

African Primal Worldviews: The Bedrock of African Christian Faith and Ethics

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/ajrts.2025.04.01014>

Abstract

While some contemporary theologians share African Christian heritage, not all of them do. Studies have shown that African primal views pose several challenges to traditional Christian theology, primarily because it seeks to interpret Christian faith and ethics through African cultural, social, ethical, and religious lenses. Hence, the overarching problem that confronts this study is to find out whether Christian theology can be truly African without the involvement of African primal worldviews. Relevant theological and ethical methodologies, as well as qualitative techniques were employed to achieve the study's purpose. This includes both primary and secondary sources of data collection. After rigorous analysis and discussion, the study finds that primal views help in contextualising the gospel within African culture, which can challenge the idea that Christian theology is universally applicable without cultural adaptation. Hence, I recommend that both Westerners and Africans are to embrace a fuller understanding of salvation, which includes the spiritual, ethical/moral, and physical aspects that are in harmony with primal views. The goal should be to develop theology that is biblically faithful and culturally rooted. Though there are challenges, those challenges require continued critical engagement with modern realities, and the inclusion of diverse African voices. The study fills the gap between the African religious thought and Christian faith, and also, contributes meaningfully to the on-going conversations about decolonising theology and promoting intercultural dialogue within the global church.

Keywords: Primal Worldviews, African Theology, Christian Faith, Ethics, Moral Values

Introduction

Many African cultures share beliefs that are similar to Western ideas, particularly in their perspectives on universal human experiences such as religion, ethics, the soul, community, and the nature of existence. For instance, as Western Christians have respect for law and justice, the African traditional courts and councils of elders serve a similar purpose in many African communities, promoting justice. However, the expression and foundations of these African beliefs are often shaped by local traditions, languages, and spiritual systems. Currently, the subject at issue Africans grapple with is that, while Christianity has been present in Africa for centuries, much of what has been taught was filtered through Western interpretations that seemed to be inadequate. It is argued by Kunhiyop (2020, p. 75) that "most of the standard works on theology and ethics being used in Africa are by Westerners or Europeans. The worldview underlying them is often irrelevant to African Christianity".

The dichotomy between African and Western theology and ethics generally refers to the contrasting foundations, values, and approaches each tradition takes towards morality and spirituality. For Adam and Boafo (2022, p. 283), "Europeans have historically dominated Christian beliefs; therefore, African Christian theology must widen its scope". Hence, this study provides a brief examination of African Christian theology and ethics within the fundamental tenets of the African primal worldviews. Gillian Bediako (2000, p. 12) describes primal to mean "the vital elements of human comprehension of the Transcendent and the universe". This is the traditional, often indigenous way of understanding reality that emphasises a deep connection between the spiritual and natural world, where ancestors, spirits, and nature play a central role in everyday life. Now, the concern is why one would accept that the manifestation of primal elements and spirituality should not serve as the fundamental beliefs and concepts on which African Christian theology and ethics must be based. To provide rational grounds for this study, the theological and ethical views of a few scholars who shared general opinions on the subject have been engaged in the discussion. Hence, I observe that the various topics in this study highlight relevant areas that can offer a broader perspective on African theology and ethics. I then proceed to review, analyse, and discuss African primal religious thoughts, which reflect traces of African Christian spirituality within a conceptual (theoretical) framework. Additionally, I examine specific primal moral/ethical values in the African Christian context. These and other considerations lead to the conclusion of this work.

Statement of the Problem

The overarching problem that prompts this study is: Can Christian theology and ethics be truly African without the involvement of African primal worldviews? Though there are many parallel ideas between African and Western belief systems, they may be expressed differently and despised by traditional Christian theology. This demands attention because the African primal views retain a sense of spirituality, enabling Africans to identify their spiritual needs and have the affinity to worship God, among many others. Such identification recognises that the Transcendent divinity is real and essential. Hence, I seek to explore the dialogue between the African primal worldviews and Christian theology to help develop an African Christian faith and ethics.

