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BOOK REVIEW

Apologetics in Africa: An introduction

Ndereba, K.M. (ed.), (Bukuru: ACT and Langham
Publishing, 2024), pp. 382, ISBN 9781839736629

Apologetics is one of the classical Christian theological disciplines that intellectually defends the truth of Christian faith against those who do not understand or agree with it. It is not new in Africa, because even the early church fathers were early church apologetics in Africa. The spread of Christianity towards sub-Saharan Africa and the manner in which Africans embraced it made Christian religion one of the fastest growing religions in Africa and in the Global South. Although the spread and arrival of Christianity in Africa was beneficial in many ways, its association with White imperialist forces such as slavery, colonialism and apartheid, as well as reckless religious practices and thoughtless statements made by some Christians, brought many criticisms against Christian religion. Hence, it is imperative for contemporary Christians to revive the practice of apologetics, in order to intellectually defend Christian faith against its detractors.

Now is the time for Africans to intellectually reflect on their own lived experiences of received Christian religion, in order to correct the wrong practices and doctrinal errors committed during the process of conversion to Christian faith. In light of the above, it is prudent for Ndereba (2024:1, 8) to have written this book, because there is a need for rational justification and defence of Christian truth claims as well as its communication to a sceptical world, due to the many cults and sceptics within

the Christian world view. Since the practice of apologetics is growing in Africa, there is a significant and growing need for apologetics resources, tailored to the African context, to give a firm grounding in the biblical world view, gospel, spirit-empowered witness, and love of those trapped in a deceptive world.

This book, *Apologetics in Africa: Introduction*, should assist scholars, students, and religious practitioners, within the Christian context, in recognising why we need apologetics in Africa. For example, it addresses specific issues in Africa, thus making a robust contribution to apologetic resources that are tailored to the African context. It addresses sceptic remarks of unbelievers, whilst it reinforces the reason to remain steadfast in the Christian faith. It asks specific questions to guide us towards the proper spiritual disposition for our argument, in order to defend biblical and doctrinal truths of the Christian faith.

This book also addresses challenges faced by apologetics in Africa such as defending Christian truth against both Christians and non-Christians. Beyond Christianity, some sceptics disparage Christian religion for its association with the White imperialist forces and for the failure of African Christians to make a social impact in their own context. Within the Christian faith, Christians from the charismatic sector emphasise health, wealth, healing, and spiritual gifts at the expense of social impact. To engage the above challenges, this book suggests the need to learn from the other, taking biblical presupposition as point of departure, and indulging in holistic apologetic practices in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The book is divided into four parts. The first three chapters focus on themes related to the Bible. One chapter discusses different movements that challenged the reliability of the Bible and the hermeneutical approaches that promote confidence and transformation of African communities. Another chapter engages the topic of African apologetic for the resurrection and highlights doctrines of resurrection in African theology; it explores proofs for Jesus' resurrection. The third and last chapter in this first part of the book is on apologetics in the New Testament and church history where a statement is made that the OT and NT texts contain the imperatives for apologetics as valid ministry of the Christian community and the impact of the development of the church through history and globally on the apologetics.

The second part of the book focuses on the philosophical issues and has three chapters, one of which discusses natural and moral evil in the context of African thought. Another chapter, "Do all religions lead to the same God?", deals with the destination question in the context of pluralism, inclusivism, and exclusivism. The third and last chapter in this second part of the book addresses God and objective moral values, and reflects on how systems

and world views, influenced by African Traditional Religion (ATR), Islam and secularism, propagate certain non-biblical truth claims that must be refuted and replaced by explicitly Christian and biblical truths.

The third part of the book has five chapters that engage cultural issues related to Africa. One chapter discusses “Christianity as an African religion” and another chapter addresses “The doctrine of Christ and traditional eldership”. This is followed by a chapter on “Christian faith and dowry practices: Lobola” and a chapter on “Christian response on domestic violence”. The final chapter in this third part of the book addresses “Christianity and African traditional Gods”.

The fourth part of the book addresses practical issues in Africa. It contains five chapters that deal with themes such as New Age movement in Africa, cults in Africa, atheism in Africa, Christian-Muslim history, and the digital age.

This book is a seminal work that deserves to be accessible to the vast majority of African theological institutions and various church denominations, in order to conscientise theology students, pastors and lay people about biblical and Christian truths that should not be taken for granted. It is time that African Christians defend Christian religion, as it is embraced within African culture and one of the fastest growing religions in Africa. Even though the book has comprehensively dealt with many relevant themes related to Africa, one can also suggest that a further study in apologetics is essential in terms of politics, prosperity gospel, LGBTQI, AI, and Robotics.

In conclusion, this book explores in-depth biblical, philosophical, cultural, and practical concerns faced by Africans as they embrace and defend the Gospel in Africa. It answers specific questions to guide the spiritual disposition of Africans. This book is a long-awaited seminal work that must initiate a debate on African Christians taking the responsibility to propagate the biblical and Christian truths on the African continent and beyond.