

Which Theological Ethics Should We to Teach: Indigenized or Recycled?

Some Reflections on an Inculturated Theological Ethical Education

Paul Chummar Chittilappilly

Introduction

Recently I read an aphorism about the modern educational system in the developing countries: A poor man collects aluminium beer cans with his donkey cart to get some money from the modern recycling factory. The powerful metaphor of this aphorism touches the core of the educational system in the developing countries: the poor student, with the help of his parents and sponsors, collects some knowledge and carries it in his cart to the job market in order to survive.¹ Often what the student collects is itself already recycled. The central aim of education remains to ensure the means of survival. Teaching and learning is aimed largely at the job market for which the easiest and most effective method seems to be recycling. This paradigm is justified by the argument that the job market looks for a degree certificate and that little else counts.

Background of a Strange Observation

My primary roots are Asian, specifically Indian, where I was largely educated. My secondary roots are mainly European, specifically Germany, where I lived, was educated further and worked for almost

¹ Though here only the masculine is used, it stands for both genders, female and male.

for a quarter of a century. A great deal moulded me during this phase of my life and much has contributed to the way I think and, consequently, the work I do. For most of the last decade I have been labouring to become more rooted in the humus of Africa, the land where human beings first appeared. The longer I live and work here in Kenya, East Africa, the more my questions are stimulated by the heterogeneity of Africa and African culture, languages, traditions and challenges! At times the young roots get stuck in the stones and rocks of the arid African humus, one of which is the issue of inculturation. The more I encounter an African theology, the more critical and sensitive I become to the multicultural influences I see and experience. Perhaps this makes me view the problems and challenges of inculturating theological ethics more seriously and sensitively than some of my colleagues here. My, albeit meagre, knowledge of the methodology of the transmission of theological ethics in the developing countries, especially that of Asia, suggests that the challenge of the inculturation of theological ethics remains the same. There too the poor students collect scraps of western theological ethical material from the different lecture halls and carry them to the examination halls for the sake of the future and their own survival!

In this brief article I try to reflect briefly on the present system of teaching theological ethics in Eastern Africa, despite my personal limitations and heterogeneous biography. The article has four parts: Part 1: The Idealism of an Inculturated Theological Ethics; Part 2: Present Reality of Theological Ethics Education; Part 3: A Brief Evaluation of the Existing System of Inculturated Theological Ethics; Part 4: Inculturated Theological Ethics in the Heart of the Church.

Part 1: The Idealism of an Inculturated Theological Ethics

Theological education in Eastern African has existed for not more than 110 years.² Some missionaries struggled for an inculturated theology from the very beginning and the challenges they faced and are still facing remain the same. The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, (CUEA) Nairobi, Kenya, a regional university under the ownership of eight Catholic Bishop's Conferences (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) was established in 1984 with the specific aim of creating an inculturated theology for African scholars.³ In its

² The first indigenous priests of Uganda were ordained in the year 1913.

³ I am deeply grateful for the periodic discussions over 8 years with Rev. Professor emeritus Dr. Dr. Charles Nyamiti, a founding theologian of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi. His incessant urge for an inculturated African theology and his loyalty to the teachings of the Church have greatly inspired me.

“vision” and “objectives and functions” it states: “The University is an instrument of liberation and transformation of people in their social, cultural, political, economical and religious dimensions. It is an academic agent for creating knowledge and producing graduates who are competent leaders for the Church and society.” It further states: “CUEA aspires to serve local and international communities by confronting perplexing issues and proposing solutions to some of the great problems facing societies and cultures. It provides faculties and opportunities to scholars to share the joy of searching for, discovering and communicating knowledge.”⁴ These statements express great ideals and are also great challenges to be fulfilled. Expressions of inculturated discipline, inculturated theology, inculturated theological ethics or inculturated disciplines in other faculties remain alien, although the ideological undertaking of the institution is to develop and to educate future African generations with an inculturated knowledge.