Literature Review

To make Christian theology meaningful for Africans, Asante (2014, p. 45) shares similar views with Kwasi Sarpong, stating that "We have to make use of our own modes of worship to worship as Christians. We must carefully study our cultural values and incorporate them into our Christian expression." For Asante, Africans should not simply demonise their religio-cultural practices such as festivals, sacred time and space (like weekly rest on Sundays), life cycle (passage) rites, or dismiss them as "primitive." He notes that "reverence for the things of God must be the same everywhere. However, the expression of reverence will differ from group to group." Asante (2014, p. 42) was particularly careful when he said

that “we must avoid the ‘tabula rasa’ hermeneutics, which assumes that the traditional African cultures and customs have nothing good to offer the Christian community.” Turner (1977, p. 27) explains his position further, stating that anthropologists “were aided by some of the outstanding missionary scholars, [who] have opened up the complex religious systems of the world’s tribal people and revealed the complexities of ritual... and the sheer spirituality of many of these long-despised religions.” Cox (2010, p. 55) also points out that “the concept of primal religion was suggested by John V. Taylor [who] unlocked the development of courses on primal religions in Britain,” highlighting the evolving understanding and appreciation of indigenous spiritual systems.

There has been widespread debate over the use of the term “primal.” In this debate, Walls (2002, p. xv) understands primal religion as the religion that a people had before the advent of Christianity or Islam. They called it African traditional religion. Although some have preferred other terms, such as non-literate, basic, and conventional, among others, primal has become the most preferred term. Turner fully agrees with Taylor’s suggestion that this concept is of paramount importance to avoid using the term “primitive” or to replace it with a different one, primal.

On the contrary, while some scholars, such as Rosalind Shaw, criticise the term primal on empirical grounds (Shaw, 1977), Walls (2002, p. 56) argues that the term “primal was used to avoid the bias of the term ‘primitive’”. He explains that the term primal serves as the basic concept to describe other religions. For Walls (2002, p. 252), this was to disqualify the “tendency of Western scientific classification to employ evolutionistic undertones”. For him, it was a tool the Westerners wanted to utilise to show where a religious group belongs. Put in a broader context, John V. Taylor (1963, p. 85) observes that the personal totality of a being, which “includes the living, the dead, and the divinities,” fills the background of the primal worldview. Specifically, this assertion stems from his understanding of primal religion in the context of how Africans perceive themselves as one; therefore, they participate meaningfully in the lives of family members, such as those in the clan and tribe. Taylor grounded his argument in the African communal worldview because, in Africa, communal life is highly valued by its people (Taylor, 1963). These points highlight the difference between African worldviews and Western ideas in terms of theological and cultural perspectives. While Africans see religion as communal because God’s role is connected to social harmony and well-being, Western faith is often seen as individualistic, emphasizing personal salvation and morality, which sharply contrasts with African religious thought.

On the other hand, it is important to note that, during the pre-Christian era, little was known about the authentic theological ideas concerning Africa’s religions. This is because they were despised by other well-known religious traditions. This warrants attention because the African primal religious past retains a sense of spirituality, which helps Africans identify their spiritual needs. Such identification is likely more than mere wish-fulfilment; it recognizes that the transcendent divinity is real and essential. One certainty among Africans is that they sing and pray devoutly to demonstrate their allegiance to a deity they believe in, as a way of expressing their spirituality (Mbiti, 1989). Therefore, when someone

accepts Christ, the primal view is not abandoned; it manifests as a natural tendency to behave a certain way or as an innate ability to know or understand God easily. Even a child knows there is a God, but no one can see God, which relates to His transcendence. This makes Him beyond human reach (Kunhiyop, 2008, p. 11). Because God is considered distant from humans, Africans often relate to Him through intermediaries.

