

Decolonising Theological Research: A Disruption and Deconstruction in Africa

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Abstract

The thrust of the paper is on decolonising theological research through innovative disruption and deconstruction of the approach. Though the beauty of life rests on the dynamism of change, yet, theological research in Africa has remained almost a fixed module as presented by the missionaries, whose influences were replicated in African curriculum for theological institutions and universities across the continent. The contexts of the people were not placed in the lime light rather, they were made to see and understand differently from a Western cultural milieu. Hence, the emphasis of research remained Eurocentric in nature; that which is void of the Africentric ideologies. This phenomenon calls for disruption of the tradition through a process of deconstruction; with emphasis on Africentric approach to research that will recognise and situate the people within their cultural context, the basis of effective theological research with emphasis on decolonising the curriculum. The paper adopted historical, hermeneutical and sociological approaches in understanding the phenomenon. It discovered that the present approach to theological research in African has left a great chasm, not having a bearing with the peoples' worldview, thereby, lacking the wide acceptance it once enjoyed in the early years of colonial dominance of the field in Africa. The nature of African environment, her society and daily experiences are not reflected in the missionary approach that now pervades the process. The understanding of God, basically from the Western worldview, does not attest to the universalism of His nature as contained in the missionary curriculum that was handed to Africans.

African experiences and encounter with the Divine were not accorded their rightful places within the purview of Western theological thought as they are considered of less value. Hence, the continuous hegemony within the field is a conscious effort, to continuously perpetrate the tradition of servitude as it was in the beginning. The discouragements through the identification of pitfalls by Eurocentric scholarship of the disruption process that will birth authentic African theological approach remained a ploy to sabotage the success. The dependence on Western certification for authentication of African scholarship even among scholars of African aborigine at home and diaspora, is a sign of weakness and acceptance of mental inferiority; not willing to chart a new course for self-discovery. The work concluded by encouraging our contemporary scholars to see decolonisation as the key to an emerging new research approach in Africa, while disrupting the former, charting a new course, deconstructing the approach for future theologians with core emphasis on African socio-cultural and hermeneutical approaches as tools for research. It recommended that African scholars should live the shared life, be selfless with knowledge, ready to mentor young researchers in the field; put up papers and organise conferences on emerging trends that promote indigenous theological thoughts without necessarily, condemning other contextual theological researches that best reflect the peoples' worldview.

Introduction

The subject of decolonization has been variously defined within a person's context and or perception. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) affirmed that the phenomenon spans a process of revealing inquiry made by the individual to achieve a realizable goal: the observation of the lacuna that has been created overtime. The change process thus required systematic yet persistent innovative disruptions that can best be described as the dismantling of colonial thoughts out of the African scheme.

English (2010) in presenting the beauty of contextual education to the overall being of the people noted that the process should essentially involve the uncovering of discontinuity disruptions and interruptions that constitute learning. Here the emphasis from Ada colonial tours should embrace disruption and innovative windows to effective discontinuity of engagement in the kitchen of teaching learning and research engagement in Africa.

The essence of research engagements in Africa that lack engagements with the people, making adequate provision for them, should be seen as abnormal, so does not prosper the people rather it alienates their identity under the guise of guiding in the path of knowledge, the traditional pattern of learning known to the people is built on mentor-mentee processes, direct observation and supervision. The bulk of the learning is based on orality.

Murithi (2014) in furtherance of the decolonization process, noted that orality has not been given its right of place in Africa, but it has gained some in Jewish tradition with so much semblance shared by both cultures which made it unique to the learning tradition of the socio-cultural values, the continuous presentation of theological research in foreign curriculum, having different coloration, portrays cultural alienation. The curriculum of theological research in Africa highlights the necessary engagement that voids its application as adequate measure for theological research.

Christensen, Horn and Johnson (2011) noted that unless the goal is understood through the process of interaction and reaction, behavioural patterns cannot be influenced positively to meet the desired result. Theological research in Africa since the colonization of the continent, has maintained a hegemonic tradition of the Western worldview. The coming of the church and her investments in education and theological training were presented with similar aims: to Christianize the people after Western tradition and culture as well as to project the disparity of superiority in terms of knowledge over Africans.

