

**African Christianity in Historical,  
Missiological and Theological  
Witness**

**Spring Course at Andover Newton School**

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**Andover Newton Theological School**  
**Newton Center**  
**Massachusetts**  
**Course Outline- 2009**  
**Spring Semester**  
**Jan – April 2009**

**Course Title: African Christianity** (African Christianity in Historical, Missiological and Theological Witness )

**Instructor: Musonda Bwalya, PhD, Visiting Judson Professor for 2008 – 2009**

**On-Campus Course**

**Prerequisites:**

1. Class attendance: Students are required to attend all classes, except where special permission is granted.
2. Class participation[ 10 %]: Students are encouraged to participate in all class discussions and present a 2 to 3 pages class paper, based on any unit or element of the course.
3. Major Paper[ 90%]: Students are expected to write a major paper of 8 – 10 pages on any unit or element of the course outline. This should be well-researched and should conform to minimum technical requirements for academic essays and projects, approved by Andover Newton.

**Course Description:** The course surveys and critiques key aspects in the historical progress of Christianity on the continent of Africa. Particular attention is given to the analysis of conventional missiological paradigms in the Christianization of the continent of Africa in order to assist students of theology develop more adequate and suitable methodologies for *the study of the Christian religion in context*. This course further engages in a critical-evaluative-constructive discussion of key concerns and challenges in African Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The course encourages students of theology to construct viable theologies of life which address real questions of African peoples in order to enable them move towards fuller lives.

**General Course Objectives:**

1. To survey and critique key aspects in the historical progress of Christianity on the continent of Africa.
2. To analyze conventional missiological paradigms in the Christianization of the continent of Africa.

3. To begin to develop more adequate and suitable methodologies for the study of the Christian Religion in Context.
4. To critically evaluate key concerns and challenges in African Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
5. To begin to construct viable theologies of life.

**Specific Course Outcomes For Students:** At the end of the course, students should be able to :

1. Survey and critique key aspects in the historical progress of Christianity on the continent of Africa in order to support the strengthening of the profiles of African churches in relation to the global ecclesial family .
2. Analyze conventional missiological paradigms in the Christianization of the continent of Africa in order to help African churches begin to embrace what is truly authentic in relation to other continental ecclesial movements.
3. Develop more adequate and suitable methodologies for *the study of the Christian Religion in Context* in order to enrich the historical, missiological and theological witness of African Christianity in relation to global Christianity.
4. Evaluate key concerns and challenges in African Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in order to help African Churches move to authenticity.
5. Construct viable theologies of life in order to enable African peoples move towards fuller lives.

**Course Format:** Will consist mainly of class lectures, discussions, readings, handouts and class presentations, based on the following study units and elements:

### **Unit I: Historical Progress of Christianity in Africa**

1. Element One: Introduction to the Course:  
Defining and Describing what African Christianity is all about
2. Element Two: African Christianity in Historical Witness:
  - The land and peoples of Africa in historical witness:  
**Read[required]:** Groves[1948]
  - The religious heritage of African peoples: **Read[required]:** Mbiti[1975] pp 2 – 59, **Recommended:** , Mbiti[1969] pp 29 – 9, Mbiti[1970] pp 3 – 85, Idowu[1973] pp 1 – 75, 108 – 202, Parrinder[1962], Wariboko[2008] *on the Theory of God* pp 35 – 66.
  - The circuitous nature of global Christianity in historical witness:  
class paper by Musonda Bwalya, PhD
3. Element Three: Special Note on North African Christianity

- **Read[required]:** Isichei[1995] pp 13 – 44, Groves[1948] 31- 54, 55- 68, 69 - 89
4. Element Four: Special Note on the Portuguese and Coastal areas of Africa
    - **Read[required]:** Isichei[1995] pp 45- 46, 52- 54, Grooves[1948] pp 114 - 138
  5. Element Five: The European Revivalist Movement, European Liberalism and the Christianization of Africa – The Path-breaking Roles of David Livingstone and Samuel Ajayi Crowther
    - **Read[required]:** Grooves[1948] pp 178 – 196, 197 – 232, Isichei[1995] pp 74 – 84, 84 – 88, 221 – 223, Bwalya[2001] pp 183 -185
    - **Read[required]:** Isichei[1995] pp 136 – 140, 171 – 174, Baur pp 120 – 125, 196 – 214, Bwalya[2001] pp 176 – 180
    - **Read [Recommended]:** Dictionary of African Christian Biography on-line @ < [www.dacb.org](http://www.dacb.org) > “David Livingstone” and “Samuel Ajayi Crowther”
  6. Element Six: Colonization and The Missionary Movement in Africa
    - **Read[required]:** Isichei pp 233 – 237, Baur pp 279 - 287
  7. Element Seven: The Birth of Missionary Churches and Denominationalism in Post-Colonial Africa
    - **Read[required]:** Isichei[1995] pp 237 – 241, Mugambi pp 12 – 27, Maluleke in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 11 - 44

