

# CHRIST IN AFRICA: THE INFLUENCE OF MULTI-CULTURITY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST.

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## 1 THE TOPIC

The topic at our disposal is, in my opinion, somewhat *elastic*. Its content can go in various chosen directions. Although I shall allow the topic to remain as it stands, I shall concentrate more on South Africa than Africa in general. There is a level at which the phrase, "*Christ in Africa*" is a slogan<sup>1</sup>. It can be used variously and divergently. That means, the topic is both multi-faceted and controversial. I have chosen to consider mainly the basic issues implied and assumed in the question of Christ in Africa. This means that instead of discussing the topic directly I shall ask basic questions related to implications and prior assumptions. In short, I shall, more or less, complicate the topic further. But I do not do this for fun. I think that it is important to be analytical and critical of familiar and apparently innocent topics. For us in South Africa, this topic is important enough to warrant such an approach.

I have divided my paper into two broad sections. *In the first section, five valid and possible directions towards which the topic of 'Christ in Africa' could veer are introduced. Without dealing exhaustively with any of these five directions, significant issues in each are outlined. I also make some suggestions. In the second section, I concentrate on the issue of multiculturalism. This issue is dealt with under four different perspectives. Finally, I present some concluding thoughts and proposals. Rather than clog the topic with elaborate propositions and exhaustive evaluations, I have been mindful of the fact that*

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1 I am using the word slogan in a very loose sense namely that slogans in and of themselves communicate little, rather they are 'ice berg tips'. The million dollar question is of course, what the 'iceberg' is.

in this paper my job is to introduce rather than pronounce the final word on the subject.

### **1.1. Where do we start? Missionary Experiences Or African Culture?**

The phrase 'Christ in Africa' can be used to denote the sum-total achievements and experiences of Euro-Western missionaries and churches in Africa since the 18th century - i.e. a discussion of missionaries and the legacy of their activities. This use of the phrase is in fact quite common because it is generally assumed that Christ's arrival in Africa can be dated<sup>2</sup> together with European arrival in Africa<sup>3</sup>. Understandably the role of missionaries, merchants and colonialists in bringing 'Christ to Africa' is most controversial. The controversy, as I have already hinted sometimes deteriorates to the most basic question: Did they really bring Christ to Africa? Of course, theologically speaking, as Kraft (1979) has pointed out, missionaries have been amazed again and again, all over the world, that wherever they went, 'Christ had been there before them'. But what does that mean? Is this a 'historical' truth or a 'spiritual' truth? The main tendency is to think about the possibility of Christ being in Africa long before the missionaries arrived as a 'spiritual' rather than a 'historical' truth. Thus we have a situation where there are two possible starting points into an inquiry of Christ in Africa - African culture or the missionary enterprise. First, there are those who subscribe to the notion of 'Christ' or 'God' being in Africa before the missionaries arrived. For those, the starting point in a discussion about Christ in Africa is more likely to be African traditional culture and pre-colonial Africa. Secondly, there are those who regard the pre-colonial presence of Christ in Africa as a 'spiritual' rather than a 'historical' matter. For such people, the Western missionary enterprise is often the starting point.

Both paths have their hazards. Those who take the Western Missionary Enterprise as a starting point for an inquiry into Christ in Africa; invariably have to deal with issues such as: missionary collusion with colonialism,

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2 For an attempt to debunk this established theory and point out its incongruity in terms of religious history, see Kalu, (1988).

3 See, Du Plessis (1911) and De Gruchy (1979), for example. Both their histories, perhaps inadvertently, connect the 'beginnings' of Christianity in South Africa to colonial presence in Southern Africa.

racism, capitalistic exploitation and missionary cultural ethnocentrism. They also have to deal with questions such as: What happened to Christ whom the missionaries brought to Africa when missionaries joined forces with colonialism, racists, and capitalists<sup>4</sup>? Secondly what happened to Africans and their culture under the impact of these forces - forces which simultaneously brought 'Christ' to them? Thirdly, what have been the implications of these circumstances for the kind of 'Christianity' that took root in Africa<sup>5</sup>? These are very real issues not just about the past but about today.

