



Eschatological Christology in African Christianity: A Reflection on Relevance and Implication

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ABSTRACT

Eschatological Christology in African Christianity is an attempt to appreciate the concept of eschatology (beliefs about death, judgement and the final destiny of individual souls and humankind) in African Christianity and decipher its significance and/or implication. The objective is to understand the complexities of sociocultural and religious factors that inform the definitions and meaning of the concepts in the theological reflection of African Christianity. Eschatological Christology in African Christianity is therefore concerned with how African Christianity in its unique religious context understands and interprets biblical prophecies about the “End Times” and the assertion of Jesus’s distinctive “status”, about his relationship with the Father, divinity and humanity. It is therefore reflective of the repositories of religious and theological reflections from Africa’s rich cultural and religious cosmology as well as already existing and available Western Christian theological Christopraxis.

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INTRODUCTION

Eschatology, “last things” was the first thing for the early church; it was key to what they believed; their assurance was the promised kingdom of God that was coming. They were confident that the promises of God contained in the OT concerning the salvation of Israel had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but that, the fulfilment was not yet attained. For Pannenberg, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, therefore, was the foundation of Christology, the absence of which all Christological arguments and rationalisation would fail.¹ Starting from this basis, Pannenberg constructs a Christology that methodologically proceeds “from below” that changes into a “high” Christology in its theological composition. In African Christianity, Eschatological Christology, therefore, is about how African Christianity in its unique religious context understands and interprets biblical prophecies about the End Times and the assertion of Jesus’s distinctive “status” about his relationship to the Father and divinity and humanity. Eschatology in African Christianity, therefore, is reflective of the repositories of religious and theological reflections from Africa’s rich cultural and religious cosmology as well as already existing and available Western Christian theological praxis. This article attempts to engage

¹ Brian O. McDermott, "Pannenberg's Resurrection Christology: A Critique." *Theological Studies*, 35, no. 4 (1974): 711-721; Frank E. Tupper, "The Christology of Wolfhart Pannenberg." *Review & Expositor*, 71, no. 1 (1974): 59-73.

various theological discourses that establish the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guide and direct the theological discourses of Eschatological Christology in African Christianity.

The Concept of Eschatology in Christianity

Eschatology is a term derived from two Greek roots ἔσχατος (last) and λογία (study). It is the study of the 'End Times'. According to Rowland eschatology is about either the end of an individual life, the end of the age, the end of the world, or the nature of the Kingdom of God.² Rahner defines eschatology as "the doctrine about humans insofar as they are "beings" who are open to the absolute future of God."³ To Rahner it is eschatology that gives expression to human beings as Christianity understands them; as beings who "ex-ist" from out of their present 'now' towards their future.⁴ Bauckham outlines 'four last things' that usually eschatology expects to be the ultimate fate of humans; (1) Resurrection, (2) Judgement, (3) Heaven, and (4) Hell.⁵ These form the last section of dogmatic theology. Bauckham⁶ Gulley⁷ further argues that in the 20th century and beyond, eschatology is not to be seen just as one doctrine amongst others to be studied after the others; but as a framework of the whole subject of theology.

Eschatology, the "*Last Things*" was the first thing for the early church; the foremost content of their faith, their hope was the coming of the kingdom of God. They were convinced that the promises of God in the Old Testament about the coming salvation of Israel had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, however, the fulfilment was not yet complete. That is, they waited for Christ's Second Coming, which they believed was imminent. This expectation was in two forms; (a) expectation of a messianic kingdom in this world which was to be established by an earthly messiah from the house of David (b) anticipation of a divine kingdom, which was to be inaugurated by the messiah, (Son of Man), and in which the "*chosen*" of the kingdom from all times would share in the state of the resurrection. According to Schwarz eschatology provides the basis for the understanding of prophetic passages in the Bible and how to live in response to what God is going to do in the last days (End Times).⁸ In the available literature, three distinct forms of eschatology are outlined; (a) messianic eschatology (b) millennial eschatology and (c) apocalyptic eschatology. Other forms also include pneumatological eschatology, soteriological eschatology and ontological eschatology.

Messianic eschatology emphasises a redemptive figure who, it is supposed, will lead the people of God, now suffering and oppressed, into a better historical future. Messianic eschatology encompasses visions of the retribution and justice of God that will befall oppressive political and religious leaders. According to Eldon, local historical narratives and expectations have enormously shaped the content and context of belief in the fulfilment of history.⁹ Millennial eschatology emphasises shared, public salvation and claims that people will be able to go through the great cataclysms of the Endtime before fulfilling the age-old dream of living in an earthly paradise which

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Christopher Rowland, Part I: Historical Eschatology - The Eschatology of the New Testament Church". In Walls, Jerry L. (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (2010) [2007]. 56–73.

