


An analytical study of Kwame Bediako's theological methods

George Emmanuel Acquah¹ 

¹ Adventist University of Africa, Kenya.

ABSTRACT

Insight into Kwame Bediako's theological methods is vital for African Christianity. This paper seeks to analyze Kwame Bediako's approach to theological method within the framework of biblical theology. The study employs a qualitative theological approach to analyze, interpret, and critically examine Bediako's theological methods within the framework of African Christian thought. This methodology suits the study's aim of exploring meanings, concepts, and theological constructs in Bediako's writings, rather than quantifying data. The findings indicate that Bediako emphasizes Jesus Christ as the main divine revelation, viewing Christian scriptures, African traditional religions, and cultures as interconnected media that prepare Africans for experiencing God's fullness in Christ. The findings demonstrate that Bediako's theological approach centers on Scripture as the key to African theology, recognizing oral traditions and cultural influences that lead to diverse interpretations. He uses the hermeneutics of the mother tongue, emphasizing cultural context over the original authors' intent, called "reverse hermeneutics" technique. By contextualizing biblical concepts within African ancestral traditions, his method leans more toward eisegesis than traditional exegesis. This study contributes to African Christian theology by emphasizing the importance of grounding theology in Scripture and advocating for the historical-grammatical method of interpretation, which ensures biblical understanding before cultural application. It recommends a Christ-centered, Scripture-based approach that critically engages culture while upholding the authority of divine revelation.

Keywords: Revelation, Mother Tongue, Grassroots Theology, Theological Method.

INTRODUCTION

The quest for genuine African Christian distinctiveness has become crucial in the African theological landscape. African theology represents a form of theological thinking and expression among African Christians.¹ This study of God resonates with the needs and perspectives of Africans. African theologians believe that African Christianity is infused with Western culture and mindset.² They argue that Africans

¹ John S. Mbiti, *The Biblical Basis for Present Trends in African Theology*, African Theological Journal (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1975).

² African theologians such as Bolaji Idowu, John Mbiti, Kwesi Dickson, Charles Nyamiti, Kwame Bediako, Lamin Sanneh, John Pobee, and others.

received Christianity and a comprehensive Western cultural package.³ This insight has spurred efforts to distinguish African Christianity from Western perspectives. The quest for African Christianity, rooted in African culture and mindset, has become essential. This objective requires the development of a distinct African theological method that offers a systematic and well-informed approach to interpreting the African theological context.

Theological method arises when an individual adopts a method to achieve a distinct purpose. The purpose is to develop an African theological method grounded in the Bible and relevant to the spiritual needs of the African people. The theological method must guide the effort to understand the word of God.⁴ African theological method requires the study of the word of God within an African context.⁵ This requires a theological method that aligns with the African worldview. The goal of African theology is to develop a theological method that embodies Africa's complete identity, being both fully African and Christian.

Kwame Bediako, an African theologian, has developed an African theological method evident in his teaching and writing.⁶ Therefore, this paper aims to examine Kwame Bediako's theological method in the context of biblical theology. It systematically analyses his primary texts and relevant secondary literature. The second section assesses Kwame Bediako's background and Theological Influence, the third examines his theological method, the fourth analyzes his theological method, and the final section concludes the study.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a qualitative theological approach to analyze Bediako's theological methods within African Christian thought. This method aims to explore meanings and theological concepts in his writings by interpreting texts and assessing their significance. Primary sources include Bediako's books, articles, and essays, while secondary sources are scholarly critiques and interpretations. The approach examines how Bediako develops his theology and its impact on African Christianity, emphasizing interpretation over empirical data.

This methodological framework is based on Bediako's hermeneutical theology, aiming to uncover the identity of African Christianity through thematic analysis of motifs such as identity, revelation, and culture. It examines his understanding of divine revelation, emphasizing Jesus Christ as the definitive revelation of God. The approach considers how Christ's revelation is mediated through Scriptures, African Religions, and cultural systems, employing comparative hermeneutics to balance these influences while maintaining Christ's primacy.