The lack of an inculturated discipline creates a vacuum which is experienced most in the realm of theological ethics. Theological ethics is the only bridge of communication, dialogue and negotiation that links burning world issues and theology; its own special character makes theological ethics a “moral imperative” for finding solutions for the problems and challenges of the world today. No other discipline has this unique mission and function, especially in the eyes of the secular world. In an increasingly secularised world where the religions and their specific disciplines and principles have little sway, we are nevertheless embarrassed by the problems in society about which theological ethics could have an increasing say by its very nature of ethics. It is urgently needed for finding solutions in today’s world and the world appears to be more prepared to enter into dialogue with the various specialised areas of practical ethics. For e.g. Bioethics, Business Ethics, Medical Ethics, Political Ethics, Sexual Ethics etc, etc. In searching for a common denominator for principles which are based on the constitution of the person and which can “function as the fundamental criteria for laws affecting the rights and duties of all”⁵ the world outside and the ethicists inside repeatedly come together in the upper room of conferences. But is not the “language” spoken there, and the solutions that are fabricated, Babylonian? In the roaring tumult of the discussions of the western theological ethicists, Neo-Greek philosophers, North American and Canadian

⁴ The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (AMECEA): *A Commitment to Provide Quality Education, Research and Community Service*, Nairobi: CUEA Publications 2006, 2.

⁵ Letter of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger to the Rector of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, on 05th November 2004.

pragmatic ethicists, the weak and stammering words of the inculturated ethics of the poor men from Africa, Asia and Latin America are not heard or taken into account and generally get lost!⁶ The theological ethicists from the developing countries return home with at most some more collected cans to recycle for their survival.

Part 2: Present Reality of Theological Ethics Education

African philosophers, theologians and ethicists have been labouring for more inculturated solutions for African problems for over 50 years. Till then the theological education and formation given to the Africans was purely Western, leaving a deep impression till today. Vatican II gave the necessary impetus for the development of an inculturated theology in Africa as in other parts of the world. More and more philosophers and theologians were sent to Europe and North America for their higher studies, where they started to appreciate the values of an indigenous culture and morals. It is true that one starts to appreciate one's own cultural and religious values when one is uprooted from one's own cultural basis and begins assimilating the culture of the other! Most of these African scholars, however, are specialized and trained in the Western or American system and their tools are mostly Non-African. These hybrid theologians carry home a theology which is recycled twice, first during basic studies and then during the higher studies in Europe or North America or Canada. Moreover, the method of working on an indigenous theme does not guarantee an outcome of correctness and depth since the directors from other continents are not acquainted with alien themes and often look at them one-eyed. Once the Western educated hybrid theologian comes back the challenge waiting for him is not primarily that of an inculturated theology, rather he is asked to teach the existing curriculum which has little room for an inculturated theology or its areas of application. And the gap between what he teaches and the real world in which his students live and move is often great.

The Courses on Offer at Present

The present theological ethics curriculum and the courses offered are mostly the same as in any other Western or North American or

⁶ The work of James F. Keenan SJ deserves recognition and praise. The International Cross-cultural Conferences for Catholic Theological Ethicists, entitled "Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church" bring together Catholic Ethicists from all over the world. The First Conference was in Padova, Italy from 08th to 11th July 2006 and the Second is from 24th to 27th July 2010 in Trento, Italy where more than 600 Catholic Moral Theologians are meeting to fortify relations among themselves across national, regional, linguistic and continental boundaries.

Canadian theological higher educational institution. The difference is that some courses on offer have typically African ethical characters. The present theology curriculum, for example, of the faculty of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa gives an overview: At the 1st Cycle, Bachelor Degree Courses, the 49 core compulsory courses include 5 courses which are called African Christianity and Theology, i.e. 10%. Among 22 optional courses (15 Electives and 7 Seminars), there are 8 courses i.e. 36%, with an African character. In the 2nd Cycle, Licentiate/ Masters Degree level 4 out of the 21 Common courses have African theological themes (19%) and among the 24 Electives and Seminars there are 3 courses (12%) which are designed specially for the African church. Among the core courses some departments have 1 to 2 with an African character whereas other departments offer no such courses at all. At the 3rd Cycle, Doctorate level, there is 1 compulsory course among 3 core courses (33%) of African inculturated theology. It is evident that in the African faculties the theology and theological ethics taught are Western and imported although they contain universal elements. An outsider evaluating the whole system would ask himself: Is this not a continuation of theological colonialism?