Those who proceed from the premise (especially African theologians) that pre-colonial African traditions and cultures are our basic point of departure in understanding Christ in Africa<sup>6</sup>, have also to deal with such issues as; the lack of records (especially records by Africans) on pre-colonial African traditions and religions, the daunting challenges of oral records, the fact that African culture and traditions, like other cultures, have not been static, but dynamic. Therefore, the danger of 'romanticising the African past' becomes real<sup>7</sup>. There are two distinct calls for caution with the manner in which the African past is considered. *Firstly*, there are those who call for caution against romanticism because it diverts attention from the present African realities of oppression and suffering<sup>8</sup>. Black theologians have been in the forefront of this particular call for caution against romanticism. Yet there is a sense in which even this kind of romanticism is understandable<sup>9</sup> though not necessarily 'acceptable'. How else would Black and African Christians people cope with the contradiction between the Biblical gospel and the life they lived in Apartheid South Africa for example. African Initiated churches are, for example, often chided for 'living in the African past' and construing the

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4 See Majeke (1952), Cochrane (1987) and Villa Vicencio (1988).

5 See Boulaga (1984).

6 At least two different ways of using the Africa's past, traditions and cultures as a point of departure. The one way accepts the perceptions of missionaries and Western theological traditions on Africa culture as authoritative. [The question is: Is this really different from using missionary experiences as a starting point?] The other way, is to regard missionary perceptions with 'suspicion', preferring other paths to reconstruct the African past such as oral tradition.

7 Buthelezi (1976).

8 Thus Buthelezi (1976:62) differentiates between "psychologically "living in the past in order to compensate for the ... existential emptiness of the present ... and "living in the past" because it is able to offer something substantial..."

9 See Mosala (1985).

Christian faith as an 'escape' from present realities. But what is wrong with such a 'use' of the Christian faith if it helps people cope with a hostile environment without trading with their faith? This question is specifically significant if we understand religion not only in the Marxian sense of it being *the opium* of the people<sup>10</sup> (though even opium can be a good and effective pain-killer) but also in the Weberian sense of seeing religion as a "creative, change-generating" force amongst the poor<sup>11</sup>.

*Secondly*, there are those who call for caution against heavy reliance on the African past simply because they see little practical value in the African past. Those who see little value in the African past suppose that since being Black and African today is so radically different from whatever it might have meant two hundred years ago, the real value of the African past is negligible<sup>12</sup>. This reality coupled with the practical problems of reconstructing an African past reduces the African past to something to be studied as far as possible, but certainly not something to detain us for too long. Can 'Africa' have a present without a past? I do not think so.

The question that confronts us is: Can we even begin to talk about 'Christ in Africa' unless we acknowledge the reality of Africa as culturally (at least) distinct from Europe and America, not only three hundred years ago but today? Does not the question of 'Christ in Africa' require of us to take Africa, and Africanness very seriously?, assuming of course that we do take Christ seriously already. If we do not take Africa and being African seriously, it seems to me that talk of 'Christ' and of 'Africa' will be hollow. The implications of such a stance are numerous. A valid conception of Christ in Africa is one that will move away from preoccupation with the activities of missionaries in Africa. This means that African culture becomes a pivotal source of the African experience of Christ. African Independent Churches become 'African' rather than merely non-Western churches. Is it not true that those Christian traditions and confessions that have not taken Africa and

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10 Even this Marxian expression needs to be read in context of other issues that Marx raises on religion. It may not be an altogether negative verdict on religion. (See Bender 1972:45-52).

11 See Villa-Vicencio 1988:188.

12 In the Apartheid context the possibility is real that the degree of generated self-hate amongst Africans may be such that it may become embarrassing for some Africans to trace themselves to an African past.

Africannes seriously are under threat of extinction if present trends do not change<sup>13</sup>?