The study also explores mother-tongue hermeneutics, "grassroots theology," and "oral theology" through critical analysis. It shows that Bediako's categories are not lesser but dynamic, contextually grounded modes of theological reflection. The methodology combines a historical-theological view, placing Bediako within early Christian and modern African thought. This approach broadens the analysis by employing qualitative methods, hermeneutics, thematic analysis, and critique to highlight Bediako's focus on Christ, African cultural contexts, and language and lived experience. In general, its objective is to critically assess the impact and relevance of Bediako on African Christian theology.

The Background and Theological Influence of Kwame Bediako

Manasseh Kwame Dakwa Bediako, also known as Kwame Bediako, was a prominent African Christian theologian from Akropong, Ghana, born on July 7, 1945.⁷ He made significant contributions to African Christianity and was raised in a Christian family in Accra, where he learned the languages Twi and Ga.⁸ He was the grandson of a Presbyterian catechist and evangelist.⁹ Bediako excelled at Mfantsipim School

³ Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992), 226.

⁴ Gwinyai H. Muzerewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985), 77-86.

⁵ Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 65.

⁶ Sara J Fretheim, *Kwame Bediako and African Christian Scholarship: Emerging Religious Discourse in Twentieth-Century Ghana*, vol. 13 (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), 8, 140.

⁷ Andrew F. Walls, "Bediako, Kwame," in *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, 2018.

⁸ Andrew F Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity* (Orbis Books, 2017), 10.

⁹ Walls, "Bediako, Kwame."

in Cape Coast, a prestigious institution founded by a British Methodist mission. He received an excellent English education during the Gold Coast's transition to Ghana.¹⁰ This period was marked by the influence of Kwame Nkrumah, a key figure who rejected Western rule and promoted Africa's future. Bediako graduated as the head prefect at Mfantsipim Secondary School.

In 1965, Bediako was enrolled at the University of Ghana. He became an eloquent orator and debater.¹¹ He attained academic excellence in French, winning him a scholarship for graduate studies in France. He was a confirmed atheist influenced by French existentialism. In France, he earned master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Bordeaux, naturally choosing African francophone literature as his area of research. Bediako converted from atheism and embraced a conservative evangelical faith.¹² He went on to do a second PhD in Theology under the guidance of Andrew F. Walls in Aberdeen.¹³

Bediako's theological analysis is influenced by several evangelical authors, including Tony Lane, Leslie Allen, Billy Graham, J. Gresham Machen, D. L. Moody, A. W. Tozer, B. B. Warfield, Francis Schaeffer, and J. I. Packer.¹⁴ In 1984, Bediako returned to Ghana and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church. The Basel Mission's beliefs and practices influenced his views on Christianity and African culture.¹⁵ Also, Frantz Fanon influenced Bediako, who rejected the church in the colonies, labeling it a white man's or foreigners' church. Bediako founded an institution to help scholars integrate their Christian and African identities.¹⁶ He founded the Akrofi-Christaller Centre for Mission Research and Applied Theology, now known as the Akrofi-Christaller Institute, with the support of his church and friends. He was the first rector of a university and wrote two monographs and over seventy-five articles. He died, following a serious illness, on June 10, 2008.¹⁷

Bediako's Theological Method

Bediako's theological method is centered on revealing the unique identity of African Christianity.¹⁸ He argues that Christianity and a genuine non-Western faith are distinct from European civilization. Bediako highlights an active God addressing African concerns. The movement of God is emphasized through Jesus, defining faith as a gift of grace.¹⁹ This section explores Bediako's sources of revelation and theological method, highlighting his understanding of African Christian identity.

Bediako's Sources of Revelation

In the Bediako theological method, Jesus Christ is God's foremost revelation. He sees the incarnation as the definitive revelation of God's nature and purpose.²⁰ The revelation of God in Jesus Christ reveals the essence of all humanity, including Africans. Bediako argues that Christian scriptures, African religions, and African cultures reveal God in Christ. God's revelation in Christ occurs through the media of Christian scriptures, traditional African religions, and cultures.²¹ First, Bediako views Christian scriptures as a medium of revelation for his theology.²² The Bible presents Jesus Christ as God within a cohesive redemptive narrative centered on Christ.²³ The Scriptures are key to understanding Christ's identity and actions.²⁴ Bediako often cites Scripture in his theological interpretations, especially the Gospel, Pauline epistles, and other biblical texts.