Different Paradigms Applied to Elucidate an Inculturated Theology

After half a century's toil by some profound African theologians there are different paradigms in which an inculturated theology is moulded rather than recycled.⁷ One of the profound foundations on which

⁷ Cf. the publications of the renowned Eastern African Theologians Charles Nyamiti, Bénézet Bujo, Laurenti Magesa. A selection of publications on Inculturation Process in Eastern Africa: Charles Nyamiti: *Studies in African Christian Theology. Vol. 1. Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Mankind. Methodological and Trinitarian Foundations*, Nairobi: CUEA Publications 2005; Vol. 2 *Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Mankind: An Essay on African Christology*, Nairobi: CUEA Publications 2006; Vol. 3. *Some Contemporary Models of African Ecclesiology: A Critical Assessment in the Light of Biblical and Church Teaching*, Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 2005; Patrick Ryan (ed.): *Faces of African Theology; Theology of Inculturation in Africa Today: Method, Praxis and Mission* (Nairobi: CUEA Publications 2001). Bénézet Bujo/ Juvénal Ilunga Muya (eds): *African Theology. The Contribution of the Pioneers* Vol. 1, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2003; Vol 2, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2008; Bénézet Bujo: *Foundations of African Ethic; The Ethical Dimension of Community. The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South; African Theology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1998; Laurenti Magesa: *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2007; *African Religion. The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2008; *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate: From Intolerance to Coexistence*. Interreligious Studies, Vol. 3, Münster: Lit Verlag 2010; Michael Kirwen: *African Cultural Knowledge. Themes and Embedded Beliefs*, Nairobi: MIAS, 2005.

African Christian scholars begin their development of an inculturated theology is the Christological paradigm of "*Jesus Christ, our Ancestor*".⁸ A *second* foundational criterion is "*Jesus Christ, the Liberator*", an inculturated paradigm born out of the present reality of the majority of Sub-Saharan Africans, namely their alienation from and deprivation of a decent life style because of poverty, exploitation, corruption and dictatorial regimes (despite the claim of democracy!)⁹ A *third* foundation for an inculturated theological ethics lies in the exposition of "*Cultural practices and their Christianized understandings*". It is amazing to see how an increasing African awareness gives Christian meaning to some sound African cultural practices, though it is a very hard and difficult process since the cultural practices and their sociological and ethical meanings vary from group to group, from tribe to tribe, from language to language and from nation to nation.¹⁰ A *fourth* foundation of an African inculturated ethics is the excavation of the hidden ethical gems in the "*African Palaver*". The understanding of African palaver has timeless validity based in African anthropology and is highly concentrated in the communitarian character. In its dialogical, anamnestic and pedagogical nature palaver is powerful for teaching the ethical values

⁸ Bénézet Bujo, uses the notion of "*Jesus Christ, the Proto-Ancestor*", which seems to be deficient [(Cf. B. Bujo: *African Theology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2003, 69-84]. "Proto" connotes "the first", "the earliest" and it is then subjected to further modification and improvement. "Proto-Ancestor" cannot be valid for a Christological understanding for an African inculturated theology, rather "*Jesus Christ, the Ancestor*". Then Jesus Christ is immutable! "Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, ..." Cf. Easter Vigil: Blessing of the Easter Candle.

⁹ One of the powerful voices integrating the realities of the majority of Sub-Saharan Africans into the thinking and creation of theology, particularly in the theological ethics, is Bénézet Bujo. "If Jesus Christ is Proto-Ancestor, source of life and happiness, our task is to bring to realization in our lives the memory of his passion, death and resurrection, making of that Saving Event the criterion for judging all human conduct. ... This concentration is the goal of the absolute commitment of Jesus of Nazareth to the restoration of human dignity. He vigorously defended the rights of the weak, of women, of children, and identified himself with outcasts and sinners. B. Bujo: *African Theology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications², 2003, 80.

¹⁰ One of the well established research centers is Maryknoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS) at Tangza College, Nairobi, academically affiliated to both, Saint Mary's University, MN, USA and The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi. The publications of the founder and director of the institute MIAS, Michael Kirwen, the Tanzanian inculturation theologian Laurenti Magesa et al increasingly reflect a culturally founded ethics and its practices.

of a particular community to its members.¹¹ The *fifth* model is "Umuntu, an anthropocentric and vital African approach towards life and person", in which the different sacred African understandings of, a. "dynamism and vitalism of life", b. "solidarity, totality and participation", c. "sacredness of life", d. "anthropocentrism" and e. "liberty" are integrated.¹² In the African tradition the person, personality and life are of utmost sacredness and are to be respected and protected by every means. The *sixth* model is "*communitarian and the modal of family*", which is the soul of the African thinking pattern; in the words of John S. Mbiti "I am, because we are, and since we are therefore I am".¹³ The African church in its 1st Synod created great waves with the motto: "*Church as Family*". A *seventh* Herculean task was undertaken by American Maryknoll Missionaries, Joseph G. Healy and Donald F. Sybertz, who constructed an "*African Narrative Theology*"¹⁴ by collecting *African Proverbs, Sayings, Idioms, Riddles, Stories, Fables, Plays and Folk songs, etc* which contain moral teaching. There may be still other methods through which an inculturated theology can be derived, but all these different approaches of an inculturated ethics are still in their infancy and they have made little impact. African inculturated theology has still to take the floor for international theological ethicists.