The Africans' sense of spirituality and their way of having affinity for religion help them to have an interest in religious matters. Religious concepts of the soul express the richness of their spiritual life. Their senses of spirituality are expressed in different forms; hence, Mbiti (1989, p. 50) notes that their spirituality is geared towards "the tendency to hold the belief and express God in human terms and thought forms. It also helps them to give human characteristics to deities, including the Supreme Being". This is what Mbiti asserted to mean that, traditionally, almost every physical thing was believed to have spiritual energy, because Africans believe that they live in a spirit world, and that there are spirits (Mbiti, 1989). Comparatively, Christians also believe that there are evil spirits and God's Spirit. For instance, as Africans believe that rain is one of the supernatural blessings of God, so it is in Christianity. They also believe that God, the Creator of the universe, is everywhere, this is because God is omnipresent. Mysterially, the universality of God's presence in his creation transcends human comprehension. Again, as child adoption is practised in the African primal world because of their communal life, so adoption is believed in the Christian faith in Ephesians 1:5, "He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ". Furthermore, as African primal spirituality accepts the performance of initiation rites as a practice, so is baptism as an initiation rite in Christianity. This agrees with what took place in the book of Acts 2:41, "Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day".

Methodology

The Christian faith in the African context attracts the core doctrines of Christianity that should engage deeply in African primal life and worldviews. Hence, the theological and ethical methodologies employed to achieve the objectives of this study expressed the Christian faith in ways that are meaningful to African cultural and spiritual realities. The inspection involves a thorough examination of African theology and Christian faith. I have observed the African theological views vis-à-vis African primal spirituality juxtaposed with how the African Christian should imbibe primal values, which could help the growth of African Christianity. This is a qualitative analysis that engages local traditions and worldviews. Therefore, to gather detailed primary accounts, two African theologians, Livingstone Buamah and Yaw Attah Edu-Bekoe, were interviewed to contribute their opinions to the study. In addition, secondary sources were contacted, which involved interviews, literature reviews, and journal articles, among others. Languages were also examined to understand how they construct social realities.

Contextual (Theoretical) Framework

The study is situated in a contextual framework of African Christian theology as the living, dynamic process of interpreting and living out the Christian faith in a way that honours both the gospel and African identity. African Christian theology emerged as a response to the cultural, historical, and spiritual experiences of African Christians. While African primal worldviews are rooted in interpreting the Bible through African cultural lenses to confirm the fact that Jesus Christ had trodden the African soil in Matthew 2: 13-14, Christian theology is often interpreted through a Judeo-Christian systematic framework.

In an interview with Buamah (personal communication, March 14, 2019) indicated that many Africans consider God to be a sovereign ruler who is superior to all others in authority, power, or status. This is because Africans believed that God is a great King. Their worldview resonates with the Scriptures in Psalm 47:2; Malachi 1:14 and 1 Timothy 6:15. Hence, God's sovereignty means he is King and Lawgiver of the universe. For him, God as King and legislator, his subjects look up to Him for good health, rain, daily bread, and to adjudicate on their matters, among many others. This means that, as King and legislator, his subjects look up to Him for good health, rain, daily bread, and to adjudicate on their matters, among many others (L. Buamah, personal communication, March 14, 2019). One thing about Africans is that they know that there is only one God, and their primal views are always about God. This confirms that there is only one reality in the primal view, and African Christians also believe that there is one reality. Some of the expressions African Christians exhibit are songs, prayers, and poetry, among others. Songs and prayers are the typical areas that you see primal experience manifesting itself in African Christianity (Macaulay, 2024, p. 4). Hence, it has been observed that the Western cultural practices are not to be seen as the standard of the Christian faith because they are not capable of answering African questions, as far as the African primal self is concerned.

