

AFRICANS NEED AFRICAN THEOLOGY

Christians in Africa need to develop their own theology. According to Joe Kapolyo, a theologian from Zambia, many of his African colleagues simply copy Western theology, which is influenced by rationalism. It fails to address specific African needs, said Kapolyo in his keynote address at the annual meeting of the German Association of Evangelical Missions (AEM) held earlier this year.

According to Kapolyo Western theology cannot provide answers to many African questions. A truly African theology must deal with subjects like poverty, tribalism, corruption, sexuality, and spiritism. Confrontation with the spirit world is a central element in African thinking. Western theology, on the other hand, regards demons as superstitious trash, said Kapolyo, although Jesus Christ himself drove out demons.

Despite its fast growth in Africa, Christianity has not succeeded in penetrating African culture, said Kapolyo. In many instances, Africans have only been touched superficially. They often mix the Christian faith with paganism: They are good Christians during the day and consult the witch doctor at night. This can lead to grotesque situations. There are thieves in Nigeria, said Kapolyo, who pray for God's help in robberies and burglaries. They also "tithe" from their loot, and pastors buy cars with the stolen money, said Kapolyo.

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