## 1.2. African appropriation of 'Christ'.

"Christ in Africa" may yet be a manner of speech designed as a discussion starter on the way in which Africans, in general, have *received or not received, corrupted, appropriated, contextualised* or even *sharpened* the Christian faith that was brought to them by white missionaries. There is a level at which even today - to be truly Christian means not to be truly African. The subject of Christ in Africa is essentially a discussion of African forms of Christianity. Yet it is not possible even to see African forms of Christianity unless one thinks that Africa and Africannes can be a legitimate host and home for Christ - just like Europe and 'Europeanness'. Lip service about the validity of 'Africannes' as a container for 'Christ' abounds. This is the story of the failures of many ambitious projects to 'indigenise' African churches<sup>14</sup>. It is the story behind the call that a certain John Gatu of Kenya made in 1971 requesting that all missionary personnel should no longer come to Africa. Refusal to accept Africa as a valid home for 'Christ' is also behind many disastrous attempts to create 'partnership' between Western and African churches - White and Black Churches. As already hinted above this means that phenomena such as the so-called African Independent Churches<sup>15</sup> must be re-considered<sup>16</sup>. Verdicts previously passed on these churches must be re-opened. Established descriptions of these churches such as: 'other-worldly', 'separatist', 'syncretistic'<sup>17</sup>, independent<sup>18</sup> and 'sect' must be abandoned.

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13 See Anderson (1993).

14 See Buthelezi (1976).

15 The African Independent Churches, earlier called the Separatist Churches (Sundkler (1948)) lately called, at least by one prominent scholar, the African Initiated Churches (Daneel 1987), are generally regarded as the 'purest expression of African Christianity. See also, Anderson (1991) (1992) (1993).

16 See Sundkler (1948), Daneel (1987), Anderson (1991, 1992, 1993).

17 In 1948, Sundkler had described them as a bridge by which African return to their pagan past.

18 A few scholars of these churches, are uncomfortable with the adjective 'independent' since it describes these churches in terms of what they are not, i.e that of which they are

Underlying these descriptions is the notion that the Western church-type and Western Christendom is the standard of what it means to be Christian. Often, dubious forms of Western 'Christianity' will be tolerated, whereas the slightest 'deviation' from (Western) tradition by African Christians will be looked upon with much suspicion and ridicule. Pockets of 'Africanised' Christianity even within the so-called 'mission churches' and the so-called 'English-speaking churches' must begin to be taken seriously. The pre-funeral-day night vigils, the foot-stamping, the repetitive choruses, the ceremonies of 'taking off the black mourning clothes', the peculiarly African preaching style, the *Manyano* and the *Amadodana* traditions, the funeral 'celebration' etc. These events and practices must begin to be taken seriously as valid African appropriations of Christianity. These must find their ways both into theology books and worship books. More than these, the emerging theologies of Africa must be accepted as valid<sup>19</sup>. Technically this includes what is termed Black Theology (prevalent in North America and South Africa) and African Theology. Unless we take all these as valid, we have not, in my opinion even begun to consider Christ in Africa.

### 1.3 Culture of Blacks vs Culture of Whites?

The phrase, 'Christ in Africa' may be an invitation for us to talk about the 'culture of Blacks' and how this culture has responded to 'Christ'. [Both the issues of culture and whites as Africans will be discussed separately below]. The perspective in such an approach would be one of drawing sharp distinctions between 'the culture of Blacks' and 'the culture of whites', with the 'noble' aim of clarifying the Black culture by contrasting it with White culture. This approach can also be used to demonstrate how different 'the ways of the Blacks' is from the 'ways of the Whites'<sup>20</sup>. For me, culture means everything about human beings. The only qualification I would add is this: The 'culture' of a given community is not necessarily the product of, or the consensus of, all members of that community.

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Independent - namely White churches and Western missionary organisations. (cf Daneel (1987).

19 See Mbiti (1976).

20 Attie van Niekerk's infamous book "Saam in Afrika" is such an approach that uses contrasts in order both to clarify and distinguish between 'white' and 'black' culture.