⁴ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith. An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. Translated by William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 431. See also Gulley, Norman R. *Systematic Theology: The Church and the Last Things (vol. 4)*. Andrews University Press, 2016.

⁴ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 431.

⁵ Richard Bauckham, "Eschatology." In *The Oxford handbook of systematic theology*. 2007. Edited by Kathryn Tanner, John Webster, and Iain Torrance, Religion, Theology and Philosophy of Religion, Online Publication Date: Sep 2009 DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199245765.003.0018

⁶ Richard Bauckham, "Eschatology." In *The Oxford handbook of systematic theology*. 2007. Edited by Kathryn Tanner, John Webster, and Iain Torrance, Religion, Theology and Philosophy of Religion, Online Publication Date: Sep 2009 DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199245765.003.0018.

⁷ Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: The Church and the Last Things (vol. 4)*. Andrews University Press, 2016

⁸ Hans Schwarz. *Eschatology*. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000).

⁹ George, Eldon Ladd. *The presence of the future: The eschatology of biblical realism*. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974); Wolfhart . See also Pannenberg, Wolfhart. "Modernity, History, and Eschatology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*. 2008.

according to Walls is contrasted with the apocalyptic eschatology that emphasis mysterious revelations about unexpected, dramatic, and catastrophic intervention by God in history; the judgment of all men, and the rule of the elect with God in a renewed heaven and earth.¹⁰ Moltmann argues that, from a Christian perspective, eschatology is Christocentric and originates from the paschal Mystery; it is not just grounded on Jesus' resurrection and proclamation of God's Kingdom, it is also concerned with Christ's return in glory, and the coming of a new heaven and a new earth that the resurrected Christ will bring about upon his return to judge the righteous and sinners, the living and dead, and inaugurate an eternal reign.¹¹

The Concept of Christology in Christianity

The concept of Christology in Christianity has been the background to many debates and at least seven ecumenical councils - the First Council of Nicaea in 325, the First Council of Constantinople in 381, the Council of Ephesus in 431, the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, the Third Council of Constantinople from 680–681 and finally, the Second Council of Nicaea in 787. From the 2nd to the 5th centuries of the history of the church, it was preoccupied with issues about how to understand and interpret the life and meaning of Jesus; the assertion of His distinctive "status," His relationship to the Father and divinity and humanity. From the Greek Χριστός (*Christós*) and -λογία (*logia*) Christology in Christianity, is about the nature and work of Jesus; His Incarnation, Resurrection, and Human and Divine natures and their relationship; the basic sources for these discussions was the New Testament.¹² Lubeck argues that even in the OT there are pieces of evidence of what he calls "*Christophanies*;" the etymology of which according to him is from two Greek words, 'Χριστός (Christos) and the ending" - phany", φαίνειν (*Phainein*) "bring to light, cause to appear, show" used in relation to the manifestation of Christ in the OT. It is derived by direct comparison with the term Theophany (*Theophaneia*).¹³

López and some early Christian writers identified the Angel of the Lord who was frequently mentioned in the OT as the pre-incarnate Christ.¹⁴ Justin Martyr strongly argued in support of the claim that the Angel was the *Logos* (the WORD) which in the opening pages of the gospel of John is said to be with God from the beginning. He argued that "He who is called God and appeared to the patriarchs is called both *Angel* and *Lord*."¹⁵ Christology is studied and discussed within the rubric of theology which is the study of the nature of the divine and more broadly, of religious beliefs.¹⁶ According to Aquinas, theology had triple features, that is, (a) what is taught by God, (b) what teaches of God and (c) what leads to God.¹⁷ Earliest Christological theologies however were concerned with the various

¹⁰ Jerry Walls, ed. *The Oxford handbook of Eschatology*. OUP USA, 2010. See also John Polkinghorne, and Michael Welker, eds. *The end of the world and the ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology*. (A&C Black, 2000.)

¹¹ Jürgen Moltmann, "The final judgment: Sunrise of Christ's liberating justice." *Anglican theological review* 89, no. 4 (2007): 565. See also Bucknell, Trevor. *Jesus, the Prophets, and the end of the world: An introduction to biblical eschatology*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016. Jürgen Moltmann, *The coming of God: Christian eschatology*. (Fortress Press, 2004); Morton H. Smith, *Systematic Theology, Volume Two: Soteriology Ecclesiology Eschatology*. (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019); Trevor Bucknell, *Jesus, the Prophets, and the end of the world: An introduction to biblical eschatology*. (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016).