Part 3: A Brief Evaluation of the Existing System of Inculturated Theological Ethics

Having seen some of the efforts at an inculturated theological ethics it would be dishonest not to note how they are seen and evaluated today. The first model "Jesus, our Ancestor" is criticized by modern thinkers who say that such a model would be imposing the thinking pattern of another elite group of theologians. Further, it has less validity in a rapidly changing society with more and more broken

¹¹ For a clear exposition of palaver as a paradigm for an African ethics, Cf. B. Bujo: *African Theology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications², 2003, 21-97.

¹² One of the pioneers of this inculturated theological understanding is Charles Nyamiti. Cf. *The Person: Proceedings of 2nd CUEA International Symposium*: (02 - 04 Feb 2010) (Forthcoming publication of the proceedings of the International Symposium).

¹³ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers¹⁸, 2002, 108-109. This monograph is valued as a general introduction to understanding African religions and philosophy. The work's limitation lies mainly in his one-sided perspective of his own Kaba tribe.

¹⁴ Cf. Joseph Healy/Donald Sybertz: *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications⁴, 2005.

families where an increasing number of Africans do not even know who their ancestors are. The second model, "*Jesus Christ, the Liberator*", could be very relevant for the majority of Africans but there is a danger of slipping into a socialist and Marxist thinking pattern that is totally contrary to the official position of the Church. The Church must be rooted in gospel values and not in the economic development of the society and its members. The main problem with "*Cultural practices and their Christianized understandings*" is that cultural practices constantly change. The younger generation hardly knows about the valuable cultural practices of former African society.¹⁵ Zealous missionaries have played an important role here, abolishing traditional moral African customs that upheld the ethical matrix. Just as the missionaries did not appreciate these riches and failed to understand their real anthropological, social and cultural meaning, so too the present generation of Africans see them as something strange and artificial. Western cultural practices are storming into Africa like hurricanes, mainly because of globalization and through the modern media. "*African Palaver*", the fourth model, seems as strange to Africans as to outsiders. After lecturing on Fundamental Theological Ethics Part I, I requested my students here in Africa to collect four African Palaver during their 6 weeks holidays for their own research papers. I was shocked that only 4 out of 24 students brought them, even after another two week extension! The rest could not write down 4 palaver which could communicate moral principles! It seems that they know more about modern stories from the T.V. and DVDs. There are deficiencies with all the models. The process of inculturation must be researched since no system is perfect and all have deficiencies, whether they are Western, Asian, or African. There are, however, some steps that can be taken in the transmission of theological ethics despite all the stumbling blocks in the inculturation process.

At present two different approaches are being used. The first approach offers basic westernized theological ethics with some add-on special courses on inculturated theological ethics. The main problem here is that the number of core courses and other academic assignments which a student has to complete during a fixed period of study means that the offer on inculturated theology remains optional. A second approach offering special inculturated theological courses raises many questions such as: is there a "Universal

¹⁵ Judith M. Bahemuka/Joseph L. Brockington: *East Africa in Transition. Communities, Cultures and Change*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001.

Christology” as well as an “African Christology(ies)”? Will some regard this as a deviation from the universal theological understanding of a particular subject and discipline? Will these two different approaches lead in the course of time to an abnormality in the universality and unity of the Church? Will it obstruct better and more intensive communication between theologians from different parts of the world and cause further Babylonian muddles? How far does such a development threaten the correctness of universal theology itself? There is a serious and urgent need for open discussion about these and other questions.

Another approach would be, for every course offered to include some aspect and character of inculturation. Though this is the ideal form of transmission of inculturated knowledge the time and space needed to cover the course content detracts from such a vast program. The main obstruction, however, is the basic training of the lecturers themselves, in that they have been systematically trained in Western modes of thinking.