**In South Africa, with its Apartheid background, Whites and Blacks have for years lived physically apart. This means that deliberate and legal policies have been enforced, in various ways to ensure that Blacks and Whites exists apart. In that limited and forced extent, there is room to talk about two 'cultures', one White and the other Black. But we need to appreciate both the artificial and the discriminative nature of this separation of Blacks from Whites. [In fact in all of colonial Africa the separation of Whites from Blacks has been discriminative]. But if we confuse this discriminative and often racist 'separation' as a natural situation owing to 'cultural' differences we end up with an embarrassing situation to explain. 'Cultural' differences between Blacks and Whites are indicated by things such as:**

- (a) Blacks live in places like Soweto and Phola Park ; Whites live in places like Sandton and Turffontein.**
- (b) Blacks speak Zulu, bad English and a little Afrikaans while Whites speak English and Afrikaans.**
- (c) Eighteen Blacks can live in one small room, but two White children cannot live in one room.**
- (d) Black Christians can worship under a tree, but White Christians always worship in big churches.**
- (e) Whites have cars and big houses and need more money to maintain them, but blacks either walk or use taxis therefore they need less money.**
- (f) Blacks believe in witchcraft and commit ritual murders, while whites believe in science and never kill human beings (at least not without a good 'motive'.**
- (g) Whites like 'Braai Vleis' and Blacks like eating pap and sour milk.**
- (h) Blacks are loud and Whites are quiet and considerate.**
- (i) Black names are 'words' with meaning, whereas White names are 'names'.**
- (j) Blacks steal, rob and kill while Whites are decent hard workers.**
- (k) Blacks sing well but Whites cannot sing.**
- (l) Hypocrisy is a virtue among Blacks, whereas honesty and forthrightness is the trademark of Whites.**
- (m) Blacks are emotional and whites are logical.**

I could go on with more typical examples of 'cultural differences'. But, most of these 'cultural' differences are either exaggerations or environment-induced. South Africans, Black and White like Braai-vleis. South African Christians, if they could have it their way would not like to worship under a tree. The reason that most Whites cannot speak Sotho is not really a cultural matter. Those who must and want to can speak Sotho without mutilating their tongues. Do Whites not commit ritual murder? What about the now common family killings. Do Whites have a scientific rather than a superstitious mind? What is so scientific about the Voortrekker monument and the solemn occasions held in it year after year? Are Whites logical, well we have just had an election campaign in South Africa and many Whites were not always logical in their arguments.

While there may indeed be some differences between White and Black South Africans, I think that, apart from those induced by artificial and racist separation, White and Black South Africans have many common 'cultural' traits. The onus is upon those who propagate a dichotomous view of cultural differences between Black and White South Africans to be forthcoming with credible cultural differences.

In our context, the question of 'Christ in Africa' must therefore be understood to refer to how; Black and White Christians, in the light of past discrimination, racism and artificial separation, can together as participants in a largely 'homogeneous culture'<sup>21</sup>, perceive, receive and proclaim Christ.

#### 1.4 Christological Debate?

The phrase 'Christ in Africa' can, technically speaking, solicit a discussion on what theologians have called 'Christology'<sup>22</sup> meaning the doctrine of Christ. Under this option, the main questions would be: What is distinctive of the way in which Africans understand Christ, his 'person', his incarnation, his saving work (soteriology). The very choice of the term 'Christ' is curious. Why 'Christ' and not 'Jesus of Nazareth'? Christologically, already, this

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21 Culture is here understood in dynamic rather than static terms. Therefore the economic and political basis of 'cultural differences' must be appreciated.