¹⁰ Walls, "Bediako, Kwame."

¹¹ Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity*, 10.

¹² Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism* (IVP Academic, 2013), 118.

¹³ Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism*, 118.

¹⁴ Timothy M. Hartman, "Revelation, Religion, and Culture in Kwame Bediako and Karl Barth" (University of Virginia in Candidacy, 2014), 73.

¹⁵ Kwame Bediako, "The Emergence of World Christianity and the Remaking of Theology," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 12, no. 2 (2009): 54.

¹⁶ Bediako, "The Emergence of World Christianity and the Remaking of Theology," 54.

¹⁷ Walls, "Bediako, Kwame."

¹⁸ Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience* (Orbis Books, 2004), 53.

¹⁹ Kwame Bediako, "Response to Taber: Is There More than One Way to Do Theology?," *Gospel in Context* 1, no. 1 (1978).

²⁰ Charles Sarpong Aye-Addo, *Akan Christology: An Analysis of the Christologies of John Samuel Pobee and Kwame Bediako in Conversation with the Theology of Karl Barth*, vol. 5 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013).

²¹ Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 228.

²² Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 157, 203.

²³ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 117 - 119.

²⁴ Kwame Bediako, "Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religion," in *Sharing Jesus in the Two-Thirds World*, ed. Samuel Vinay and Chris Sugden (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984).

Second, God's revelation in Jesus Christ occurs through the mediums of African traditional religions (ATR). Bediako opines that God purposely employs ATR to prepare Africans for the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ.²⁵ He argues that the expansion of African Christianity is connected to traditional religions as a preparation for the gospel.²⁶ Bediako emphasizes revelation as direct gospel communication to Africans, asserting that the Christian faith aligns with ATR practices. He claims that God has always existed in Africa and revealed Himself through ATR.²⁷

Third, Bediako asserts that God's revelation in Jesus Christ occurs through the medium of culture. He emphasizes the significance of various cultural interpretations for comprehending Christ's revelation.²⁸ He affirms the validity of pre-Christian African religious cultures as vessels of divine revelation. He asserts that culture can be and is used by God to reveal to humanity who He is.²⁹ He considers African culture a universal revelation to all Africans. Bediako connects universal revelation in African culture with Jesus Christ and the Bible.³⁰

Bediako's Theological Methods

Bediako's quest to interpret the Bible in light of Africa's socio-cultural values has shaped his distinctive theological approach. African Christians strive to understand and contextualize the Bible by engaging with African worldviews, gaining insight into the author's intent and meaning. His theological methods highlight mother-tongue hermeneutics and grassroots or oral theology, as detailed below.

Mother-tongue hermeneutics is one of Bediako's theological approaches to translating the Bible into African languages. He emphasizes the importance of mother-tongue hermeneutics for understanding the Bible.³¹ He posits that language conveys culture, preserves wisdom, and enhances spiritual engagement.³² Bediako uses Mother-tongue hermeneutics in translating Colossians 1:16, highlighting the Twi translation of "thrones" as *nhengua*. He argues this term refers to sacred thrones for departed royals. He asserts this method enables individuals to authentically hear, understand, and express their faith.³³ African Christians adapt Scripture to societal changes, showcasing God's dynamic revelation.³⁴ Bediako argues that Christianity's message is universally relevant in different languages, enabling authentic engagement with diverse cultures.³⁵

Grassroots theology is another theological approach of Bediako's theology. The phrases "grassroots" and "oral theology" are misleading. The name "grassroots" suggests that this type of hermeneutics is found only in non-literate circles. The term may seem to imply that we are dealing with only an oral phase, a transitional stage, on the way to academic or written theology, which then becomes the fundamental theology.³⁶ Oral tradition is a culture transmitted from generation to generation through word of mouth than written accounts.³⁷ Bediako reflects on the grassroots theology exemplified by the poetic prayers of Afua Kuma.³⁸ Bediako emphasizes the importance of oral theology in understanding God's revelation in African communities.³⁹ He highlights that this theology is rooted in the everyday experiences of Christians.⁴⁰ It is expressed through actions, such as prayer, Scripture reading, preaching, and storytelling, and is shared in singing, dancing, and conversational forms.⁴¹

²⁵ K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a World Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 225.