Other perceptive points of the African theological views on the Supreme Being are reflected in the local names they ascribe to him as God. One of these names given among the Ewe of southern part of Ghana, Togo, and Benin is "Mawu". According to Vernus George, the name "Mawu" is regarded to be the Ultimate Reality, who is firmly behind all that is happening in the universe. Hence, research by George (2008, p. 13) establishes that the Ewe people depend on "Mawu" for everything. This portrays God's dependability and the belief in His Providence. For that reason, some Ewe children are named to depict that there is God. The name, such as "Mawusi", meaning in God's hand is given as a way to acknowledge God's supreme protection for people. In an interview with Yaw Attah Edu-Bekoe (personal communication, May 9, 2019), the name "Mawuli" means the continual existence of God. One distinctive attribute of God among the Ewe is that God Almighty means, "Mawu ŋusẽ katã tɔ". Other languages equally have a name for him, because God is real to the African, and tends familial relationship with him. Hence, they communicate with him through the ancestors; therefore, communicating with God through Christ is meaningful for them. This is the significant and primal conception of God. This shows that God is given several descriptive names by African societies, which convey the idea of God's supremacy

over the universe (Y. A. Edu-Bekoe, personal communication, May 9, 2019). This refers to the approach theology is understood, interpreted, and practice within the African context. A systematic explanation by Festus Ohaegbulam (1990, p.107) reveals that "Onyankopon" is the Akan reference to God, and the expression of His sovereignty. Gyekye (1995, pp. 70-71) who did an intensive work among the Akan agrees with the view that "Onyankopon" means the Great One, the Supreme, and dependable one who is independent. Names for God that point to His sovereign character are not peculiar to Ghana; other African nations also have names for God in their languages. For instance, a study by Udoe (2011, p. 36) notes that the Yoruba of Nigeria also refer to God as "Olodumare", which means Almighty or Supreme. Theologically, these appellations are descriptive of God's nature, expressive of his sovereignty over the affairs of humankind. Africans are clear in their mind, and therefore, hold God in high esteem. For them, God is holy and transcendent; hence, they communicate with him through mediators. As has clearly been demonstrated, these and many primal thoughts motivate the assertion that Africans have an authentic knowledge of God. They know how to relate and communicate their ideas effectively with him (Bediako, 1994). This contexts challenge theologies imported from the West that often emphasise individualism and rationalism, because there is very little common grounds of comparison between the two.

Unfortunately, Knighton (2004, p. 147) notes that, "African culture was widely seen by missionaries, though to varying extents, as the enemy of education and progress". This idea of the missionaries shows that they were badly misinformed. Hence, John B. Taylor (1976, p. 3) postulates how almost "everything about Africa was meaningless, 'pagan', and 'fetish'". The African mind was regarded as having no conception of God, and therefore, expected to make a fresh start in matters of Christian faith. It means that some of the European missionaries were not adequately equipped to faithfully address, as Bediako (1992, p. 235) puts it, "academic or theological issues that would arise from the presence of Christianity in Africa". This suggests that Africans have to tell the truth that such a perception of Africa was an arbitrary opinion taken by the missionaries. If this is done properly, African Christian thought that has emerged would be relevant for the same process outside Africa (Bediako, 1994). This is the task of the African Christian theologians to enable the outside world to hear the truth about Africa; a situation which entails explicit interpretation of the African pre-Christian story.

Analysis and Discussion

Current debates in African Christian theology reflect the dynamic engagement between Christian faith and African cultural and social realities. The fact that God has given general revelation about himself this gives the justification that African theology, which has its primal worldviews as the bedrock, is grounded in God. Tinyiko Maluleke's (2022, p. 303) concern is to "highlight some salient points on the subject", that has to do with the lack of a systematic, structured, rigorous theological discourse to respond to academic or global theological questions. The absence of these must have been the grounds for downplaying

African theology. Nevertheless, for Forster (2022), if there are any critiques, they “relate to what are varying understandings and misunderstandings of Africa and what it means to be African”. The fact that God did not create humans differently, but rather both Westerners and Africans alike, means that they are free to determine their identity and understand their environment. God’s purpose in all of this was that “The nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way towards him and find him” (Acts 17:27).