Isiorhovoja (2021) noted that the root cause of the colonial failure in effective curriculum implementation in Africa was the desire of both the missionaries and colonialists in flagrant rejection of the Phelps-Stokes Commission which sought adequate education for self-reliance and sufficiency for the people. The premise of the commission was to make the people independent, reliant and dynamic. However, the process was short-changed, met with stiff opposition as the colonialists construed same as freedom for the slaves. Hence, theological seminaries and indeed the universities were fashioned after Western scholarship and curriculum. It was a most derogatory and flagrant disrespect for the people whom they saw as not having

knowledge adequate to think about God and to act correctly as a people, well cultured and civilized.

The over bearing triple effects of the curriculum failure has not only affected the quality of research but the churchmanship. Murithi (2014) noted that it reflected in the way and manner certain realities in Africa are handled with levity, the presence and manifestation of power and counter power; quest for prosperity through the loudest amen, poverty and unemployment as well as the prevalence of diseases, where all attributed to the mode of theological training that some religious ministers have demonstrated ignorantly because they were related to theological training process.

Adamo (2005) posited that engagement with the continent should not be trivialized. He added that it must require adequate knowledge of the continent to effectively engage with the people. Being a scholar in Western philosophy is not enough; this is the point of departure and arrival at decolonizing theological research for whoever wishes to engage the continent, such communal education as the entry point to understanding the peoples sociocultural milieu before doing research is essential.

The relevance of theological research thus, must seek to be objective, healthy and not a condemnation of the people and the cultural objects, which best describe the people should be studied and within their context too. Africans have rich culture, arts and customs which serve as the basis for engagement in theological research; the basis for the fledgling of the church in Africa. Barrett (1958) observed that the high-handedness of the missionaries in terms of attitude among the Luo people was germane to the experienced conflict between the people and the gospel the women revolted against. The Gospel created disaffection within the homes, branding African families as polygamous while men in their tradition, maintained mistresses, living under fornication. The gospel message was not presented holistically as to mirror the people itself. Kincheloe (2005) thus posited that the subject presentation should take the tradition seriously through a process of effective window of communication that brings about changes that meet the needs of the people. Kincheloe (2005) is further corroborated by Christiansen *et al* (2011) adding that all necessary tools for the realisation of the goal of education should be

explored inasmuch as the goal is to keep in focus the essence of the message.

The Need for Decolonizing Theological Research

Buitendag (2019) noted that the quest for adequate theology within the public university is premised on two major reasons with distinct examples: to identify the need for meaning clarification for concept and comprehensiveness as the basis for theology. Lots of innovative disruptions have taken place, a systematic shift from the norm which the missionary preoccupation and engagement with the continent, the need for critical pedagogy, has brought in new orientation in critical research. Bowker (2003) noted that *theos* should be deconstructed to embrace the total man and his culture as the basis for successful engagement, the shift from autonomy and heteronomy to human as the apian way to self-transcendence, consciousness and self-reliance as argued by Schleimacher (1999) and Tillich (1994). Thus, the preoccupation of theology has remained theocentric which requires philosophical enquiry on the part of men with elements of epistemology and ontology, which located the discipline as properly situated in the field of reality as a major concern.

The need for decolonisation of theological research in African universities and seminaries should be understood as the brainchild of Western and or missionary Canon that was be-queathed to Africa. The process predatorily denied all forms of prior knowledge in Africa worldview. Heleta (2016) averred that the dismantling of Western hegemony is inevitable in Africa, the task should begin with innovative disruption as espoused by English (2010), a deconstruction of the curriculum to accommodate African socio-cultural context as the basis for teaching, learning and research that will be relevant to the people' the basis for adequate *Missio Dei* among the people (Murithi, 2014).