²⁶ Kwame Bediako, "The Willowbank Consultation, January 1978, A Personal Reflection," *Themelios* 5, no. 2 (1980):28.

²⁷ Hartman, "Revelation, Religion, and Culture in Kwame Bediako and Karl Barth," 129.

²⁸ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 426.

²⁹ Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 28.

³⁰ Bediako, "The Willowbank Consultation, January 1978, A Personal Reflection," 28.

³¹ Kwame Bediako, *Religion, Culture, and Language: An Appreciation of the Intellectual Legacy of Dr. JB Danquah* (Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2006), 14.

³² Bediako, *Religion, Culture, and Language: An Appreciation of the Intellectual Legacy of Dr. JB Danquah*, 37.

³³ Kwame Bediako, "Scripture as the Hermeneutic of Culture and Tradition," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 4, no. 1(2001): 2–11.

³⁴ "The Importance of African Mother Tongues and Bible Translation for Christian Mission and Theology in Contemporary Africa," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 22, no. 1 (2019): 4–11.

³⁵ Kwame Bediako, "Facing the Challenge: Africa in World Christianity in the 21st Century—A Vision of the African Christian Future," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1, no. 1 (1998): 52–57.

³⁶ Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*, 17.

³⁷ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 226.

³⁸ Kwame Bediako, "Cry Jesus! Christian Theology and Presence in Modern Africa," *Vox Evangelica* 23, no.1 (1993): 13.

³⁹ Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 128.

⁴⁰ Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 245.

⁴¹ Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 134.

Analysis of Bediako's Theological Methods

The analysis of Bediako's theological methods is essential to reveal the basis of his theology. The first issue explores the concept that Jesus Christ is God's primary revelation. Jesus, as the Father's revelation, has the Scripture, ATR, and various cultural contexts as means of transmission. Bediako identifies Jesus as a primary revelation, showing his theological strength. Pobee echoed Bediako's assessment, describing revelation as unveiling the divine to humanity.⁴² It was evident that the divine revealed to humans is the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. Bemmelen articulates that the essence and focal point of special revelation is embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, who represents God in human form.⁴³

First, Bediako acknowledges that Scripture is the primary medium of God's revelation in Jesus, demonstrating his theological acumen.⁴⁴ John Mbiti argues that the relevance of African theology depends on its connection to Scripture.⁴⁵ Pobee regards the Scriptures as the foundational theological standard and the primary document of the Church.⁴⁶ The Bible identifies Scripture as the authoritative and sufficient medium through which God's revelation is preserved and communicated (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Second, Bediako recognizes ATR as a medium of God's revelation.⁴⁷ Although ATR acknowledges the existence of the supreme God, it is not a revealed religion. Gyekye contends that traditional African moral values do not stem from religion, as ATR is not considered a revealed faith.⁴⁸ Mbiti asserts that ATR is rooted in oral traditions, in which values and lifestyles are passed down from elders to youth, reflecting customs and identities conveyed through stories and myths.⁴⁹ If a tradition is unwritten and passed down orally, it is susceptible to distortion and alteration.

