

IZIKO LAMAKRESTO LOMZANTSI AFRIKA IFO LA BA KRESTE AFRIKA BORWA

PROGRAMME

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1804

NOTES ON SYMPOSIUM: 13-14 August, 1976

Notes on suggested themes, speakers, enrolment form and programme for the Symposium are herein enclosed. The main theme of the Symposium is an "ENCOUNTER OF AFRICAN RELIGION WITH CHRISTIANITY". The goal is to find concrete plans of a study programme to evolve a syllabus for Black Theological Students generally and the isolated African Independent Churches Students in particular.

SUGGESTED SYMPOSIUM THEMES AND SPEAKERS

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AFRICAN RELIGION

1. Bishop I.P.B. Mokoena: Chairman of the South African Theological College of Independent Churches (SATCIC) Governing Board.
2. Rev. L. Mdzekeli: General Secretary of the African Independent Churches Association (AICA).

B. AFRICAN CULTURE (Tradition, values, norms)

1. Br. Aubrey Mokoena: Regional Director of the Black Community Programmes (BCP) in Transvaal.
2. Mrs. W. Kgware: First past President of the Black People's Convention (BPC).

C. AFRICAN MYTHOLOGY AND CHRIST

1. Rev. D.D.L. Makhathini: Rector of the Lutheran Theological College, Maphumulo, Natal.

D. AFRICAN WORSHIP AND MODERNISATION

1. Father J.B. Sebidi: Rector of St. Peter's Catholic Seminary, Hammanskraal
2. Rev. H. Ngakane: Director of Mission and Evangelism, S.A.C.C.

E. COLONISATION OF AFRICAN RELIGION

1. Rev. S. Gqubule: President of the Federal Seminary, Edendale.
2. Rev. T.S. Farisani: Second past President of the Black People's Convention (BPC).

All correspondence to be addressed to the Secretary

ENCOUNTER OF AFRICAN RELIGION WITH CHRISTIANITY

The main aim and objectives that caused our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus to come to the earth was to establish the Kingdom of God, and His innocent blood was shed for establishment of the heavenly kingdom on earth. The main aim and objective of the early white missionaries to introduce Christianity to the aborigines of Southern Africa was to spread these "Good News" to all nations of the world. The Ten Commandments were used as the basis for the formulation of the principles of this Kingdom hence Jesus teaches us that the main principle of the Kingdom is the love one should have for his God with all one's heart, soul and mind and secondly, to love one's neighbour as oneself. This means that all Christians are called upon to translate into action the Gospel's message that all people are God's people regardless of our race, to realise that the wealth of South Africa belongs to all God's children, to resist the temptations of that soul destroying vice, greed.

In this kingdom we have to realise that there is enough for all in South Africa, and as the children of one Father, we are called upon to share the wealth of our land. The Kingdom of God in South Africa can only be built on this foundation.

Let me put it to us all, that the Black people of South Africa had implemented this type of theology and philosophy of sharing, which Black people of South Africa either call African Socialism or Black Communalism before the arrival of White Settlers. Just as the early Christians in Jerusalem were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which they possessed was one's own, but they had everything in common, no Black person could ever starve in the midst of plenty food. Theology of sharing was the answer when the needy were exposed. But the early white Christians built another capitalistic-like foundation and black people began to be exploited.

The unsolved problem is that the first Black Christians agreed when the institutionalised church of the early Colonialists and Imperialists made it plain that everything "African", namely culture, traditions and norms was superstitious barbarism of heathens - not at all to be accepted by those Africans converted into Western Culture, traditions and norms which were introduced and sugar-coated as Christianity.

Black people were and are still thoroughly brainwashed and systematically indoctrinated into rejecting their traditional forms of dress, marriage, authority and social organisation. It therefore stood to reason that salvation was thus not in Jesus Christ alone but in accepting the new white man's culture and traditions, and that in order to be accepted by the White Jesus, Black people had to get rid of all their civilisation and accept Western Civilisation that is now on the verge of destroying humanity by means of dangerous bombs.

The effect of this was to give the Black people a sense of the inferiority that inherited in them as Africans. "This was compounded by two prominent strands in religious language - the inter-changeability of the words 'black and evil', and the prominence given to the nobility of servitude. The Black man learned that the two terms were synonymous but knew also that nothing could be done to change Black pigmentation.

The first Black victims were made to feel conscious that their blackness was a sign of their inferiority, as outcasts from the grace of God."

It is inevitable to reach the conclusion that the Church helped to colonise the minds of those who believe in Christ, and in the Church as much as in the State all rule and leadership was assumed by whites with very little resistance from the Black people.

Unfortunately under the weight of white leadership in the Church, Black Preachers like myself have all received their training from White Theologians. Consequently the syllabus prepared for us and the Gospel we preach is firmly rooted in the perspective of whites. (Change is needed now).

For change, Black Theology is the answer - as it is actually a revolt against the spiritual, psychological and physical enslavement of Black people and thus against the loss of their sense of human dignity and worth. It is a theology in search of new symbols by which to affirm Black humanity. It is a theology of the oppressed for the liberation of both the oppressor and the oppressed. It is therefore advisable and essential that Black Theologians come together and meet with the leaders of Black Traditionalists, Black Students of all fields, Leaders of the African Independent Churches, Black resource people and the Black "lay" Christians in order that they plan together for de-colonising the minds of the Black believers in Christ, and thus regain the loss of their sense of human dignity and worth.

"COME NOW, LET US REASON TOGETHER, SAYS THE LORD....." (Isaiah 1:18).

MASHABADA MAYATULA
ORGANISING SECRETARY