22 Africans have indeed been involved in Christological debate. (See for example, Mofokeng (1983), Daneel (1989) Schreier (1991).

choice of 'Christ' and no 'Jesus' is *unAfrican*<sup>23</sup>. Jesus of Nazareth, walked the streets of Tyre, Sydon, Galilea and Jericho. But 'Christ' is on the right hand of God. The former cried when he saw his friends, Mary and Martha crying for their deceased brother. 'Christ' invokes worship and admiration not evaluation. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. In the West over the ages, Christ has been, *Rabbi, the turning point of history, the light of the Gentiles, the King of Kings, the cosmic Christ, the Son of man, the true image, the monk who rules the world, the bridegroom of the soul, the divine human model, the Universal man, the mirror of the eternal, the Prince of peace, the teacher of common sense, the poet of the spirit and the man who belongs to the world* (Pelikan 1985). In a sense we can tell 'who' Christ is in Africa<sup>24</sup>, by looking at the 'pockets' of Africanisation in the African forms of Christianity<sup>25</sup>. Unlike in the West, African Christology is very new and still developing. This means that the predominant manner in which Christ is understood in African remains largely Western - i.e. in forms I have just described above. In Africa, Christ is the *healer, liberator, ancestor, mediator, elder brother, the crucified one, head and master of initiation*<sup>26</sup> and the *Black Messiah*.

### 1.5 White Africans?

To talk of Christ in Africa need not imply an exclusive discussion about Black Africans. There are White Africans too. Of these the Afrikaners (some would say Boers) are perhaps the best known group. But they are by no means the only ones. The point is; the 'ways of White Africans' is different from the 'ways of White Europeans and White Americans'. Our talk about Christ in Africa should ideally include both such White Africans as well as Black Africans. I have already argued thus above. Therefore talking about Christ in Africa includes forms of Christianity found in the largely Afrikaner Reformed tradition. What is Africa's challenge to what Jaap Durand

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23 See Nyamiti (1991:12f.)

24 Pelikan (1985) gives a comprehensive discussion of the manner in which Western culture has accepted and conceived of Jesus over the centuries. His work is also excellently illustrated.

25 For different articles by different African theologians on Christology see Schreier (1991).

26 The climax of this initiation is His death and resurrection (cf Sanon 1991).

(1985:49) has called Dutch Reformed Church schizophrenia" - meaning "its concern for the social and political welfare of the Afrikaner people, on the one hand, and its apparent lack of concern for the same problems amongst blacks..."? What is Africa's challenge to the 'pietistic strain' that encourages withdrawal from the world in Afrikaner Christianity<sup>27</sup>? What is Africa's challenge to the English-speaking churches which have a tradition of protest without resistance<sup>28</sup>? What is the challenge of Black and African theologies for the White Church<sup>29</sup>? It seems to me that if we are to include under the rubric, Africa, white Christians, which we should, then these question present real challenges.

## 2. Multi-culturality and Culture

The vastness of possibilities under this topic is a serious methodological hazard. But it is also an indicator to the richness of the topic at hand. The subtitle, namely *the influence of multi-culturality on the experience of Christ* does not really help. In my opinion, the sub-title rather complicates the issues. The notion of multi-culturality is more complex than it looks. It depends very much on (a) what one wishes to convey by it, and (b) the use that one wishes to make of it. A common sense definition of multi-culturality would be that it points to the existence of multiple cultures. It acknowledges the existence of various cultures whilst pointing to the possibility for these cultures to exist alongside one another amicably. Several problems emerge, however.

2.1. *Firstly*, the notion of multi-culturism<sup>30</sup> presupposes the issue of what culture<sup>31</sup> is. It neither attempts to define culture nor acknowledge the problematic nature of the process of defining culture. In my opinion, even if we fail to define what we mean, by culture, we should at least be able to sketch out some issues and problematics in the process of defining culture. That

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27 See Saayman (1985:56) and Bosch (1984).

28 Villa Vicencio (1988).

29 See Kritzinger (1988).

30 i.e. Belief in the existence (and equality) of multiple cultures. For this more technical and 'postmodernist' understanding, dubbed 'multiculturalism' see West (1993).

31 A very helpful analysis of what 'culture' is, is offered by Schreier (1985). See also Luzbetak (1988) and Kraft (1979).

way, our understanding of culture does not become like a lump of clay in our hands - whose shape can be changed by a slight twitch in our fingers. This is precisely the danger inherent in this meta-term, multiculturalism.