Consequently, the overall objective of theological education from other institutions is to seek the maximum good of humanity within his local context, the preoccupation of theology. All such efforts that are not in tandem with service rendering to humanity, godly virtues to share same with passion, should be construed as inadequate

knowledge of God, since the kerygma cannot manifest divisive and depressive tendencies (Kelsey, 1992, 1993).

Using diverse model approach, Kelsey (1992) noted that both the Athens and Berlin approach took into context the place of virtues, godliness, service and humanity as well as professionalism into account. Neither did any model present a leeway born out of indolence and immoral lifestyle as plumb line. Niebuhr, Williams and Gustafson (1956) decried the plethora of courses offered in divinity void of social context. This may be the earliest back-ground why Eurocentric scholars handed down a curriculum that estranged the people completely from their rich cultural milieu because their home was in disarray.

Challenges of Effective Curriculum Decolonization

Race *et al* (2022) noted that higher education curriculum has long been overdue for decolonization as the continuous Western hegemony no longer appeals to Africans whose rich history is not captured from the classroom to personalize research processes. They concluded that the process through which you seek to decolonize the curriculum and curricula together, the process will be incomplete if adequate interpretation based on the context of its construction is not taken alongside with innovation and initiatives born out of the people's worldview.

The implementation of Western curriculum which thrives in most part of Africa as noted by Ayling (2019) has much to do with inferiority complex, the polemic assumption of Western ideology being superior to African, what Burnell *et al* (2020) described as love for Englishness. The practice in Nigeria showed that Britain has evolved and approved for continuous neo-colonialism, the sale of global brand at the detriment of the people's culture yet, reinforcing white Supremacy (Onwuzuruigbo, 2018). The victory of the oppressors over the oppressed as identified by Bell (2018) rested on the unconscious dynamics of operation by Western scholarship.

The Black Minority Ethnic BME (2020) thus calls for systematic synergy that seek to evolve indigenous process of our classrooms teaching and learning as well as research within the purview of

African cosmology thus, erasing traces of-white colonialist and structure, thus making the teachers, lecturers to have dominant roles to play in redirecting the curriculum. Indeed, all stakeholders should oversee the process of policy formulation and practice.

The complexity of the process rested more on men of African descent who are ready to take up the task willingly and wholeheartedly because many Western trained scholars cannot be trusted with the task having being trained under Western curriculum with its lacuna. Tagore (1906) used the Indian case as a model for disconnecting and establishing the moratorium in theological research in Africa.

Race *et al* (2022) observed that contemporary research on black history and the black race showed that racism cannot be eliminated by mere wishes of the minority, who do not consist majority of the population hence, teaching must be thorough and in-depth. However, the hope is further jettisoned, under the disguise of global citizenship, minority culture are usually subsumed and lose their identity, the core reason for decolonization as a process for revitalization and rejuvenation of African core values through the curriculum planning and policy formulation, implementation and supervision through a mental process under the tutelage of an African scholarship.

Akel (2020) stated that the rethinking, reframing and reconstruction of the curriculum as well as curricular of research mistake African coloration as an outlook. It is only through such an avenue that we can conscientiously engage in the process from: manpower generation to curriculum implementation across the rank-and-file. All African Conference of Churches AACC (2021), held in Nairobi, Kenya noted that the curriculum has become dysfunctional in essence. The pursuit of theology endangered research in general has goofed into fragmentation in terms of curriculum and curricular thus, manifesting in research outcomes. Ill-equipped manpower development and irrelevant theology has failed to meet the needs of the people, the failure reflected in this dysfunctionality of the whiteness theology that was superimposed on the black continent.

Reflecting on the biblical text Romans 12:2, the emphasis was on non-conformity to the old pattern, gunning for transformation and mind renewal as a springboard for achievable decolonization process.

The body observed that seminaries and departments of theology in African universities have succeeded in producing men and women whose learning and certification failed to meet the needs of the locals within the churches and communities in Africa. The curriculum did not only alienate the trainees but they were rendered useless in their immediate communities within Africa socially, politically and otherwise are among other factors that gave impetus to the impoverishment. There is need for resource mobilization, contextual theological centres, personal stewardship, and full infrastructure for biblical studies and publications development, church renewal and transformative research engagements across the various institutions and departments.