Part 4: Inculturated Theological Ethics in the Heart of the Church

Since Vatican II the Church has opened her arms towards different cultures, especially where Christianity is more and more established. There is a flood of documents with regard to this issue.¹⁶ Inculturation is not a new theological jargon or a new technique for evangelisation, but is as old as Christianity and the Church itself. The first effect of the inculturation of Christianity is seen in Christianity’s urban character. We see two different streams in the spreading of the new religion, Christianity. On the one hand the new religion absorbed the language, culture, community life, form of socialisation and thinking pattern of the towns (Civitas) and was increasingly a “town religion”, especially in the first three centuries. On the other hand Christianity was seen as strange and foreign when it did not correspond to the external forms of the antique religion. A lesser degree of communication and exchange of culture meant that Christianity became established in the country side somewhat later.

¹⁶ Chidi Denis Isizoh has systematically compiled 100 magisterial excerpts and other important documents up to 1998: Chapter One: Statements of the Papacy of Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II; Chapter Two: Documents of Vatican Curia of respective Cardinal Prefects; Chapter Three: Statements of Regional and National Bishop Conferences of Africa; Chapter Four: Statements of African Bishops; Chapter Five: Bibliography of African Traditional Religion and Culture. Chidi Denis Isizoh: *The Catholic Church towards African Traditional Religion and Culture*, Lagos-Rome: Ceedee, 1998, 332 pages.

The recognition of the importance and even the urgency of the inculturated transmission of theology is not a recent phenomenon. One of the earliest references is found in the Epistle "To Diognetus" - a fictitious name -, a mid-second century document (105-111) from Alexandria written in a fluid Greek and excellent rhetoric and literary style, which could be one of the earliest, classical and foundational texts of the inculturation process. The author brilliantly reveals his method by articulating his own questions and enquires about the process of inculturation and then giving answers as if to enquiring Christians about the new religion of Christianity and about the tensions and problems their cultural practices raise. In chapter one he deals with enquiries about the new Christian religion, their God, their love for the other, the belated entrance of this religion into the world. Chapter two to four expose his rejection of Pagan and Jewish cultures. The following five chapters then develop a positive attitude towards the Christian faith with an invitation to Diognetus to join in the process of inculturated Christianity. The writing is highly influenced by ethical thoughts.¹⁷ The author's method of inculturation lies in his indirect way of communication: no mention of the name of Jesus Christ, no mention of the organization and liturgy of the Church, no supportive statements from the Old Testament, no mention of the age of the author. It can be discerned that he belongs to a well educated and privileged group of Christians who wanted his writings to attract the attention of Clement of Alexandria, a powerful social reformer and social ethicist of the time.

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind by country or language or customs ... While they live in cities both Greek and oriental, as falls to the lot of each, and follow the customs of the country in dress, food and general manner of life, they display the remarkable and confessedly surprising status of their citizenship. They live in countries of their own, but as sojourners. They share all things as citizens; they suffer all things as foreigners. Every foreign land is their native place, every native place is foreign ... They pass their life on earth; but they are citizens in heaven. They obey the established laws, but they outdo the laws in their own lives ... In general we may say that Christians are in the world what the soul is in the body.¹⁸

¹⁷ According to Rudolf Brändle the ethical reflections of Diognetus is highly influenced by the theologies of Paul and John as well as by the Soteriology. Cf. R. Braendle: Art. "Diognet", in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd Edition, Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1996, Vol. 3, 238-239.

¹⁸ Henry Bettenson (ed.), *The Early Christian Fathers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956, 74-75.

The letter to Diognetus in Alexandria, Egypt shows brilliantly that no distinctions are made in the life style of Christians as members of a new religion. Christians follow the customs of the country in almost everything as any other member of that society. Nevertheless, their lives are expected to surpass others in virtue because their lives are orientated towards heaven. Their lifestyle shows that they are like anyone else but they are different in their being. The genius in the letter to Diognetus is in the depiction of the interaction between faith and culture. Thus the author paves the way for the notion of inculturation as a programmatic and permanent process which roots the gospel values in a particular socio-political, religious and cultural setting. Since culture continuously develops the inculturation process can never be closed, but it is an on-going process. The inculturation process has the power to inspire, to form and even to transform the other as part of the universal Church. It seems that Jean-Marie Masson used the concept of inculturation in the missiological context for the first time in 1959, having inherited it from his teacher, the famous dogmatist Pierre Charles (1883-1954). Three years later Masson speaks of the need for an inculturated Catholicism!¹⁹ In 1974-1975 it inspired the 32nd General assembly of Jesuits. In a "Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation" the Superior General, Pedro Arrupe defined the concept of inculturation for the first time: "The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation'."²⁰ The theological foundation of the inculturation process rests on the incarnation, as Paul VI and John Paul II developed in their theological statements, as God himself took his human nature in a particular nature but is active in all cultures of humanity. The universality and adaptability to any culture is founded in *Gaudium et Spes*: "By its nature and mission the

¹⁹ Cf. Giancarlo Collet: Art "Inkulturation", in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd Edition, Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1996, Vol. 5, 504-505.

