



A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO DECOLONIALISM AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN AFRICA

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Ephesians

3:10

We called to demonstrate the unsearchable riches of Christ and the multi-faceted wisdom of God, to principalities and powers in heavenly places

God's witnesses, the Church, consist of a body of believers who are made up of a remnant of believing Jews, together with a body of believing Gentiles..

Kirche und koloniale Denkmuster

My friend from Germany send me this last week: In a discussion on decolonising Christianity with the bishop of ELCSA, he just use an interesting idea to describe decolonisation. He said: "don't eat the bread with the plastic and don't throw away the bread because of the plastic" (Bishop Nkosinathi Msawenkosi Myaka) Kirche und koloniale Denkmuster – (Church and Colonial Thought Patterns)





DEFINATION OF TERMS

- **Colonialism** - the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically: the state apparatus that was dominant under colonialism.
- **Decolonisation:**
 1. the action or process of a state withdrawing from a former colony, leaving it independent: they thought they could assist the process of decolonization and local self-determination | the decolonization of Africa and Asia | [as modifier] : the decolonization process.
 2. the process of freeing an institution, sphere of activity, etc. from the cultural or social effects of colonization: he said decolonization of the museum's galleries was important and long overdue.



SOME AFRICAN SCHOLARS SAYS:

- John Mbiti writes: “... The image that Africans received, and to a great extent still hold, of Christianity, is much colored by colonial rule and all that was involved in it. We are still too close to that period to dissociate one from the other” (Mbiti, 1969:231).
- Iwe has described colonialism as: “... a phase in the evolution of Africa characterized by intensive geographical explorations, the slave trade, the scramble for Africa, the territorial ambitions and pretensions of the Western nations, the imposition of alien rule and institutions, the planting of Western forms of Christianity, acculturation, racialism and exploitation...”(Iwe, 1985).

WHAT ABOUT CRITICAL RACE THEOLOGY?

- D. A. Horton directs the intercultural studies program at California Baptist University and serves as associate teaching pastor at The Grove Community Church in Riverside, California. His 2019 book, *Intensional*, presents a “kingdom” view of ethnic divisions and reconciliation. Horton has written a four part series on Ed Stetzer’s blog, The Exchange, about CRT and Christian missions.
- Horton joined global media manager Morgan Lee and senior news editor Kate Shellnutt to discuss what critical race theory is, why it unnerves some Christians, and what can be done to help Christians stop talking past each other when it comes to addressing the reality of racial injustice.
- **Do we need someone who can take some of the ideas proposed in the framework of critical race theory and add that theological dimension to make the bridge happen for people who still see it in conflict?**
Horton: Well, there have been many, many Christians who are living out their vocations as given to them by God, in the different spaces and arenas in society. In the behavior sciences, social work, the field of education, and legal studies, you have believers who engage the terms, the language, and the concepts, but at the same time, they’re also looking for the way that they can communicate a biblical perspective. Understanding that society is not going to be perfectly transformed, that our finish line is not a utopia of this side of eternity, but rather it is residents in the city of God that we read about in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.





Critical Race Theory

- Critical race theory is a cross-disciplinary examination – by social and civil-rights scholars and activists – of how laws, social and political movements, and media shape, and are shaped by, social conceptions of race and ethnicity.
- Critical race theory (CRT), intellectual and social movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour. Critical race theorists hold that racism is inherent in the law and legal institutions of the United States insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between whites and nonwhites, especially African Americans. Critical race theorists are generally dedicated to applying their understanding of the institutional or structural nature of racism to the concrete (if distant) goal of eliminating all race-based and other unjust hierarchies.
- **Critical race theory has six main tenets:**
 1. Race isn't a biological difference between human beings. Rather, it's a socially invented category used to oppress and exploit people of color.
 2. Racism in the United States is normal, not aberrational.
 3. Legal "advantages" for people of color tend to serve the interests of dominant white groups. Racial hierarchy is typically unaffected or even reinforced by alleged "improvements" to the legal status of people of color.
 4. Members of minority groups are assigned negative stereotypes, which benefits white people.
 5. No individual can be adequately identified by membership in only one group; people belong to multiple identity groups and are affected by assumptions about more than one group.
 6. The experiences people of color have with racism provide insights into the nature of the U.S. legal system.

Though critical race theory originated in the legal field, scholars of all kinds have employed it in their own areas of study.

And outside of universities and academic journals, people use the tenets of CRT to make sense of the world around them— a world that includes poverty, police brutality, voting rights violations, and other issues influenced by the many different ways race is understood (and misunderstood) in the United States.

