

BOOK REVIEWS

Kwesi A. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth

Biblical Revelation and African beliefs

New York: Mary Knoll, Orbis books, 1969, pp. 190.

This is an important book for the students of World religions and African culture. This book gives a wide knowledge on the African concept of God, Spirits, Priesthood, Sacrifice, Theological estimate of man, Theological basis of ethics, vital participation and Eschatology. Also, it gives comparisons with Christian teachings. The contributors - each a distinguished African theologian - explore the ways in which African Christians can express their faith without denying their African heritage.

In the World of Spirits, Africans distinguish four main categories of spiritual beings: The Supreme Being (God), a multitude of lesser divinities and other spirits, Ancestral Spirits, Evil Spirits.

The Supreme Being (God), is regarded as Creator, Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent. He is real, unique, universal and controller of the universe. He is called by different names, which are descriptive both of His nature and of His attributes e.g. "Orise" = "Source of Being", "Chukwu" = the Immense, "Odomankoma" = Creator, etc. Sometimes, He is known as "King who is in heaven" e.g. "Oba Oru" = King who is in heaven, "Onyame" = A shining living Being elevated above.

Spirits are made up of superhuman beings and spirits of men who died a long time ago. They are below the status of divinities and above the status of men. They dwell in the same geographical region as men. These, sometimes, topple the order of the world as a punishment for man's offences, but man has ways and means of preventing this or restoring the order when upset, by making direct appeal to God or indirect appeal to minor divinities and other Spirits.

The Ancestral Spirits are among the good Spirits. Their cult is of supreme importance in the life of the African. The Father of the Family begins the day by praying to them, dedicating himself and his entire family to their protection. Sometimes, once a year, the whole