That notwithstanding, many have argued for a contextual theology rooted in African experiences, while others emphasize the need for theological rigor and global theological dialogue. In light of this, Waweru (2018, p. 214) postulates that African theologians should utilise “the best insights from African context that is compatible with the gospel of Christ as the only way to contextualize the gospel, and allow it to freely interact with their Christian faith”. This is because African Christian faith must offer rich, multifaceted insights that stem from a deep intertwining of biblical Christianity with African cultural, communal, and spiritual realities. This can be achieved not necessarily by relying on European ways of interpretation, devoid of primal religious views.

Peter Hayes (1997, p. 28) argues that even “European Christians have a primal religious background since Christianity did not originate with them and that they were not living in a religious vacuum.” This is one reason why Europeans cannot dismiss African primal thought as theologically shallow. For Walls, primal religion has produced more Christians than any religion in the East or West, and unfortunately, the reasons are not far-fetched (Walls, 2002). This is because African theologians interpret Scripture in dialogue with community needs and ethical living. Bediako (1994, p. 18) further argued that “The African church needed to build its bridges to the ‘revelation’ given to Africans in their pre-Christian and pre-missionary religious traditions of the past.” This requires the ability to establish a logical foundation for building bridges that begin with common grounds in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. Therefore, in addition to African heritage and identity, African Christian theology must become a discourse about God and highlight His soteriological activities. On this basis, Bediako challenges forms of African theology that rely too heavily on Western theological categories. He called for “Christocentric African theology” that is both faithful to Christian revelation and culturally authentic (Bediako, 1994). This aligns with Greg Kame (2022, p. 27), who states that the “principle that is central to understanding and developing a soteriology for (Christocentric) African theology that will identify with the Bible is a biblical understanding of God’s sovereignty.” Interestingly, Africans possess traces of primal spirituality intertwined with their knowledge of God’s sovereignty, which cannot be relegated to a minor aspect of religious tradition because they recognize God’s sovereignty. Additionally, Macaulay (2024, p. 26) notes that “the Africans’ ways of having an affinity for religion help them to have an interest in spiritual matters.” The significance of this is that the work of many African theologians provides common ground through which Christian theology can be expressed as authentically African without compromising biblical truths. For example, O’Donovan (1996, p. 272) shows that “as Christian theology teaches the reality of heaven, hell, and the immortality of the soul, many African traditions similarly believe in an afterlife and the idea of the soul.” However, it is important to recognize that

African theology should not overly focus on traditional culture to the neglect of modern African issues such as urbanization, poverty, and gender equality. Ignoring these concerns could make African theology irrelevant to everyday life.

Christianity in Africa was largely introduced through colonialism, which often dismissed African culture as primitive. This challenge has created a perception that Christianity is a Western religion, making contextualization difficult. Bediako (1994, p. 15) pointed to this as the challenge of relegation, saying that "The Western value-setting for the Christian faith in the missionary era had entailed a far-reaching underestimation of the African knowledge and sense of God." Notwithstanding this challenge, evidence to the contrary shows that Africans are doing better than Westerners' low estimation of African capability. Hence, a work by Maluleke (2022, p. 2) quickly points to the current development that "Contemporary African theology tackles several themes that speak to the problems and promises of religion in Africa and the rest of the world."

