

fruitfully used to analyze the components of this broad concept of African culture and the inherent mechanisms and dynamics.

This is undoubtedly a very good book which we wholeheartedly recommend to students, pastors and theologians.

DR TAKATSO A. MOFOKENG

REPORT:

BLACK THEOLOGY CONSULTATION IN NEW YORK, USA

1-3 December 1986

On 30th November 1986 a team of eight theologians from South Africa converged on Union Theological Seminary in New York to fulfil a historic mission. They went to Union Theological Seminary as guests of the Ecumenical Program and Theological Field at Union with the purpose of attending a long overdue formal consultation on various aspects of the black theology of liberation as it is done on both shores of the Atlantic Ocean. This consultation was historic because it was the first time that black theologians on the continent and those in the African diaspora met formally. It is a well-known fact that contact between these theologians from Africa and US goes back as far as the 19th century. In a way this meeting was a strengthening of centuries-old warm ties as well as an affirmation of the strong bond that keeps us together as Africans over centuries and across oceans.

The following papers were read and intensely discussed in meetings which were very well attended by students, faculty and black theologians from different seminaries and universities in the US.

"Historical, Social & Cultural Origins", Prof. James Ngcokovane, Federal Theological Seminary.

Prof. James M. Washington, Union Theological Seminary (UTS).

"Black Feminist Theology", Prof. Kelly Brown, Edward Waters College; Rev. Roxanne Jordan, Pastor, Jeffrey's Bay Congregational Church.

"Present Socio-politico-economic movements for Change", Prof. Cornel West, Yale Divinity School; Prof. S.S. Maimela, University of South Africa (UNISA)

"Theological Reflections", Prof. James H. Cone, Union Theological Seminary (UTS); Prof. Takatso Mofokeng, University of South Africa (UNISA).

"The Future and Mutual Support", Prof. Josiah U. Young, Colgate University; Prof. Itumeleng Jerry Mosala, University of Cape Town.

It was decided that these papers, which were of a very good quality, should be published, in order to widen the dialogue to include those theologians who were not able to attend. Both sides affirmed the necessity of a continuing formal dialogue which will culminate in another meeting in 1988, a year after appearance of the report of the 1984 dialogue.

The Black Theology Project heartily thanks Prof. James H. Cone and Mr Dwight Hopkins, who worked tirelessly to make the dialogue a success and the stay of our delegation at Union very pleasant. The Union Theological Seminary community also deserves our gratitude for the support given to that delegation.

DR TAKATSO MOFOKENG

REPORT ON THE SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION OF THIRD WORLD THEOLOGIAN (EATWOT), HELD IN OAXTEPEC, MEXICO, DECEMBER 7-14, 1986

I. PARTICIPANTS

Some 56 EATWOT members represented Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States minorities. Africa was represented by 14 people, and three of them came from South Africa. They were Rev. Frank Chikane, Dr Takatso Mofokeng and Prof. Simon Maimela. Of the 56 present, 33 were men and 23 women. There were also observers from the First World, representatives from the press, local theologians, members of the host committee and invited guests from Mexico.

II. THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

The general theme of the assembly was: "Commonalities and Divergences in Third World Theologies". The objective was to examine closely the common and diverse aspects in the theologies that are developing in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as from US minorities. This examination focused on theological issues, orientations and methodologies as well as the challenges that particular realities of these continents pose to one another.

To facilitate discussion and sharing of ideas, each continent was

asked to write a position paper of about 20 pages on the theme of the assembly, focusing on:

- (a) Commonalities in Third World Theologies
- (b) Differences in Third World Theologies
- (c) Cross-fertilization among Third World Theologies
- (d) The future of Third World Theologies

This attempt at theological exchange among the continents was only partially successful. Although the quality of the position papers and the experience and competence of the participants were ample basis for an enriching and fruitful dialogue, the interspersing of General Assembly business, such as elections and amendments to the constitution, precluded a more in-depth analysis of the Conference theme and frustrated some of the participants.

Despite this difficulty, several conclusions were arrived at as a result of the group and plenary sessions. It was the general consensus that the situation of oppression in the Third World, which has given rise to the new theologies, has remained unaltered. Thus the practice and reformulation of theology from the perspective of the oppressed, continues to be in service and support of the struggle for the liberation of all marginalized peoples. From this standpoint, there are many commonalities among Third World theologies but we need a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the forms of oppression.

The differences arise out of the cultural and religious experiences of the continents, and the religions of countries. Dialogue and cross-fertilization are both necessary and should go hand in hand in the theologizing process for the mutual enrichment of the continents and regions.

The Latin Americans' theological option intends to link the sociopolitical with the cultural and religious traditions of the continent. Asian theology seeks to relate the positive contributions of the traditional spiritualities of the great religions to the peoples' struggle for liberation and poses the challenge for a cosmic holistic theocentric christology. As African theology explores cultural identity in the face of racist oppression, it serves as a critique to the models of traditional theology. The theological efforts of US Minorities challenge both the political and economic system of their nation as well as the main neo-conservative trends in American religiosity.

The sizeable womens' delegation at the Conference presented a critique of EATWOT and asked for an integration of womens' perspective in Third World theologies. A week before the Conference, from December 1-5, an intercontinental meeting of women

theologians from Asia, Africa and Latin America was held on the same site in Oaxtepec to share in the theme "Doing Theology from Third World Women's Perspective".