2.2. *Secondly*, multiculturalism is a postmodern<sup>32</sup> concept. We must remember that a little more than a hundred years ago the word culture had a very distinct meaning. It referred to Euro-American life-style, its religion and its attendant 'civilisation'. Even by the turn of this century<sup>33</sup> the opposite of 'culture', meaning Euro-American civilisation, was denoted by words such as 'savage', 'pagan', 'barbaric', 'primitive'. When we find these words in general, church or mission historical works, they do not merely describe the religious state of the people being described; they specifically serve to disclose the cultural state of the people - more precisely their lack of culture. A 'barbaric' people is a culture-less people. A savage tribe is savage precisely because 'no cultural precepts and values inform the behaviour of such a tribe'. What has happened within the space of the past hundred or so years then? What has happened to the 'savage' and 'barbaric' tribes that filled many history and anthropological books? This is the question that the term, multiculturalism obscures<sup>34</sup>. Most of them have become, what we now call the Third World<sup>35</sup> - so we talk of 'Third world standards' and 'Third World peoples'. In this sense, multiculturalism is an attempt to file out the disturbing historical memory of the hegemonic dominance of a single culture versus several non-cultures. Has this situation completely changed in our times? I am not convinced that it has.

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32 Two excellent discussions of the (possible) influence of postmodernism specifically on the church and Christian missions are, Newbigin (1986) (1989) and Bosch (1991).

33 See Du Plessis (1911).

34 My reservations on the concept of multiculturalism do not derive from opposition to the view that accepts a multiplicity of cultures. It is precisely because of the tendency to 'romanticise' cultural multiplicity, in my opinion, inherent in this term, that I am uncomfortable with it. In this way, the term multiculturalism can be anti-multiple cultures insofar as it obscures the *power basis* of cultural multiplicity.

35 The term is not an imposed one. It was a consciously chosen one by political leaders of African, Asian and Latin American countries at Bandung in 1958 (cf Frostin 1988). This they did so as to distinguish themselves ideologically from the First and Second worlds which were engaging in a cold war.

2.3. *Thirdly*, as already hinted above, the notion of (a) valid and (b) equal cultures, built into multiculturalism, is more romantic than real. In America for example, everybody knows that it would be very difficult for either a confessed communist or a Muslim to become president. In our own country, no one would seriously attempt to make Venda culture normative in national ceremonies. It would be fiercely resisted. Nor would we, if we could help it, allow two lesbians to become president and first deputy president of our country. South Africa is to all intents and purposes, whatever that means, a Christian country. 'Christian culture' is *in* and all other cultures are tolerated. More seriously though, talk of multiculturalism does not eliminate the disproportionate power relations and power realities between various cultures, whichever way you define culture. Some cultures are more powerful than others. Some cultures have more money than others. Some cultures are more glossy and glitzy than others. We all enjoyed watching the film series "Gods must be crazy". It makes for a good laugh. But it is also designed to demonstrate how 'far back' Bushman culture is from our own. Bushmen can track thieves and wild animals, but we use helicopters to do that quicker and more efficiently. The romantic and harmonious notion of multi-cultures is a 'cover-up' both in relation to the past as well as in relation to the present. All these issues that I am raising precede the question of 'Christ in Africa'. It is these issues that influence and determine the manner in which Africa experiences, interprets and proclaims Christ.

2.4. *Fourthly*, the coinage 'Christ in Africa', at least in common usage, assumes that a 'pure gospel' unadulterated by 'culture' encountered Africa -or that Africa encountered an unadulterated Christ. Missionary and Euro-American agency in the bringing of the 'gospel' to Africa is not supposed to have interfered with the purity of the gospel and the uncontaminated Christ. This analysis is common to Western scholars who write with the aim of praising the efforts of Western missionaries. Sometimes those white scholars who write about African Independent Churches, with the aim of demonstrating African creativity in appropriating Christ, inadvertently commit the same mistake<sup>36</sup>. The equation therefore consists on the one hand, of the pure

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36 They do this when they seem to argue (cf Anderson 1993) that in the African Indigenous Church traditions, Africans have managed to 'strip the gospel' of all Western trappings -. i.e.