One common ground that challenges the African theological position is the gradual decline of morals that sustain community life. In traditional thought, primal moral values—social taboos about acceptable standards of behaviour, which are right, wrong, or evil—are fading away and need to be revitalized in African theology, because it concerns the moral goodness of character and behaviour. Research by Mugambi and Wasike (1999, p. 75) notes that contemporary African society laments over the decline of moral values, which has developed into a moral world fallen apart. The scholars added that this is because elderly people also lament daily that "they are meeting behaviours that shock them: sexual immorality, affectless relationships, scepticism about religious matters, and many things which hasten the old to their graves. Middle-aged people lament about children they fail to control, and the youth complain of a lack of example from the older members of society." This is a call not to despair, but to discernment, truth-telling, and the patient rebuilding of what has been lost. Some argue that we live in a post-truth world where facts, ethics, and values are subjective or manipulated; a behaviour that needs to be discouraged in African Christian faith and ethics. This invites genuine and lasting contributions that capture both spiritual and moral aspects of African theology to arrive at African Christian faith and ethics. Against the African idea of morality, Bansah (2018, p. 101) points to Richard Dawkins, who forcefully argues that "religion is no moral compass for society and that it is a horrible idea to suggest that we get moral direction from religion". One would argue that there are no moral grounds in Dawkins' argument, because being an atheist, it would be very wrong for him to display a moral choice of "belief" and "disbelief". If he does, then he ceases to be an atheist, but rather a theist. Interestingly, religious, moral, and ethical principles are the undertone of African theological and ethical themes because traditional societies have strong ethical systems based on concepts that pivoted around communal responsibility, hospitality, truthfulness, and respect for elders. By extension, while African cultural values are communal, they are deeply rooted in spirituality. Practices include greeting elders respectfully, group worship and prayer, initiation rites, and the welfare of the group over individual gain. These practices are found in all African cultures.

John V. Taylor (1963, p. 85) observes an African moral undertone that, "The African learns to say I am because I participate in the life of the extended family. This is because in Africa, a person is not complete without other people; hence, people belong to a community first". To provide a comprehensive explanation, it is interesting to note that in the gospel of Christ, the Father and Son are one, and he instructed all to be one (Jn. 10:30; 17:22). This resonates with the African communal and social life that it is the community that trains people how to cope with societal norms to live a communal life: the impetus of African morals and communal life. Hence, the encounter between the primal worldviews of African traditional thought and Christian faith is significantly correlated with neighbourliness. The fact that God has given general revelation about himself this gives the justification that African theology, which has its primal worldviews as the bedrock, is grounded in God.

On moral grounds, primal views in the African theological context are about a moral God. Some distinguishing characteristics of primal morals are respectfulness, justice, honour, equity, discipline, piety, and neighbourliness. These virtues sustain a community and give it a strong future. Van den Toren (2013, p. 9) argues that in the olden days, "when people violated a moral rule, they showed remorse. When they disrespect an elderly person, they apologise, and when they refuse to show hospitality to visitors or families, they feel offended. Also, their conscience speaks against wrong attitudes and actions that would threaten the harmony of the clan". Hence, some of the societal taboos are patience, chastity before marriage, faithfulness during marriage, mercy, truthfulness, justice, and hard work, among others. Hard work is encouraged among Africans because, without it, one is not qualified to marry or capable of marrying and taking care of one's family (Mbiti, 1989). This primal value in African thought is akin to biblical principles of how to work to "have something to share with those in need" (Eph. 4:28). For Macaulay (2024, p. 86), "asking God to provide by miracle is a behaviour which stands in stark contrast to hard work, which is over-emphasised today, and should never be a substitute for hard work. Because primal moral values will not allow that, it leads to laziness, idleness, stealing, and corruption".

In traditional African cultures, individuals, families, and the larger community assist each other in farming, building, and other projects. Therefore, assisting one another in farming or fishing connotes communality, for which reason Africans have such strong loyalties to their cultures and moral values. This is even strongly believed in Christianity concerning the family of God. By extension, a Christian has identity and security and also understands the essence of life because he is part of the family of God. For this reason, Taylor (1963, p. 109) argues that, "a Christian from Europe or America should learn from Africa how to see Man as the Bible does". This has been the major impetus and vital grounds for African theology based on biblical principles of communal life.

