can provide insights into how power dynamics and social inequalities intersect with the process of decolonization. His critical approach to understanding and challenging oppressive structures can inform discussions on addressing concerns such as cultural relativism, the preservation of core theological principles, and the potential for division and fragmentation in decolonial projects. Observably, decolonizing



preaching is not without challenges. By understanding these challenges, such as resistance from traditional theological frameworks or pushback from congregations, we can gain insights into potential roadblocks and how to overcome them. Analyzing these challenges will uncover valuable lessons learned and best practices for navigating the decolonization process.

Conclusion

The study has explored the decolonization process of theology and preaching and the importance of embracing indigenous cultural expressions, integrating African languages, and rediscovering African spiritual and theological traditions in evangelical preaching. Recognizing the marginalization of indigenous cultural expressions and the need to reclaim African theological identity have profound implications for theology and preaching in African evangelical churches. These implications revolve around embracing indigenous cultural expressions, integrating African languages, and rediscovering African spiritual and theological traditions.

In embracing indigenous cultural expressions, African evangelical churches can honour the rich heritage of African communities by embracing and valuing indigenous cultural expressions. This quest includes incorporating African art, music, dance, and other cultural practices into worship and theological discourse. By doing so, churches create a space that resonates with the lived experiences of congregations and fosters a sense of cultural identity and belonging. Concerning integrating African languages, a language holds immense cultural significance, and incorporating African languages into theological discourse and preaching allows for deeper connections with African communities' cultural and contextual realities. By preaching and teaching in African languages, churches can ensure that the Gospel is proclaimed in a way that is more accessible and relatable to the congregations. This integration of African languages enhances the authenticity and relevance of the preaching experience. In rediscovering African spiritual and theological traditions, African evangelical churches can benefit from this rediscovery that involves recognizing the wisdom and insights embedded within African cultural and religious practices and integrating them into the theological framework.

Overall, these implications call for a shift towards a more inclusive, culturally relevant, and authentic theological landscape in African evangelical churches. By embracing



indigenous cultural expressions, integrating African languages, and rediscovering African spiritual and theological traditions, churches can foster a more profound sense of identity, belonging, and connection within their congregations. This shift allows for a more holistic and enriched theological discourse that reflects African Christians' diverse realities and experiences.

It is important to note that these implications should be approached with sensitivity and respect for each community's particular cultural contexts and traditions. Collaboration with local leaders, theologians, and scholars is crucial in incorporating indigenous cultural expressions and reclaiming African theological identity within the specific context of each African evangelical church. These implications contribute to the decolonization and contextualization of theology and preaching, enabling African evangelical churches to authentically engage with their cultural heritage and create spaces for spiritual growth, empowerment, and transformative worship experiences.

Recommendation for African Evangelical Churches

The following recommendations apply to churches seeking to decolonize their preaching and embrace a more inclusive, culturally relevant, and authentic theological landscape. First, intentionally incorporate indigenous languages into preaching and worship services. This practice allows for a deeper connection with the cultural and contextual realities of the congregation. It demonstrates respect for local languages and fosters a sense of belonging and ownership within the community.

Second, promote local cultural expressions by encouraging the integration of local cultural expressions, such as art, music, dance, and storytelling, into worship and theological discourse. This promotes celebrating and affirming African cultural heritage within the church community. It also creates spaces for congregants to express their faith in ways that resonate with their cultural identities. Third, foster dialogue and collaboration between traditional and decolonized theological perspectives through forums, conferences, or workshops that bring together theologians, scholars, pastors, and community leaders. These spaces allow for the exchange of ideas, the exploration of diverse theological perspectives, and the development of a more inclusive and contextually grounded theological discourse.



Fourth, engage with African theological scholarship by encouraging pastors, preachers, and church leaders to engage with African theological scholarship. This includes reading and studying the works of African theologians who have explored decolonization, contextualization, and indigenous knowledge for valuable insights and practical strategies for decolonizing preaching. Fifth, empower local leadership by providing opportunities for theological training and education rooted in the African context. Also, by equipping local pastors and preachers with the necessary tools and knowledge, they can effectively lead the decolonization process within their congregations.

Sixth, embrace contextual preaching by encouraging pastors and preachers to develop a contextually relevant preaching style. This involves addressing the congregation's needs, questions, fears, challenges, and aspirations within their cultural and socio-political context. Contextual preaching ensures that the message of the Gospel is communicated in ways that resonate with the lived experiences of the congregation.

Seventh, practice theological reflection by promoting the practice of theological reflection within the church community. Congregants can be encouraged to critically engage with biblical texts, theological concepts, and social issues from their African perspective. This reflective process allows for a deeper understanding of the intersection between faith and culture and fosters the development of a decolonized theological framework.

These practical recommendations provide a starting point for African evangelical churches to decolonize their preaching and embrace a more inclusive and authentic theological landscape. It is essential to recognize that this process requires time, patience, and ongoing commitment from church leaders, pastors, and the congregation. By implementing these recommendations, churches can create transformative spaces that honour African cultural heritage, empower their congregants, and foster a deeper connection with God in a contextually relevant manner.



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