gospel (or Christ) and (barbaric) African culture. This equation is faulted. We know Christ through the incarnation. The christian gospel has been always wrapped around a culture. No such 'pristine gospel' ever existed apart from an 'incarnation' or 'culture'. The real issues in the phrase 'Christ in Africa' relate to how Euro-American culture encountered African culture. That is the package in which Christ was wrapped when He 'came' to Africa. A discussion of Christ in Africa therefore, necessarily includes, a discussion about Euro-Western civilisation. How did it help or frustrate the cause of the Gospel in Africa? How is it continuing to do that in our own times? It also include the role of colonialism since the gospel was often presented hand in hand with colonialism<sup>37</sup>. During our own times the influence of consumerism, pluralism, racism, urbanism, and materialism upon our African culture has become relevant in any discussion about Christ in Africa.

### 3 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS

As explained in the beginning, my approach has concentrated on basic, implied and assumed issues in the topic. Rather than plunge into telling stories about Christ in multi-cultural Africa, I have chosen to ask probing questions about the meaning, experience and possibilities of Christ in a supposedly multi-cultural South Africa. This is, in my opinion, a useful way of addressing an otherwise deceptively familiar topic which can easily become flat and elusive.

On the basis of the positions I have adopted on the issues raise in this paper, valid conceptions of Christ in Africa should be built upon at least some of the following propositions and realities:

- (a) Africa, its peoples, its culture, (pre-colonial) past and present as well as all its peoples must be taken seriously as a valid and creative 'host' of Christ. This means challenging and going beyond Euro-Western conceptions of Africa even if these are held by Africans.

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they have finally appropriated the 'naked' gospel which they are supposed to be now applying to their context.

37 See Majeke (1952).

- (b) African forms of Christianity such as those represented by African Initiated Churches and the 'pockets' of Africanisation within the so-called 'main-line churches', must be accepted as valid and creative forms of Christianity. The phase of 'describing'<sup>38</sup>, 'othering' and 'apologising' on behalf of these forms of Christianity must come to an end.
- (c) African theologies deserve the same acceptance accorded to Euro-Western and Latin American theologies. This means that African must begin to 'do' African theology. These must become the over-arching frameworks in all African theological research and discourse.
- (d) The continued dualistic and often racist and exploitative view of culture as being the culture of the *West versus the* 'non-cultures' of the *rest* must be challenged and rejected in whatever form it masquerades. Even if it presents itself in the language of multiculturalism, this view must be rejected.
- (e) Already, Africans are 'enacting'<sup>39</sup> their Christology. We see these in the powerful healing ceremonies in such churches as the International Holiness Apostolic Church of Frederick Modise and the Zion Christian Church of Legkanyane. As they integrate their Christian faith with traditional beliefs, Africans are 'vocalising' their experience of Christ. On the theological front, Black and African theologies are doing the same. In Africa, Christ is not a 'rabbi', 'the monk who rules the world', 'the teacher of common sense', or the 'bridegroom of the soul'<sup>40</sup>. Christ in Africa is, the healer, the Black Messiah, the ancestor, the elder brother, the crucified one and the master of initiation.
- (f) White (and Black) African Christians, theologians and churches must begin to situate themselves epistemologically and contextually in Africa. For this to happen, Africa must cease to be something out there. This has implications both for the churches and theology. Both need to effect a kind of *epistemologica ruptura*<sup>41</sup> from the West.

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38 Started by Sundkler in 1948, but to a smaller extent by Du Plessis in 1911.

39 Daneel (1989) describes the total praxis of the African Initiated Churches as an enacted theology of liberation.

40 See Pelikan (1985).

41 See Frostin (1988).

- (g) The notion of multiculturalism must not be allowed to 'cover-up' the religious, socio-political, economical and power basis of 'cultural' differences. A valid view of the multiplicity of culture must include a keen awareness of the role of religions, politics, economy and power in fostering and sustaining a fair share of so-called cultural differences.

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