## **Unit II: Conventional Missiological Paradigms in the Christianization of Africa**

1. Element One: Evangelism through Education and the Impact of Education on the African *Psyche*
  - **Read[required]:** Chuba[2005] pp 99- 106, Mugambi[1989] pp 36 – 49, Bwalya[2001] pp 181 – 189, Chuba[draft] pp 36 - 41
  - **Read[recommended]:** Ragsdale[1986] pp 28 - 43
2. Element Two: Christianization through Health Centers and the Impact of Health Centers on Traditional Medical Practices
  - **Read[required]:** Chuba[2005] pp 99 – 106, Mugambi[1989] pp 36 – 49], Chuba[draft] pp 20 - 21
3. Element Three: Christianization through Church Work and The Impact of Church Work on African Socio-Political-Economic Life
  - **Read[required]:** Chuba[2005] pp 99 – 106, Mugambi[1989] pp 36 – 49, Zorn[2004] pp17 – 27, 28 - 43
4. Element Four: The Post-modern Paradigm of Mission in David Bosch
  - **Read[required]:** Bosch[1991] pp 349 - 362

## **Unit III: The Christian Religion and The African Context: Quest For Adequate And Suitable Study Methodologies**

1. Element One: The Judeo-Christian Tradition and Its Radicalization in the African Soil
  - **Read[required]:** Maluleke in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 11 – 23, Bediako[2004] pp 20 – 33, 34 – 45, Mugambi[1989] pp 50 - 55
2. Element Two: Movement Towards Reclaiming African Authenticity
  - **Read[required]:** Bediako[1995] pp 3 – 16, 39 – 58, 59 - 74
3. Element Three: The Task and Method of Theology in Africa: Towards a Contextual Approach
  - **Read[required]:** Bediako[1995] pp 75 – 86, Maluleke in Kalu[ed](2005) pp 469 – 493, Hand-out on the contextual theological methodology
4. Element Four: The Social Scientific Research Method in Africa
  - **Read[required]:** Bless and Achola pp 1 – 8, 9 - 15

#### **Unit IV: Evolution of Theologies of Transformation**

1. Element One: African Christianity at the Crossroads
  - **Read[required]:** Masango in Bwalya *et al.* pp 149 – 158, Mombo in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 159 – 179, Bediako[1995] pp 91 – 108, 109 – 124, 126 – 151, 152 - 171
2. Element Two: The Role of African Christianity in the Transformation of the Continent of Africa
  - **Read[required]:** Bediako[195] pp 172 – 187 and Bwalya[2001] pp 224 - 239

#### **Unit V: Authentic Ecclesial Identity in Africa**

1. Element One: Dealing with Authentic Ecclesial Identity
  - **Read[required]:** Paper presentation by Musonda Bwalya, PhD
2. Element Two: Biblical Hermeneutics and The African Hermeneutics of Identity
  - **Read[required]:** Paper Presentation by Musonda Bwalya, PhD
  - **Read[recommended]:** Mbiti[1986] pp 46 - 66
3. Element Three: Lessons from African Instituted Churches[AICs]
  - **Read[required]:** Adogame and Jafta in Kalu(ed) pp309 – 329,
  - **Read[recommended]:** Chuba[draft] pp 46 - 65

#### **Unit VI: Creative Encounter With the Western World**

1. Element One: A critical Assessment of Westernization and its legacy on Africa
  - **Read[required]:** Paper Presentation by Musonda Bwalya, PhD
2. Element Two: The Continental Search for African Authenticity

- **Read[required]:** Oduyoye in Otieno and McCullum(eds)[2005] pp xiii - xx
- 3. Element Three: Quest For Suitable Notions of Political Rule and Democracy
  - **Read[required]:** Bediako[1995] pp 234 - 251
- 4. Element Four: African Churches as “Counter-Colonial Movements”
  - **Read[required]:** Bediako[1995] pp 252 - 267

#### **Unit VII: Economic Globalization**

1. Element One: The Struggle For African Existence in a Globalized World: From Political Liberation to Economic Liberation
  - **Read[required]:** Otieno and McCullum(eds)[2005] pp 38 – 58, WCC Report on Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth[2006] pp 7 - 27
2. Element Two: ‘Growth from own Resources’
  - **Read[required]:** Paper Presentation by Musonda Bwalya, PhD
3. Element Three: Obstacles to an economically-liberated Africa: The Incidence of HIV/AIDs and related Diseases
  - **Read[required]:** Otieno and McCullum(eds)[2005] pp 59 – 72, Mahlangu-Nchobo in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 473 – 476, Phiri in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 477 – 488, Mundle in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 489 - 493

#### **Unit VIII: African Leadership**

1. Element One: Towards the Re-birth of The New African Leadership
  - **Read[required]:** Mombo in Bwalya *et al.*[eds] pp 173 – 174, Chuba[draft] pp 20- 23
  - **Read[recommended]** Isichei[1995] pp 339 – 352
2. Element Two: The Role of Women Leaders
  - **Read[required]:** Nyoroge in Kalu(ed) pp 446 - 467
3. Element Three: The Re-orientation of Education and Cultural Paradigms in Leadership formation
  - **Read[required]:** Paper Presentation by Musonda Bwalya, PhD
4. Element Four: African Churches as “Instruments of Socio-Political-Economic Critique” in a society prone to human injustice and corruption
  - **Read[required]:** Otieno and McCullum(eds)[2005] pp 73 – 88

