SPIRITUALITY OF KENYAN PASTORS:

A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF KIKUYU PCEA PASTORS IN NAIROBI

By

SUNG KYU PARK

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ABSTRACT

The subject of spirituality is descriptive, comprehensive, transformative, and interdisciplinary. This study is about the spirituality of Kikuyu PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) pastors in Nairobi. This research seeks to find expressions and meanings of Christian spirituality of the research context. Thus, the concrete aims of this research are: (1) to understand the complex spiritual/religious/cultural world of Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church in Nairobi; (2) to study biblical and historical spirituality in order to find biblical and Western-historical spiritual perspectives; (3) to have critical hermeneutical dialogue between narratives, different cultural/religious traditions, biblical/Western-historical spiritual perspectives, and African theological perspectives with a view to finding strategies for transformation of the research participants, churches in Africa, and African society at large.

To achieve the aforementioned aims of this research, a research paradigm was employed which is comprised of postfoundationalism, practical theology, narrative, and social constructionism. Postfoundationalism provided theological positioning; practical theological process laid a framework of the research as the main research methodology; narratives generated essential experiences for the research; social constructionism provided a method with which to form the realities socially which would have a relevance to the context.

Thick questions were formulated from the following studies: the narratives of the research participants, African (Kikuyu) cultural/religious traditions, Christianity's influences on the research context, and the socio-economic-political phenomena of the Kenyan society. The questions were: (1) Would mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa continue to be an effective form of Christianity in Kenya and among the Kikuyu?; (2) What is the relationship between charismatic spirituality and the contextual spirituality of East Africa?; (3) How can spirituality shape and influence the socio-economic-political context more than it being influenced by the context?;

(4) What would the biblical and historical spirituality suggest to the spiritualities of the research participants?

In regards to biblical/historical spiritualities, the spiritualities of both Old and New Testament and each historical period were unique, and the spirituality of each period was developed distinctively by the needs of the time. Then the fusion of horizons between the research context and biblical/historical spiritualities turned out to be a valuable process for the making of the final strategies for transformation.

The strategies for transformation reflect the essential elements of African Christian spirituality, which can be applied to the African socio-religious context beyond the scope of the current research arena. Christian spirituality in the 21st century Africa demands African expression and identity whether it means contextualisation, liberation, or reconstruction. Structures, governance, forms, and expressions of the Christianity of the past century need to be re-evaluated for the formation of authentic African Christian spirituality. African society faces tremendous challenges and pressures providing Christianity with both an unprecedented privilege and obligation to impact African society with the message of love and hope.

KEY TERMS

Spirituality

Postfoundationalism

Practical theology

Narrative

Social constructionism

Cultural anthropology: worldview, religion, and subsystems

Mission Christianity and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa

East African Revival Movement

Charismatic movement

Biblical and historical spirituality

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