Furthermore, Bediako mentions culture as a means of God's revelation.⁵⁰ It is not disputable that culture plays a crucial role in theological engagement. Nkansah-Obrempong agrees that African culture is a vital foundation for theological reflection within the Christian faith.⁵¹ However, the existence of many cultures implies innumerable interpretations of Scripture.⁵² Scripture remains unchanged; it can be translated into any language and is relevant across all cultures. However, Bediako's culture and ATR must be under the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. Scripture functions as *norma normans*, serving as the authoritative standard.⁵³ Meanwhile, ATR and culture can be classified as *norma normativa*, which is subject to the oversight of Scripture.⁵⁴

Bediako's quest for an African identity, rooted in Jesus as God's revelation through Scripture, ATR, and culture, provides the basis for his hermeneutics. Bediako interprets the Bible using his Mother-tongue hermeneutics, which emphasizes scripture translations and commentaries in local African languages.⁵⁵ This suggests that the Bible is accessible in African languages. It helps theologians differentiate the gospel's vital meaning from the cultural context.⁵⁶ It is evident that when Scripture is translated into any language, it transmits culture. Tompkins affirms that culture and language are interdependent and mutually reliant on each other for their existence.⁵⁷ Mbiti argues that translating the Bible into African languages promotes a deeper personal connection with its message.⁵⁸

Furthermore, Bediako employs another African approach known as grassroots or oral tradition theology. Bediako opines that the grassroots or oral tradition is culture passed down from generation to

⁴² John S Pobee, "Toward an African Theology," (*No Title*), 1979, 32.

⁴³ van Bemmelen and Peter M., "Revelation and Inspiration," in *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 30.

⁴⁴ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 132.

⁴⁵ Mbiti, "Mission Outreach in African Theology," 122.

⁴⁶ Pobee, "Toward an African Theology," 120.

⁴⁷ Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*, 203.

⁴⁸ Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (Temple University Press, 1995), 57.

⁴⁹ John S Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Waveland Press, 2015), 1-2.

⁵⁰ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 84.

⁵¹ James Nkansah-Obrempong, "The Contemporary Theological Situation in Africa: An Overview.," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31, no. 2 (2007), 140-150.

⁵² Paul G Hiebert, "Anthropological Insights for Missionaries. Grand Rapids," *Baker Book House*, 1985, 11-13, 97-103.

⁵³ Reinhold Bernhardt, "Scriptural Authority: A Christian (Protestant) Perspective," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 30 (2010): 73-84.

⁵⁴ Abraham D. Stone, *On "Normativity,"* 2024.

⁵⁵ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 84.

⁵⁶ Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*, vii.

⁵⁷ Andrew Tompkins, "The Interplay between Forms of Revelation: Implications for Theological Method," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 12, no. 1 (2016): 84-106.

⁵⁸ John S Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1986), 26.

generation by word of mouth rather than through written accounts.⁵⁹ Mbiti confirms that grassroots theology is conveyed through songs, sermons, teachings, prayers, and conversations. It is practiced openly and transmitted orally, remaining largely unrecorded and absent from libraries and seminaries.⁶⁰ This method connects Christian theology with African realities, blending biblical faith and local wisdom. Bediako deserves commendation for his cultural resonance hermeneutics.

However, Bediako's interpretation of the Bible appears to reverse the hermeneutical principles. Davidson explains that biblical hermeneutics interprets Scripture by understanding the authors' intended messages, discerning divine communications, and applying these messages to modern audiences.⁶¹ Bediako appears to begin with the African cultural context and then move to the Bible. He takes a cultural concept and finds a Bible text that seems applicable. Mashau and Frederiks categorized this theological methodology as the 'reverse hermeneutic method.'⁶² Mashau and Frederiks discuss the concept of "reversed hermeneutics" in African theology. In this method, the interpretative process moves from cultural contexts to biblical texts, emphasizing contextualization.⁶³

Bediako's interpretation of Colossians 1:16-17 illustrates his reversal hermeneutical approach, notably his interpretation of Colossians 1:16, which asserts: "For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or authorities, all things were created through him and for him." Bediako, with an African ancestral context, highlights the Twi translation of "thrones" as *nhengua*. He believes this term refers to sacred thrones for departed royals, hidden from public view.⁶⁴ Bediako appears to have integrated his ATR ancestral understanding into the Bible, reflecting eisegesis rather than exegesis. The thrones mentioned in the text are not linked to ancestral spirits but symbolizes heavenly or spiritual beings.⁶⁵ The term "thrones" is often taken to refer to the angelic.⁶⁶ Bediako's reversal hermeneutics reinterpret these thrones as ancestral seats, introducing a cultural overlay that distorts the original meaning.