III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly of EATWOT was divided into four main parts: reports, elections, working groups on EATWOT business and plans for the future.

A. Reports

The President, Emilio de Carvalho, the Executive Secretary, Virginia Fabella and Treasurer, Sergio Torres, presented their reports. The chairperson of the two working commissions, Enrique Dussel and Mary John Mananzan reported on the work of the Church History Commission and Women's Commission respectively.

B. Elections

The following persons were elected for the period 1986-91:

President: Sergio Torres (Chile)

Vice President: K.C. Abraham (India)

Executive Secretary: Teresa Okure (Nigeria)

Regional Co-ordinators:

Africa: Simon Maimela (South Africa)

Asia: Virginia Fabella (Phillippines)

Latin America: Maria Clara Bingemer (Brazil)

U.S. Minorities: Virgil Elizondo (San Antonio, Texas)

C. Working Groups on EATWOT Business

Six working groups and one *ad hoc* committee were established to study EATWOT's performance in specific areas of its life and work and to recommend plans and directions for the future.

The recommendations regarding publications and working commissions approved by the Assembly are the following:

1. That EATWOT have two official publications: *Voices from the Third World* as a semi-annual theological review and *News Bulletin*, principally for EATWOT members.
2. That EATWOT's two Working Commissions (on Church History and on Theology from Third World Women's Perspective) be maintained.
3. That a new Working Commission be created to deal specifically with the main theological issues confronting EATWOT in the different contexts.

IV. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Plans for the future include the deepening of EATWOT's theological thrust in methodology and content, and facing the new challenges presented by experience and reality. Programs will continue to be developed in the regions as well as inter-regionally through the Working Commissions.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

1. Africa

EATWOT will work on different levels in Africa, considering the experience of the past years and facing the new challenges to African theology. Some of the projects are as follows:

- (a) To pursue a dialogue between South Africa and the other African countries on the general theme, "Religion, Development, Power and Liberation".
- (b) To continue the dialogue already initiated between South African theologians and black theologians from the USA.
- (c) To develop a feminist approach in theology from the experience of African women.

2. Asia

EATWOT will develop in Asia a program on three levels:

1987-88

Level 1 — EATWOT people engaged in grass-roots movements and organizations will get together in different countries to share among themselves their experience and reflections.

1987-89

Level 2 — EATWOT people engaged in theological teaching or ecclesiastical institutions will reflect from a philosophical and theological point of view and will exchange with others similarly engaged through mutual critique of their reflections and writings.

August 1989

Level 3 — There will be III Asian Theological Conference (ATC III) where about 30-35 participants of these two groups will get together for dialogue, mutual challenge, critique and the formulation of a holistic Asian theology.

3. Latin America

- (a) Latin American theologians will continue the publication of a collection of books, which deals with all the major theological issues from a liberating perspective.
- (b) The following activities are planned for the next five-year period:
 1. February, 1988 — A second Consultation on "Black Culture and Theology" (1988 marks the 100th anniversary of the

- abolition of slavery in Brazil).
2. A third Consultation on "Indian Culture and Theology" (place to be determined later).
 3. 1988-1991 – Participation in the preparation and celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the arrival of the Spaniards on the continent.
 4. US Minorities – The regional co-ordinator of the US Minorities will submit his program at a later date.
 5. Caribbean Islands – Episcopal Bishop Alfred Reid from Montego Bay, Jamaica, EATWOT member, committed himself to make renewed efforts to start an EATWOT chapter in the Caribbean.

V. NEW PROGRAMS

Sensitive to the "signs of the times" in Third World countries for this new state, we listened very carefully to the experience of the people present at Oaxtepec and formulated a consequent program of action for the next five years, which is described in the enclosed report.

Among the different aspects, I would like to underline the following:

- (a) New sensibility to religions and cultures, as the real raw material of Third World theologies, going beyond the mediation of the Westernized middle-class of our countries.
- (b) Serious consideration of the women's perspective in theology.
- (c) Dialogue with socialist countries. Last year an EATWOT delegation went to China and had a fruitful encounter with Catholic and Protestant church leaders. EATWOT was perceived as a credible partner for dialogue renewal.
- (d) New openness for dialogue and relationships with First World Christians and theologians.
- (e) Creation of new EATWOT chapters in the Caribbean and in the Pacific Islands.

VI. CONCLUSION

This was perhaps the most important meeting of EATWOT during which its members had to re-evaluate the programs of EATWOT and re-orient its focus and vision and its work in the years ahead. Among many issues that will receive special attention are the problem of racism, class and sexism in the Third World countries. The issue of race was a particularly painful one to deal with, especially by people from Latin America where on surface there seems to be no racial problem. But the fact that there are a few members who are Black and Native American Indians is indicative of the reality of racism in Latin America, especially in Brazil where the population is more than 60%

black. The EATWOT assembly resolved to freeze the membership from Latin America until one-third is black and/or Native American. EATWOT has teething problems but its courage to face these problems is a sign of maturity and promise that no stumbling block, however great, will frustrate its work. Indeed, Oaxtepec, Mexico, rediscovered its importance as the forum for dialogue among Third World Theologians. Therefore, it resolved to be ever more determined to be a progressive and radical witness to the gospel of Jesus, as it tries to do theology in a new way so that both theology and God's people might be liberated.

PROF. SIMON S. MAIMELA