God gave wonderful gifts to Africans in their strong bonds between people and within the community. Concern for others is one of the key pieces of evidence of African personhood. Some notable concepts of well-rounded characteristics that agree with biblical teaching are forbearing, faithfulness, and self-control. Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian church that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience (forbearing), kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). In the African ideal, a person earns honour by living out these character qualities. Other areas of primal values in the Bible are generosity, hospitality, and attending to one's neighbour. African primal views hold hospitality and generosity in high esteem. Kame (2022, p. 33) establishes that "the move towards advocating for a Christian theology within an African cultural context is good because it is a proactive effort towards contextualization for the African people". I can, however, admit to some extent that there may be some degree of flaws, but the danger rests in how Christian theology and ethics are developed within the African context. Hence, for Kame (2022, p. 38), "a proper grasp of biblical and theological principles could help African theologians to begin the process of developing a robust African evangelical theology by developing a soteriology that is rooted in Scripture". This will help avoid syncretising the evangelical theological and ethical teachings and not to compromise biblical authority by integrating too much of African religious principles into Christian theology. For this reason, one has to be careful about the fact that there are varieties of vices which are sinful. According to Gaba (1971, p. 22), "Sin may be described as the breach of prohibitions imposed on a human being by his object of worship or the doing of anything that is displeasing to spirit powers with the result that the displeased spirit powers manifest themselves adversely in human affairs". While the African holds a moral sense of justice and truth, and the knowledge of the existence of good and evil, his primal world view seems to be the fulcrum around which every activity revolves.

Though many African churches still rely heavily on Western theological texts and curricula, many scholars in this work agree with the idea that primal views resonate with Christian thought of faith. Indeed, it is an excellent heritage to hold in high esteem the spirituality of primal views over that which is secular. In this respect, African primal views are much closer to the Bible's teachings than the Western secular denial of the spiritual/supernatural. Because of the African primal heritage of a belief in the spiritual/supernatural, it is easier for Africans to embrace the Christian faith than many people in the Western world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article makes a strong case for rethinking Christian theology through an African perspective, promoting a more inclusive view of salvation that goes beyond traditional Western frameworks. The methodology used develops a theology that is both genuinely African and Christian, reinterpreting Christian faith and ethics through African lenses rooted in communal values. The discussion on primal worldviews as the foundation for Christian faith indicates that if African Christian theology is to be relevant in Africa, it must incorporate primal values. In other words, African theology should centre on Christ. The study reveals that Jesus Christ came to Africa during his childhood, and his name is to be feared among the nations (Mal. 1:14). The expression of this belief should be based on both Christian revelation and African cultural values that align with the Christian faith. Furthermore, it is clearly stated that African theologians need to be cautious when engaging with Christian faith to avoid accepting ideas incompatible with the gospel. An

interesting point is that the cultures of the Bible and African primal views share many similarities, and both emphasise one God. However, we cannot claim that African and biblical cultures are identical simply because they seem similar. Therefore, caution is necessary to prevent this idea from leading to academic fallacies.

At the other end of the spectrum is the fact that Africans perceive every facet of human activity to have a spiritual undertone. The Western world needs to understand African theological views because one has to consider each other's theological views about God, since one might not have all the answers. Also, Western misunderstanding of African primal views is the possibility of gross error in interpreting them. To provide a rational common ground of comparison, Western seminaries and mission organisations should continue to partner with African institutions for reciprocal learning.

Finally, while African primal worldviews present a rich opportunity for global Christian theology, it is not without challenges of intellectual, cultural, gender, and structural limitations. Addressing these challenges requires continued critical reflection, engagement with modern realities, and the inclusion of diverse African voices, especially women and youth. This could be done by emphasising context, community, holistic salvation, and cultural identity to invite the global church to embrace a fuller understanding of the gospel. The fact that there is a shortage of African-authored theological works that reflect local realities and spiritual experience, the task now is for a two-way theological dialogue, not dominance, so that the body of Christ may be enriched by diverse voices, including those rooted in the African experience.

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