DISCUSSIONS

As Christian practitioners whether church pastors or leaders in theological education looking at the language developed through CRT or decolonialism:

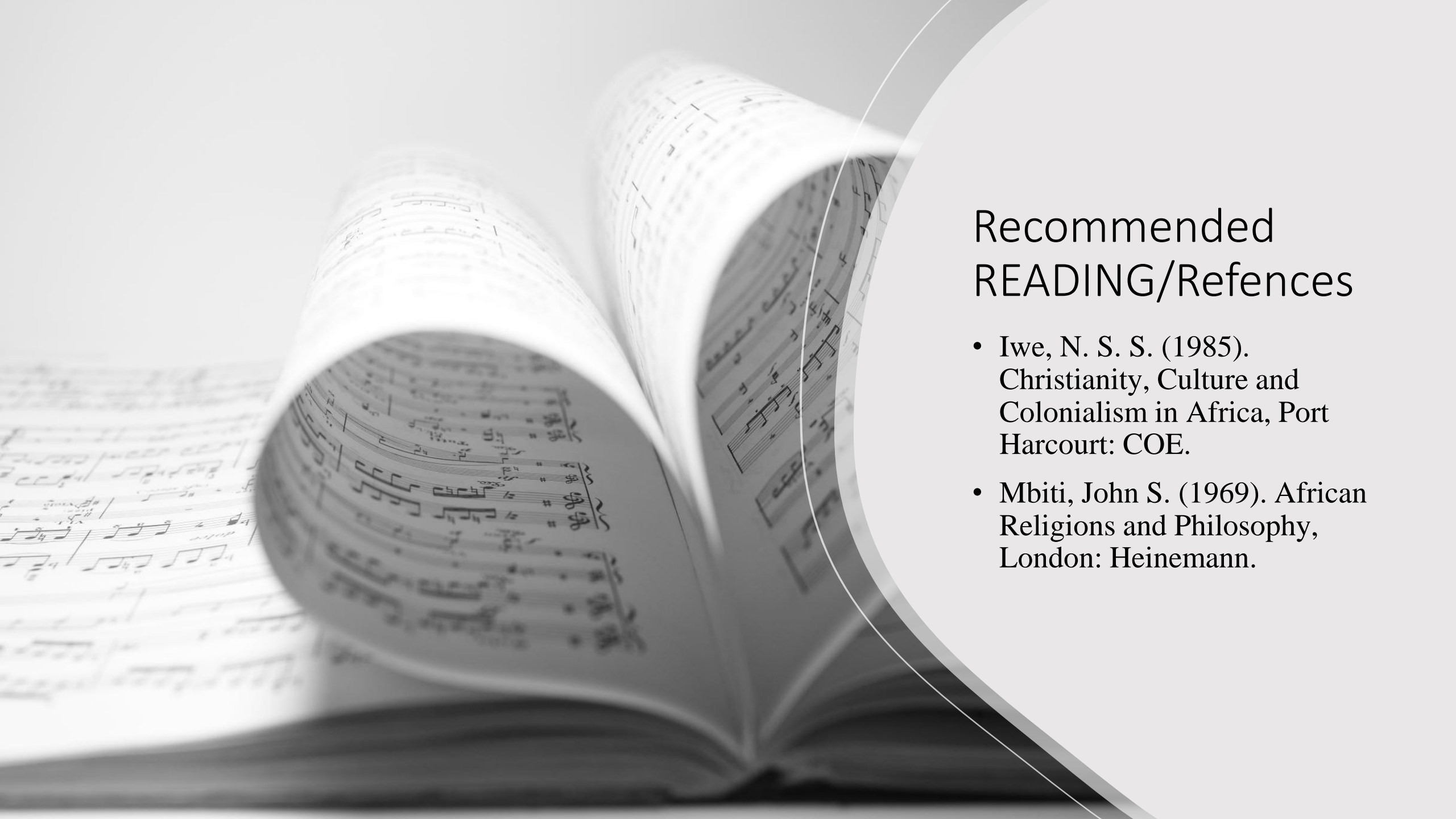
- What are the ways that it's helpful, or are there places where there are limits or concerns?
- Are there boundaries you draw for how it can be employed as a tool within a faith structure?
- Do you think the reason that some Christians are turning to the language of critical race theory is that they haven't found sufficiently comprehensive language within Christian contexts to talk about racial injustice?
- Can you see the genuine or sincere motives that people have for raising questions about critical race theory? Do you see a good reason or the gospel as a motivation for people who are still suspicious, skeptical, or trying to learn?





Concluding Thoughts

- Critically analysing what is plastic and what is bread change the method but not the message
- Avoid being extreme but loving in our response
- Found out reasons behind every action so as to deal with the source
- Unity of cultures is a true reflection Ephesians 3:10
- Every culture has the good and bad things we should not throw away the child with bath water
- We should not shoot down these conversations as "politics" but find a way of listening for better understanding
- Always approach it in a Godly man
- Speak out against all evil



Recommended READING/References

- Iwe, N. S. S. (1985). Christianity, Culture and Colonialism in Africa, Port Harcourt: COE.
- Mbiti, John S. (1969). African Religions and Philosophy, London: Heinemann.