²⁰ Pedro Arrupe: "Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation", in *Jerome Aixela*, ed., Vol. 3, 172-181. Two years later the concept of inculturation gained its importance in the official document *Ad populum Dei nuntius*, Art. 5 and again two years later in the official document *Catechesi tradendae*, Art. 53. Since then the concept is increasingly visible in Church documents, especially in the inter-continental mission documents. John Paul II used it as *neologism* in *Catechesi tradendae* which was heavily criticized as a very unfitting or even an uninspiring word!

Church is universal in that it is not committed to any culture ..." (GS 42) and out of her long and rich experience the same document emphasizes that the "Church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and language of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all men and the requirements of the learned insofar as this could be done" (GS 44). In short: the mission of the Church is not limited to a particular culture and evangelisation is not a process which exports a particular culture. Moreover, the process of evangelisation can never be without culture for the Church can never promote a faithless culture. John Paul II strengthened the concept, connecting it with human dignity and the right of humans for their particular culture to be reflected in the forms and practices of faith.

Concluding Reflections on an Inculturated Theological Ethics

An African proverb states, "a stick in your neighbour's house can never kill the snake in your house" (a Ganda proverb). African problems can only be addressed and solved by African means, by inculturated ethical means. To be very clear: No indigenous problem can ever be solved by imported solutions. Indigenous problems must be solved by indigenous solutions. These solutions must have their roots in indigenous culture, anthropology and above all ethical principles. Otherwise the gap between what is taught in the lecture halls of the theological ethics and the realities outside the lecture halls will be unbridgeable. Therefore there should be a serious change in the transmission of theological ethics. There does not appear to be any other way than the hard and painful way of creating an inculturated theology, rather than recycling. The creation of inculturated theological ethics can only be brewed in African pots.²¹ The philosophical and theological ingredients should be original African, grown in African soil. Recycling aluminium beer cans is a Western system that maintains the strong impression of neo-colonialism and prevents the indigenous thinkers of a developing continent from growing and developing!

The most serious obstacle to transmitting an inculturated theology is the lack of readily available and relevant African philosophy in the form of books, published materials and other resources etc, as is the case for Western or Greek or Indian or Chinese philosophy. As with

²¹ Cf. Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator: *Theology Brewed in an African Pot.* – (Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2009).

any profound theology, African inculturated theology has to be founded and developed on the basis of African philosophy which is rich, ancient and pluralistic, and needs to be made accessible and available to scholars and theologians.

A second concern is that the different projects to systematize the African philosophies need to be coordinated and given concrete forms. Since the African continent is so diverse, there might be different philosophical zones, for example Eastern, Central, Western, Northern and Southern or categories according to similar tribes and cultural areas. Here the indigenous philosophers are mostly challenged.²²

A third step would be the creation of African inculturated theological ethics. This would begin by rewriting the basic and universal theological ethics valid throughout the Church through an African understanding and producing texts, reference books and publications. African ethical questions can then be answered by developing African Applied Ethics. In all these undertakings the norms of the official Church should be the guidelines as the Church has long and rich experience with regard to the process of inculturation.

The creation of an inculturated theological ethics is not about reviving former indigenous cultural practices in terms of theological ethics, or satisfying nostalgia for moral practices. Rather it has the unfailing aim of answering the challenges of our time in terms of subjectivity, autonomy, rationality, freedom, and critical and trend setting ethics based on the awareness of how the majority of humans live; that is the poor of the developing countries. They are not the objects of an inculturated theological ethics, but the subjects! They are living in a mixture of pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity. And lastly, let us always remember the aphorism of the poor man who collects aluminium beer cans with his donkey cart to get some money from the modern recycling factory!

²² As a humble undertaking, CUEA has initiated CUEA INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUMS: "... in search of a common denominator ...". CUEA INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUMS provide an arena for profound, constructive, and serene dialogue between international scholars and the CUEA community and in particular, African scholars from diverse origins and cultures. The publication of the proceedings of the CUEA INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUMS is to help students, staff and researchers, and any one who is at the service of others, benefit from a creative mixture of traditions and values and develop further innovations.