

# Comparative analysis jenkins and aikman essay sample

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## **Comparative analysis-Jenkins and Aikman**

This essay relates view points of Phillip Jenkins ' The New face of Christianity' and David. Aikman, " Jesus in Beijing" in discussing the influence of missionary Christian theology from two different cultural contexts. Jenkins' themes include, " Poor and rich, old and new, good and evil, persecution and vindication, women and men, north and south." (Jenkins, 2006).

Aikman( 2003) takes a more socio-political approach in interpreting the benefits of Christianity to China.

Missionary Christian theology when observed within its political context seeks always to Christianize and liberate people of Eastern cultures. Often they are perceived as pagan within their native religion. Jenkins in his assumptions seeks to draw similarities between what Christian theologians call unacceptable religious practices and the traditional beliefs of eastern cultures.

Therefore, what can Christian theologians tell these people about Jesus, the bible and Christianity that would not counteract their traditional religious cultures, but rather enhance it? Jenkins was very careful in his techniques of introducing Christianity to people considered pagan(Jenkins, 2006)

In chapter four, he references changes in cultural beliefs in Western civilizations which have brought new interpretations of Christianity. Concerns are that the doctrine ought to be relevant from a political, technological and social standpoint. Here he identifies a shift from Western world towards the South and ultimately the East. Precisely, when taking the message to the

east, missionaries ought to be aware of these new concepts and be adaptable (Jenkins, 2006)

More importantly, adequate modifications are necessary since it is further observed that Christianity is rapidly taking over China when the opposite is occurring in other parts of the Western society. Jenkins wonders if it will still be Christianity if this trend continues. He fears an acculturation of biblical principles and doctrines as it pertains to Jesus, the Bible and what many Christian practices signify.

David Aikman's account of 'Jesus in Beijing' speculates the beginning of Christianity in China as a religious underground occurrence. With precision he points towards the political benefits of Christianity to China now emerging as a world power if they are to gain some degree of recognition for acceptance to this forum (Aikman, 2003)

The missionary Christian theology is focused on becoming compatible with Western civilization for political gains. While Jenkins turns his attention towards the influence of missionary Christian theology in creating changes in perceptions of Jesus, the Bible and the Church, Aikman turns the other cheek.

His debate lies in the belief that Christianity is not new to China. He accounts for three episodes over a 1400 year period beginning from 655 AD, through to 1623 and eventually 1807 when it again became prominent. It is interesting to note that while Christianity in Western civilizations seems to be losing its focus within elements of modernization and social change; practice of biblical principles in China appears to be gaining momentum (Aikman, 2003)

## **Analysis of Walls, “ indigenizing” and “ pilgrim” principles Bedaiko, Kwame. Jesus and the Gospel in Africa**

Andrew Walls (1996) posits that the Christian Church teaches a doctrine of two opposing forces one denotes inclusivity and the other exclusivity. In reality we cannot be both, but this is where Christian gospel takes the congregation many times (Walls. 1996)

Inclusivity explains how people are ‘ indigenized’ in that they cannot interpret any doctrine outside of their cultural orientation. There must a correlation between culture and bible, culture and Jesus and more importantly culture and the Christian Faith. It then means that one must exist as a Christian being as well as a social being. They are inseparable. As such, the Gospel accepts people as they are with peculiar cultural differences.

Then comes the notion of exclusivity when the “ Pilgrim” aspect of Christianity surfaces. The gospel is supposed to transform. If this is true it would entail separating one’s self from one’s cultural disposition and adapting only doctrines of Christianity. Here is where Bedaiko Kwame’s interpretation of, “ Jesus and the Gospel in Africa’ becomes relevant to this discussion.

In Chapter 8 he gives an account of ‘ Christian religion and African social norms” linking authority, desacrilisation and democracy. He projects that Africa has its own religion and practiced Christian principles long before Western civilization infiltrated their culture. Christian Doctrine at the time of

impact merely tried to revolutionize their practices to put a Eurocentric dimension to not only their religion, but also politics (Bedaiko, 2004)

Hence, the initial response was antagonism to white authority and face of Christianity. Indigenizing was not acknowledged even though it is a sacred method of Christianizing pagans. Instead there were harsh routes for creating pilgrims and destroying cultures. According to Kwame (2003) they seem to have forgotten these principles altogether in their effort to establish authority, remove sacrilisation and promote a politically democratic society for their benefit.

Ultimately, in modern Christian practices whether it is Western or Eastern paths indigenizing is an important aspect of the conversion process. Jesus of the Christian religion practiced this principle when he was accused of eating with sinners. At the time he confirmed that he did not come for the righteous but to call sinner to repentance (Holy Bible). Therefore Indigenizing must proceed the Pilgrim principle.

## **Works cited**

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