Kabongo (2020) wrote on the need for adequate contextualization of theological research and posited that the benefits accruable from such study will equip the students with the real world of Africans. African reality therefore should not be considered as whiteness gift rather as the basis for building the bridge between preaching and everyday life, the head knowledge without application amounts to emptiness and disengagement with societal reality hence the daily experiences should be upheld forthwith, using life examples to overcoming alienating and or exotic illustration having little to offer the people's life experiences. Knowing these pitfalls, the institutions are to brace up to equipping researchers for proactive productivity and prosperity.

Approaches to Decolonizing Theological Research

Western approach commonly bought into by African Biblical Scholars are seen to be superior since they are handed down as fail-safe approach to research which include, but not limited to: Textual Criticism, Form Criticism, Source Criticism, and the Grammatical-Historical Method. However, African Biblical Scholars are very versed in other methodologies which include: Reader-Response Criticism; Rhetorical Criticism, Traditional Criticism, and Ideological Criticism and Orality based on the uniqueness of the African culture. In contrast, the African peculiarities according to Adamo (2005) include: comparative, evaluative, identification of Africans within the Bible, inculturation, liberation, Black theology, and feminist hermeneutics. These terms have synonyms like: Africentric studies, African cultural hermeneutics among other terms.

Comparative Studies engage both the Old and New Testaments, with the aim of promoting interaction with African culture and religion, drawing on the unique characteristics and similarities greater knowledge for comparison of the Bible with other religions and culture of the Ancient Near East. It brings to bear the relevance of African Culture in the study of the Bible among Africans. One cannot but appreciate the African context otherwise, considered as fetish in the past as the Bible interacts with culture interpretatively.

Evaluative Studies examine heuristically, the contributions made by African. This approach scrutinises and appraises scholars as part of their contributions towards the interpretation process. Adamo (2004) noted that prominent scholars of African descent have invested much time to showcase their dexterity in promoting African presence. Such scholars include Adamo, D.T, Justin Ukpog, Holter, K. among others. Ukpog (2005), emphasized here that the peoples' socio-cultural context is very important.

African Presence in the Bible focuses on the significant contribution made by Africa and Africans that were hitherto not properly accounted for in the Bible. These included the roles played in actualization of the salvific history. Isiorhovoja (2010) noted that there is recourse today, for many to trace history to their root or ancestral homes in order to know their background. Scholars of African aborigine at home and in diaspora have taken up this challenge, to properly identify and document African history as written in the Bible. Adamo (2009) argued in favour of the African presence in the Table of Nations which he traced to the root, using name as a means of proper identification, "What is a name?"

McCray looked at the household of Noah heuristically, brought out the three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth as well as their genealogies as the earliest families in ancient times. His argument is premised on the relevance of a name as mentioned by Prof. Adamo, D.T. He added that in Africa, names go beyond mere identification to include the prevailing circumstances at the birth of the child. Other situations are taken into consideration hence they are symbolic and unique; bearing marks of their religious expression and or faith Mbiti (1991). Thus the account in Genesis 10 clearly showed the family tree of every race on earth and the semblance they bear to one another as a people of one

parent from ancient historical document, the most voluminous of the ancient world. It characterised the Noahic family tree. Consequently, all nations today can adequately be traced back to a person or people identified in Genesis 10 (Felder, 1991). The basic argument here is that the Bible should be seen as a commonwealth to our salvation history.

Post-Colonial Criticism, Liberation Theology, and Hermeneutics: Liberation Theology and Hermeneutics have similar concerns. Both are emancipationist movements in their purest forms. Using liberation hermeneutics, one may note a Biblical interpretation in which the Christian religion uses the Bible as a tool for establishing a just society. The application of liberation theological perspectives to the understanding of the Bible is known as liberation hermeneutics. Liberation theology started in Latin America in the middle of the 1960s and has since extended to and been cultivated in the once colonised nations of Africa where it has persisted in the light of current societal challenges.