CONCLUSION

God has made His revelation universally available to all humanity in Jesus Christ. However, Scripture is central to our faith and commitment to God because there is no other witness to Jesus Christ than the Written Word of God. Humanity recognizes the Bible as the sole source that reveals Jesus Christ and upholds His authority. Bediako's theological methods appear to serve as fortresses that defend the African worldview, rather than the biblical foundations. Traditions can overshadow scripture, shifting its role from guidance to mere support and elevating tradition as the primary source of theological authority. Bediako's theology is rooted in the cultural context, prioritizing Scripture as the authoritative Word of God instead.

The Bible serves as the foundation for all theological methods in the African context. Biblical interpretation is grounded in the principle of sola scriptura, affirming the Bible as the ultimate authority for truth. I recommend the historical-grammatical method for interpreting Scripture, that emphasize the original context, including historical and literary aspects. The grammatical-historical method analyzes grammar, syntax, key terms, and theological messages in the Bible. The resulting message is applied within a culture.

This study of Kwame Bediako contributes to theological scholarship by offering a critical yet constructive evaluation of his methods, particularly within African contextual theology. While acknowledging his significant role in affirming African identity in Christianity, the study cautions against allowing cultural traditions to overshadow the authority of Scripture, reaffirming Sola Scriptura as the

⁵⁹ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, 226.

⁶⁰ John S Mbiti, "Cattle Are Born with Ears, Their Horns Grow Later: Towards an Appreciation Of African Oral Theology," *All African Lutheran Consultation on Christian Theology and Christian Education for the African Context*, 1979, 49–50.

⁶¹ Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 58–104.

⁶² Derrick Mashau and Martha Frederiks, "Coming of Age in African Theology: The Quest for Authentic Theology in African Soil," *Exchange* 37, no. 2 (2008): 116.

⁶³ Mashau and Frederiks, "Coming of Age in African Theology: The Quest for Authentic Theology in African Soil," 116.

⁶⁴ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, 26-30.

⁶⁵ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Baker, 1983), 381.

⁶⁶ Francis D. Nichol, "The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary" (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 190.

foundation of all theological reflection. It highlights the need to ground theology in the Bible as the sole and reliable witness to Jesus Christ, thereby contributing to hermeneutical and missiological discourse by emphasizing a balance between contextual relevance and doctrinal fidelity. Consequently, the study recommends adopting the historical-grammatical method of interpretation, which prioritizes the original historical, literary, and grammatical context of Scripture, ensuring that biblical truth is properly understood before being applied in African contexts. In this way, the research strengthens African Christian theology by advocating a Christ-centered, Scripture-based approach that critically engages culture while preserving the universality and authority of divine revelation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aye-Addo, Charles Sarpong. *Akan Christology: An Analysis of the Christologies of John Samuel Pobee and Kwame Bediako in Conversation with the Theology of Karl Barth*. Vol. 5. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013.
- Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1983.
- Bediako, K. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a World Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.
- Bediako, Kwame. "Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religion." In *Sharing Jesus in the Two-Thirds World*, edited by Samuel Vinay and Chris Sugden. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984.
- . *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh University Press, 1997.
- . *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997.
- . "Cry Jesus, Christian Theology and Presence in Modern Africa." *Vox Evangelica* 23, no. 1993 (1993): 7–24.
- . "Facing the Challenge: Africa in World Christianity in the 21st Century—A Vision of the African Christian Future." *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1, no. 1 (1998): 52–57.
- . *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*. Orbis Books, 2004.
- . *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*. New York: Orbis Books, 2004.
- . *Religion, Culture, and Language: An Appreciation of the Intellectual Legacy of Dr. JB Danquah*. Series 37. Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2006.
- . *Religion, Culture, and Language: An Appreciation of the Intellectual Legacy of Dr. JB Danquah*. Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2006.
- . "Response to Taber: Is There More than One Way to Do Theology?" *Gospel in Context* 1, no. 1 (1978).
- . "Scripture as the Hermeneutic of Culture and Tradition." *Journal of African Christian Thought* 4, no. 1 (2001): 2–11.
- . "The Emergence of World Christianity and the Remaking of Theology." *Journal of African Christian Thought* 12, no. 2 (2009): 50–55.
- . "The Willowbank Consultation, January 1978, A Personal Reflection." *Themelios* 5, no. 2 (1980).
- . *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*. Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992.
- Bemmelen, van, and Peter M. "Revelation and Inspiration." In *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, edited by Raoul Dederen. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000.
- Bernhardt, Reinhold. "Scriptural Authority: A Christian (Protestant) Perspective." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 30 (2010): 73–84.
- Davidson, Richard M. "Biblical Interpretation." In *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, 58–104. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- Fretheim, Sara J. *Kwame Bediako and African Christian Scholarship: Emerging Religious Discourse in Twentieth-Century Ghana*. Vol. 13. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018.