#### **Unit IX: Re-Orienting African Christianity**

1. Element One: The All Africa Council of Churches[AACC] Agenda
  - **Read[required]:** Otieno and McCullum(eds)[2005] pp 89 - 99
2. Element Two: Towards All-inclusive, All-affirming Theologies of Life
  - **Read[required]:** Otieno and McCullum(eds)[2005] appendix One

**Relationship to Current Curriculum:** This course connects well to current curriculum in that:

1. It enables students of theology to specifically engage with and explore the incidence of the Christian Religion on the continent of Africa in relation to other contexts.
2. The course further gives analytical, evaluative and constructive tools to students of theology which are necessary in evolving adequate theologies in the practice and progress of World Christianity

**Scheduled Class Time:** 2:30pm to 5pm, every other Wednesday, beginning 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 till 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2009; Final week of April will be the final week of submitting the major paper by 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2009, 4pm, which will be marked and submitted to the Registrar's Office as part of the final semester mark. *Nota bene:* there will be no exams!

## **Core Bibliography:**

- Baur, J.[1994]. **2000 Years of Christianity in Africa**. Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines.
- Bediako, K.[1995]. **Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion**. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.
- Bediako, K.[2004]. **Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience**. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.
- Bless, C. and Achola, P.[1990]. **Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective**. Lusaka, Zambia: Government Printer.
- Bosch, D.J.[1991]. **Transforming Mission**. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.
- Bwalya, B.S.[2008]. **God of our fathers is our God: African Christian Theology in Practice**, draft.
- Bwalya, M. et al. **Evangelism or Development: Interpreting Christian Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**. Eldoret, Kenya: Zapf Chancery[being published].
- Chuba, B.S.[2005]. **A History of Early Christian Missions and Church Unity in Zambia**. Ndola, Zambia: Mission Press.
- Groves, C.P.[1948]. **Planting of Christianity in Africa**. London: Lutterworth.
- Idowu, E.B.[1973]. **African Traditional Religion**. Maryknoll, New York.
- Isichei, E.[1995]. **A History of Christianity in Africa**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans.
- Kalu, O.U.[ed.][2005]. **African Christianity: An African Story**. Pretoria, South Africa: Dept of Church History at Pretoria University.
- Mbiti, J.[1969]. **African Religions and Philosophy**. New York, New York: Praeger.
- Mbiti, J.[1970]. **Concepts of God in Africa**. New York, New York: Praeger.
- Mbiti, J.[1975]. **Introduction to African Religion, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition**. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J.S.[1986]. **Bible and Theology in African Christianity**. Nairobi, Kenya: OUP.
- Mugambi, J.N.K.[1989]. **African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity**. Nairobi, Kenya: Longman.
- Otieno, N. and McCullum, H.[eds.][2005]. **Journey of Hope: Towards a New Ecumenical Africa**. Geneva: WCC.
- Parrinder, G.[1962]. **African Traditional Religion**. London: SPCK.
- Ragsdale, J.P.[1986]. **Protestant Mission Education in Zambia: 1880 – 1954**. Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Press.
- Wariboko, N.[2008]. **The Depth and Destiny of Work: An African Theological Interpretation**. Trenton, New Jersey.
- WCC.[2007]. **Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth[AGAPE]: Consultation on Linking Poverty, Wealth and Ecology: African Ecumenical Perspectives**, 05- 09 November, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a report.
- Zorn, J-F.[2004]. **The Transforming Gospel: The Mission of Francois Coillard and Basuto Evangelists in Barotseland**. Geneva: WCC.



**Additional reading:**

Fashole-Luke, E. et al.[eds].[1978]. ***Christianity in Independent Africa***. London: Rex Collings.

Garvey, B.[1994]. ***Bembaland Church: Religious and Social Change in South Central Africa, 1891 – 1964***.Leiden: EJ Brill.

Isichei,E.[ 2004]. ***The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History***. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

Karamaga, A.[ed].[1991]. ***Problems and Promises in Africa***. Nairobi, Kenya: AACC.

Mugambi, J.N.K. and Magesa, L.[1998]. ***The Church in African Christianity: Innovative Essays in Ecclesiology, second edition***. Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers.

Namwera, L. et al.[1990]. ***Towards African Christian Liberation***. Nairobi, Kenya.

Oden, T.C.[2007]. ***How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity***. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP.

Oduyoye, M.A.[2004]. ***Beads and Strands: Reflections of an African Woman on Christianity in Africa***. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis.

Oosthuizen, C.G.[1979]. ***Afro-Christian Religions***.Leiden: EJ Brill.

Pobee, J. and Ositelu II, J.[1998]. ***African Initiatives in Christainity***.Geneva: WCC.

Shorter, A.[1975]. ***African Christian Theology***. London: Geoffrey Chapman.

Sindima, H.J.[1994]. ***Drums of Redemption: An Introduction to African Christianity***. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Sundkler, B. and Steed, C.[2000]. ***A History of the Church in Africa***. United Kingdom: CUP.