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Review – Teresia Mbari Hinga, *African, Christian, Feminist: The Enduring Search for What Matters*

SimonMary A. Ahiokhai
University of Portland

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***African, Christian, Feminist: The Enduring Search for What Matters.* Teresa Mbari Hinga. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017. Xxv, 244 pp. \$45.00. ISBN: 978-1-62698-249-9.**

Some works hold captive the imagination of their readers while leading them to explore new insights that shatter previously held beliefs. *African, Christian, Feminist: The Enduring Search For What Matters* by Teresa Mbari Hinga is one such work. Hinga makes a strong case for retrieving the religio-political roles of African women that have been lost to the annals of history due to the manipulative role of colonialism in the continent of Africa carried out by Europeans. She begins with a retelling of the contributions of Kimpa Vita (Dona Beatrice), a female prophet, mystic, and political figure in the Kingdom of Kongo prior to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and situates her work as an avant-garde for the intellectual contributions of African women in the area of African feminist theology.

This work makes a case for a new way of being Christian in the continent of Africa; one that allows for faith expressions to be authentically African, inclusive of all voices, persons, and genders. It also calls for African theology to center its focus on the multiple social, political, religious, economic and cultural issues defining the lives of Africans.

African, Christian, Feminist: The Enduring Search for What Matters is divided into four major parts. Part one engages head-on the colonial traumas experienced by Africans. Such traumas have led to the silencing and erasure of female voices and their creative insights in the theological discourses going on in the continent. By affirming the relevance of inculturation to the practice of Christianity in the continent, the author traces the grassroot work that is being done by African women in their respective social locations.

Part two explores pathways for realizing expressions of African Christianity and theologies that address the ambiguities, challenges, and opportunities faced by many in the continent. Reflecting on the relevance of the Bible to African Christians, the author sheds light on the many ways that biblical exegesis ought to be done by African theologians. Affirming the relevance of diversity and inclusivity, a chapter is dedicated to the various Christological themes that arise while

doing theology in Africa. Part two concludes with a chapter dedicated to how faith in Jesus Christ ought to lead to the liberation of African women. Such liberation ought to affirm the multiple faces of Christ embraced by African women.

Part three dives into a systematic study of systemic poverty; the crisis of HIV/AIDS; patriarchy and violence against women; and the contemporary crisis of land grabbing going on in Africa. The author concludes this section by retrieving a Gikuyu theology of land that centers ownership and usage of land within the domain of communal flourishing as a corrective measure for the individualistic approach introduced by the colonial agents that have led to endemic poverty in the continent.

Part four provides a pedagogical model for doing transformative theology with the intent to make students of theology become more aware of the need to embrace a sense of global consciousness. The challenges faced by our world today are mainly caused by the primacy of individualism at the expense of otherness. The author makes a case for the relevance of embracing vulnerability as a pedagogical tool for transforming lives by telling her own story of journeying towards transformation. She explores insights she has gained from leaving her home in Africa to study religious studies and theology at institutions in the global north. She sheds light on how her experiences as an academic and scholar-teacher at a Jesuit institution in the United States positions her to be a bridge of friendship and collaboration for communities in the global south and the global north.

Finally, reading this work, one is compelled to appreciate the depth and breadth of scholarship and multiple interlocutors that Hinga makes relevant to her vision for how theology ought to be done in Africa. Furthermore, this work speaks to multiple disciplines like African history, missiology, cultural studies, feminist studies, colonial and post-colonial studies, social and cultural ethics, and above all else, this work has created a new pathway for doing African feminist theological studies. Theology ought to be interdisciplinary and this work has made a strong case on how this can be done.

SimonMary Aihokhai, Ph.D.
University of Portland