Inculturation Hermeneutics: According to Loba-Mkole (2005), Justin Ukpong introduced Inculturation Hermeneutics as a brand-new exegetical technique in 1996. Despite not using Ukpong, J B Matand had espoused on similar concept in 1998. With the works of Cilumba in (2001), Manus in (2003), and Loba Mkole in (2005), Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics/Exegesis reached its pinnacle. Ukpong views this method it as a descendant of “Inculturation Theology” technique. He characterised it as a biblical interpretation that used the inculturation paradigm.

The express goal of inculturation hermeneutics is to understand the biblical text from the current socio-cultural view-points and it makes these perspectives the object of interpretation. It is “a dynamic, ongoing process through which people are made aware and critically adopt the Bible and its message from their own viewpoint and with the resources of their own cultures,” according to S. O. Abogunrin, who quoted J. S. Ukpong. By rereading the text in light of the audience or reader's current context, this technique makes use of the revelations from the text's historical analysis. It should be emphasised that Cilumba, one of the most prominent proponents of this approach, utilised tradition critique to establish the background

Multicultural Biblical Hermeneutics: Berekiah (2017) noted that certain modern readers “may recognise cultural assumptions in the layers of the text that others might fail to detect” owing to their varied cultural experiences. Juxtaposing several modern interpretations of the same text, then, would not only clarify the text but might also help readers assess their own contexts and methods of deriving meaning from the text. Although the names and approaches are similar in many ways, intercultural biblical hermeneutics should be clearly separated from intercultural philosophical hermeneutics in practice. The primary distinction is that, in contrast to other subfields of African Biblical Studies, Intercultural Biblical Hermeneutics expressly makes the Biblical text its principal object while purposefully making the African socio-cultural milieu the topic of interpretation.

To bridge barriers between peoples and cultures, intercultural hermeneutics as performed in the philosophical area of study. However, it digs more deeply into hermeneutics as a process of understanding cultures. Although intercultural philosophical hermeneutics also deals with the biblical text, it frequently interprets ideological and philosophical paradigms that are reflected in the text rather than the text itself. These are picked and highlighted using analogous or congruent events in the context of African cultural experience. Because of this, some works by scholars, like Idowu’s explanation of the Yoruba concept of God, Okere’s explanation of the concept of soul and body in the Igbo indigenous cultural idea of “Ahu” and “Ahu-ahu”, which could clarify how Christians understand the Biblical concept of soul and body from Igbo traditional cultural experience, and Segun Gbedegesin’s explanation of the concept of “Eniyan,” in Yoruba since they try to explain phenomena arising from African traditional cultural thinking using the concepts and vocabulary of Western systems of thought, can be categorised as intercultural philosophical hermeneutics products.

People Biblical Feminist/Womanist Hermeneutics: Biblical Feminist/Womanist Criticism is the basis for feminist/womanist interpretations of the Bible. Womanist Biblical Criticism is more at home in Africa, whereas Feminist Biblical Criticism is mostly based in the United States and Europe. Despite Abogunrin's claim that “feminism arises as the response of women to the male-dominated society, which has

most frequently been unfair to women”, it should be emphasised that both men and women engage in Feminist and Womanist Biblical Criticism. Utilizing the Bible and Christian doctrine, feminist biblical criticism is concerned with addressing and reversing the situation of the female gender being marginalised in the political, economic, and social spheres. It could be favourable or unfavourable. While the negative version draws attention to and critiques the gyno-sadistic or misogynistic tendencies in Biblical texts, the positive version highlights and displays the good images of women in the Bible. Biblical criticism by women is more African. Womanist Biblical Criticism is mostly done by African and other women of colour, in contrast to Feminist Biblical Criticism, which is dominated by educated, middle-class white women from Europe. Womanist Biblical Criticism is unique in that it targets the specific injustices faced by women of colour and is not simply attentive to gender prejudice. It is also actively engaged in homiletic on issues pertaining to race, colour, and racial discrimination. The writings of Madipoane Masenya clearly demonstrate a womanist perspective to biblical studies.

