

The current african interest in express devotion to god

Religion



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African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society” by Jacob K. Olupona

Chapter 12: “ Revitalization in African Traditional Religion”

This chapter discusses about the changes experienced in African traditional religious practices due to modernity. This is because of the institutional collapse and withdrawing appeal that emerge with modernization aspects.

The author indicates that the traditional spiritual beliefs are embracing new expression structures and avenues of survival in the present world. It is

apparent that the changes comprise of globalization, commercialization, politicization and characterization among other aspects. This implies the

traditional beliefs are changing to conform to the modern demands of the society. In this regard, church structures are streamlined to accommodate

different elements of commercialization and politics. The chapter further

discusses the process, such as cultural, political and economic, that make

the traditional religions to maintain their strengths in the communities. This

portrays how modernity changes can affect the traditional spiritual

institutions and influence the communities. The author concludes that the

incorporation of modernity with spiritual beliefs affected the structures of the churches (Olupona, 1991).

Chapter 13: “ Tradition and Continuity in African Religions”

Chapter 13 tackles the introduction of new religions in non-Western nations in the current era. This entails the new religious movements that might have emerged from the original ones as break-offs or independent developments.

The author states that division and schism are the domestic features of

these latest movements. Similarly, government harassment contributes to

external pressures that enhance the disintegrations (Olupona, 1991). The

internal schisms emerge from cultural plurality and the failure to have stable leadership responsibilities and succession patterns. The development is a result of the collapse of customary religious influence and the alterations of the numerous functions of faith into the secular sphere. Although the secular aspect is still not dominant in the African context, it is eroding the significance of customary religions. The break-off religions are coming up with secular incorporations into their practices that affect the traditional practices (Olupona, 1991). However, the structural changes are common due to modernity and changes in perceptions of the churches.

Chapter 14: " Perseverance and Transmutation in African Traditional Religions"

This chapter recognizes the significance of the African traditional religious attitudes despite the modern developments. For instance, in social places like markets, Bibles are being distributed across Nigeria meant to heal boils or destroy a competitor. Similarly, in Zaire, rituals to appease ancestors are still conducted at mining sites (Olupona, 1991). There are also instances where prominent people are prosecuted for engaging in cannibalism or cult activities. This indicates that the conversion into Islam and Christianity penetrated because of the traditionalist contradictions. In this regard, the current African interest in express devotion to God was a reaction to catastrophic changes in the lives of people. The majority of the people realized that the traditional religions misled them, prompting them to embrace the modern religions of Islam and Christianity. It is apparent that the traditionalists were not innocent in their deeds, which cause calamities to them. The African religious shrines were for confronting enemies or derive

self-interest benefits. This failed the mission and functions of their duties as evidenced in Zaire and South African gold mines (Olupona, 1991). Some nations also believed in witchcraft because they did not understand the roles of the traditional religious groups.

Reference

Olupona, J. O. K., International Religious Foundation, & Council for World Religions. (1991).

African traditional religions in contemporary society. New York: International Religious Foundation.