- Gyekye, Kwame. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*. Temple University Press, 1995.
- Hartman, Timothy M. "Revelation, Religion, and Culture in Kwame Bediako and Karl Barth." University of Virginia in Candidacy, 2014.
- Hiebert, Paul G. "Anthropological Insights for Missionaries. Grand Rapids." *Baker Book House*, 1985.
- Martey, Emmanuel. *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009.
- Mashau, Derrick, and Martha Frederiks. "Coming of Age in African Theology: The Quest for Authentic Theology in African Soil." *Exchange* 37, no. 2 (2008): 109–23.
- Mbiti, John S. "Mission Outreach in African Theology." In *All African Lutheran Consultation*, edited by 122 Rebecca Schmutz. Geneva: Department of Church Cooperation, Lutheran World Federation, 1980.
- . *The Biblical Basis for Present Trends in African Theology*. *African Theological Journal*. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1975.
- Mbiti, John S. *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Oxford Univ. Pr., 1986.
- . "Cattle Are Born with Ears, Their Horns Grow Later: Towards an Appreciation Of African Oral Theology." *All African Lutheran Consultation on Christian Theology and Christian Education for the African Context*, 1979, 49–50.
- . *Introduction to African Religion*. Waveland Press, 2015.
- Muzerewa, Gwinyai H. *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985.
- Nichol, Francis D. "The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary." Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957.
- Nkansah-Obrempong, James. "The Contemporary Theological Situation in Africa: An Overview." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31, no. 2 (2007).
- Pobee, John S. "Toward an African Theology." (*No Title*), 1979.
- Stanley, Brian. *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.
- Stone, Abraham D. *On "Normativity,"* 2024.
- "The Importance of African Mother Tongues and Bible Translation for Christian Mission and Theology in Contemporary Africa." *Journal of African Christian Thought* 22, no. 1 (2019): 4–11.
- Tompkins, Andrew. "The Interplay between Forms of Revelation: Implications for Theological Method." *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 12, no. 1 (2016): 84–106.
- Walls, Andrew F. "Bediako, Kwame." In *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, 2018.
- Walls, Andrew F. *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity*. Orbis Books, 2017.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Pastor George Emmanuel Acquaah holds a PhD in Biblical Theological Studies with an emphasis in Systematic Theology from Adventist University of Africa. He has advanced expertise in the formulation, analysis, and contextual application of Christian doctrine. He also serves as the President of the Pioneer Ghana Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Additionally, he is a part-time lecturer at Valley View University. He earned an MPhil in Biblical Theological Studies from Adventist University of Africa, Kenya; an MA in Human Resource Development from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana; and a BA in Theological Studies from Valley View University, Accra, Ghana. His research focuses on the doctrine of God, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, Bibliology, Theological Anthropology, Theological Method, Historical Theology, Contextual and Comparative Theology, Ethics and Moral Theology, as well as topics like contextualization, exegesis, and religious studies.