African Biblical Studies has produced a variety of outputs over the years, including dissertations and theses, conference papers and proceedings, journal articles, books, and Bible commentaries. Positive social and economic effects of African Biblical Studies may be seen throughout the continent of Africa. More Africans have come to understand and use the Gospel as a result of the contextualization of the biblical message. In the face of poverty, starvation, economic despair, and other crippling societal problems that are unique to the African Continent, this has provided hope to countless Africans. On theses and dissertations, Adamo (2005) posited that:

among the many theses and dissertations, these few instances amply demonstrate the growing influence of African biblical scholarship on the international debate. In Felix Ikeagwuchi’s thesis for the international postgraduate programme at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, titled “Ethnicity, Religion and Socio-Cultural Development in Nigeria: Towards Inter-Cultural Hermeneutics and Religion in Dialogue,” an example of intercultural Biblical hermeneutics is demonstrated. African Womanist methodology is used in Madipoane’s Thesis, “Proverbs 31:10-31 in a South African

Context: A Bosadi (Womanhood) Context.” African Biblical Scholarship has been used locally in a number of dissertations and theses completed at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Berekiah’s “Berith as a socio-political and Economic Regulatory Mechanism in Ancient Israel and Traditional Egba-Yoruba Society” is an illustration of one of these.

On books, Keith Augustus Burton wrote “The Blessing of Africa: The Bible and African Christianity” using the “African and Africans in the Bible approach” in addition to other approaches and methodologies. He devoted one chapter to identifying Africa and Africans in the Bible, respectively, and another chapter to tracing the origins and formative periods of Christianity to the soils of the African continent. A postcolonial and feminist approach to the reading of the Gospel of Matthew is presented in Musa Dube’s Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible.

Need for Innovative Disruption

On the need for contextualisation of teaching methods, Bowen and Bowen (n.d.) advocated for contextual hermeneutics as the method of instruction which must be innovative, flexible and experimental in approach. They observed the contract distinction between western and African approaches. Africans perceive learning faster and better synthetically; learning is viewed as a consistent whole while Western scholars perceive learning as analytic in nature.

Theological research among Africans is perceived as being functional among other things because the essence of the training is seen as a whole. This goes to show Africans benefit more from group studies, researches, collaborations among others. Hence, the process needed to sustain same as against personal study which is otherwise analytic and individualistic – the characteristics of Western research and approach.

According to Saint Augustine in support of contextual teaching and learning as well as research, he noted that in as much as God is the centre woman contest should be the basis of interpretation and learning. Nyende (2009) from his overview of theological education noted that curriculum challenges must be contextualized to reflect the African yearnings and aspirations of the people. The continuous presence of colonialist in African institutions – universities and

seminaries connotes imposition that should be dialogued to culminate in the moratorium; a systematic disengagement from key positions of authority. The basis of decolonialization argument is premised on the experienced dysfunctional approach in terms of curriculum and curricular that bears no tangents with African worldview.

Nakpodia (2005) argued that the objectives of the Christian mission in Africa using the Nigerian experience primarily is to convert people to Christianity, they were able to achieve this through systematic condemnation of what did not appeal to them and their western purposes while at the same time getting the blacks enslaved to western cultures and ideas.

The enterprise flourished basically to the advantage of the colonial Masters who enforced peace through the power of the guns and other forms of artillery. The concept of brotherhood that was introduced to the people was superimposed, riding on the wings of Christianity and the worship of God. Thus, the church and the school became perfect partners in progress, serving as veritable tools for achieving the conceived curriculum for converted Africans who found their ways into the mission houses, hospitals, schools and other centres (Fafunwa, 1974).

The core subjects approved, apart from the teachings of the Bible and singing of hymns were essentially the three: Reading Writing and Arithmetic. The approved history and geography curriculum were those of Britain and Europe while African history and culture were totally neglected. The Phelps-Stoke Commission remained the juggernaut and pivot for the inclusion of technical and vocational subjects that practically encouraged the people without the 3R's. This is the springboard for qualitative evaluation and the point of departure. The theological education curriculum was premised on the tripod that manifested in our seminaries too.

