

Book Notes

Education in Mission/Mission in Education

A critical comparative study of selected approaches

by Dr Bongani Mazibuko

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In this volume Dr Mazibuko advocates a comprehensive concept of ministry which believes that effective mission belongs to the whole people of God, not just to a chosen few within the Church. Therefore the concern in theological education is to enable all people, men and women, ordained and lay, to perform their varied ministries. Where 'cultural power' hinders this interplay, power has to be met by power. Therefore the 'cultural power' in oral culture has to be recognised, released and articulated. It has to be seen as different from but equal to the formal power of received educational structures.

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Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa

by Dr Itumeleng Mosala

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This study seeks to investigate the use of the Bible in black theology in South Africa. It begins by judging the extent to which black theology's use of the Bible represents a clear theoretical break with white western theology.

The use of concepts like "the Word of God", "the Universality of the Gospel", "the particularity of the Gospel", "oppression and oppressors" and "the God of the Oppressed" in black theology, reveals a captivity to the ideological assumptions of white theology. It is argued that this captivity accounts for the current political impotence of black theology as a cultural weapon of struggle, especially in relation to the black working class struggle for liberation. Thus while it has been effective in fashioning a vision of liberation and providing a trenchant critique of white theology, it lacks the theoretical wherewithal to appropriate the Bible in a genuinely liberative way. This weakness is illustrated with a critical appraisal of the biblical hermeneutics of especially two of the most outstanding and outspoken

black theological activists in South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Dr Allan Boesak.

The fundamental weakness of the biblical hermeneutics of black theology is attributed to the social class position and commitments of black theologians. Occupying and committed to a petit bourgeois position within the racist capitalist social formation of South Africa, they share the idealist theoretical framework dominant in this class.

Thus in order for black theology to become an effective weapon of struggle for the majority of the oppressed black people, it must be rooted in the working class history and culture of these people. Such a base in the experiences of the oppressed necessitates the use of a materialist method that analyses the concrete struggles of human beings in black history and culture to produce and reproduce their lives within definite historical and material conditions.

The book undertakes such an analysis of the black struggle and of the struggles of biblical communities. For this purpose a materialist analysis of the texts of Micah and Luke 1 and 2 is undertaken. This is followed by an outline of a black biblical hermeneutical appropriation of the texts. It is concluded that the category of "struggle" is a fundamental hermeneutical tool in a materialist biblical hermeneutics of liberation. Using this category one can read the Bible backwards, investigating the questions of which its texts are answers, the problems of which its discourses are solutions. The point of a biblical hermeneutics of liberation is to uncover the struggles of which the texts are a product, a record, a site and a weapon. For black theology, the questions and concepts needed to interrogate the biblical texts in this way must be sought in the experiences of the most oppressed and exploited in black history and culture. What form such an exercise may take is illustrated by a study of the book of Micah and Luke 1 and 2. Two significant findings follow. The class and ideological contradictions of black history and culture necessitate the emergency of a plurality of black theologies of liberation. Similar contradictions in the Bible necessitate a plurality of contradictory hermeneutical appropriations of the same texts.