Nyoni (2019) identified within the system of Caged Colonial Mentality (CCM) in advocating for decolonial curriculum reform. Some African scholars have not looked beyond and outside the box, with the aim dissembling, reorganizing and incorporating African existential beings. He identified some curriculum qualities and knowledge competencies but included multiplicities of identity.

Africans have unique identities which they are known for, not just the multiplicities. Ray (2005) noted that African are readily identified with the way and manner in which they respond to the Divine, brotherhood and communal life. The process of self-recovery should not be borne from multiplicity. Part of the damages done to the people was the delisting of the cultural values of the people. We cannot afford to go through the experiences of some of our fathers. Udjo (2015) recounted how they were monitored from the lecture theatres back then in the seminary to dining halls as to ensure strict compliance with Western culture. He added that they were instructed on how to eat, hold spoons and fork, walk along the lawns and glue themselves to British history.

However, African Studies were denied and delisted from the curriculum; the point of interest in African culture is works through the registered long essays. Boje (2000) noted with dismay that, the findings were treated as further avenues to laugh at the religious experiences of the people, denying the manifestation of power; a dynamism that was too high and intelligible to comprehend by most sit-at-home researchers who were mainly anthropologists and colonialists.

The uniqueness of African worldview of reality takes into cognition ethnic realities and identities. There is the need to understudy concepts that relate to this topic in Africa. Certain ethnic elements which are otherwise unknown to Western knowledge should not be left unturned as it creates the sense of community and communal living without this disaffection and disbelief in the African communal system of brotherhood.

In deconstruction of the Curriculum: Reading and researching with the third eye should be the basis. African indigenous knowledge and science and religious experiences should be taught from the existential point of the African people. African cultural hermeneutics should be seen as the basis for Biblical interpretation which speaks to the daily lives rather than the Historico-grammatical approach that appeals only to scholars. The beauty lies on the utilisations of basic experiences. For example: Jesus is the *Eba* and *soup* of life appeals more to an average Nigerian than the bread in Western hermeneutics.

Eba is made from cassava flour, a day without it, could be seen as a wasted day, as it gives strength for daily living.

G.A. Onibere strongly advocated orality as a method of research among Africans their quest for scholarship as indigenous method. He noted that orality which has been popularised among linguists such as G.G. Dara has not only solved riddles and puzzles but has proffered solution to the synoptic debate according to Ejenobo (2015). The vernacular reading of the Bible and its hermeneutics, story-telling and collective reading has proved to be African methods of theological training based on the traditional method. Such avenue should be seen as modular refineries that will produce knowledgeable men and women in African theological institutions which essentially include Theological Education by Extension.

Bediako (2001) saw culture as the basis for innovative disruption of theological research in Africa. He pointed at the central role of scripture in establishing cultural identity which hitherto were formerly demonised as traditional cultures. Hence the laudable achievements of the *African Bible Commentary and Bible Translations into various languages in Africa should be seen as entry points for African universities to teach such languages and cultures*, they best serve as paradigms for scripture interaction with culture in Africa. The objective is for the bible to be made relevant without the middle-man, the Western actor because the Bible speaks for itself.

Conclusion

Decolonising theological research in Africa has become an existential challenge. The quest, can be surmounted. The curriculum is central and germane; hence attention should be focused on the contents, given that most Universities, Faculties of Theologies and Seminaries are based on Eurocentric curriculum. The knowledge of God as revealed in the continent as well as the wealth of knowledge from scholars is enough to develop the philosophical underpinnings of some rich content for our people.

It recommends among others, the need to establish African Biblical research centres with funding for young scholars from the continent to engage in quality research and studies. More so, building quality

mentor-mentee relationship becomes necessary to shed light on difficult research areas as a way of growing and sustaining enviable research structure that will revolutionise our institutions of learning at the home front.

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