¹² Ilaria LE. Ramelli, "The Father in the Son, the Son in the Father in the Gospel of John: Sources and Reception of Dynamic Unity in Middle and Neoplatonism, 'Pagan' and Christian." *Journal of the Bible and its Reception* 7, no. 1 (2020): 31-66.

¹³ Ray Lubeck. "Christ in the Old Testament: Old Testament appearances of Christ in human form." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (2001): 332. See also Edwards, Robert GT. "Proverbs 8, Christological Controversies, and the Pre-existence of the Son and Torah in the Third and Fourth Centuries." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 51, no. 1 (2020): 67-96.

¹⁴ López, A. René "Identifying the" Angel of the Lord" in the Book of Judges: A Model for Reconsidering the Referent in Other Old Testament Loci." *Bulletin for biblical research* 20, no. 1 (2010): 1-18.

¹⁵ Helleman, Wendy Elgersma. "Justin Martyr and the logos: An apologetical strategy." *Philosophia reformata* 67, no. 2 (2002): 128-147.

¹⁶ Paul Badham, "What is Theology?." *Theology* 99, no. 788 (1996): 101-106.

¹⁷ Brian Davies. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. New York: Oxford University Press (1992).

designations of Jesus in the apostolic literature.¹⁸ Particularly, the wealth of mythologies and metaphors in the Apostolic literature shaped early Christian perception of the person and nature of Jesus. That widespread vocabulary was first given an articulate context in the 2nd century when Ignatius rejected adoptionism to contend that Jesus was a conqueror of death and that in Him the divine and the human natures are present.¹⁹ According to Ignatius, Jesus was Spirit and Flesh, Created and Uncreated, Suffering and Nonsuffering. As a spirit, according to Ignatius, Jesus was one and equal with the Father in essence and substance, as flesh, he was subordinate and altogether submissive to the Father.²⁰

Two Christologies developed over the period; the low or adoptionist, and the high or incarnation. The low or adoptionist Christology is the belief that Jesus was exalted by God to be his Son by bringing him up from the dead. The 'high' Christology, is the view that Jesus was a pre-existent divine being who took upon himself the nature of a man becoming like us, did the Father's will on earth, and then was taken back into heaven where he originally came from. According to Boers and Casey, the high Christology developed during the active periods when the apostle Paul was writing most of his letters under the influence of Gentile Christians, who introduced their pagan Hellenistic traditions to the early Christian communities, ascribing divine characters to Jesus.²¹ Following the Apostolic Age, from the 2nd century, a number of disagreements emerged about how the human and divine natures in Jesus are connected and related within the person of "Jesus".²² By the 2nd century, different approaches developed. In contrast to *monoprosopic* views, *dyoprosopic* views also emerged. *Prosopon* had an important role in the development of theological terminology related to the "Trinity" and "Jesus Christ". "*Prosopon*" was commonly used for the "self-manifestation" of individual "*hypostasis*". Every hypostasis according to Anton had its own *prosopon* (face or countenance).²³

According to Ramelli, two theological concepts emerged in relation to the "Person of Christ"; (a) the "*monoprosopic*" which advocated that Christ had "one person" and (b) the "*dyoprosopic*" which advocated that Christ has "two persons" (Divine and Human).²⁴ Hypostasis (Gk; ὑπόστασις, hypóstasis) was the underlying state (or something that settles at the bottom). The *Triadology* of God consists of three *hypostasis*: Hypostasis of the Father, Hypostasis of the Son, and Hypostasis of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ Three concepts emerged in reference to the number and mutual relations of "divine hypostases"; (a) *monohypostatic* (or *miahypostatic*) which advocated that God has only one hypostasis; (b) *dyohypostatic* which also advocated that God has two *hypostases*- Father and Son; and (c) *trihypostatic* which advocated that God had three *hypostases*- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Christology, two hypostatic concepts also emerged in reference to Christ; (a) *monohypostatic* which advocates that Christ has only one hypostasis; and (b) *dyohypostatic* which also advocates that Christ has two hypostases - divine and human.

Eschatological Christology in African Christianity

¹⁸Christopher A Beeley, "The Early Christological Controversy: Apollinarius, Diodore, and Gregory Nazianzen." *Vigiliae christianae* 65, no. 4 (2011): 376-407.

¹⁹Peter-Ben Smit, "The end of early Christian adoptionism? A note on the invention of adoptionism, its sources, and its current demise." *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 76, no. 3 (2015): 177-199.

²⁰Daniel L Hoffman, "Ignatius and early anti-docetic realism in the eucharist." *Fides et historia* 30, no. 1 (1998): 74.

²¹Hendrikus Boers, "Jesus and the Christian Faith: New Testament Christology since Bousset's Kyrios Christos." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89, no. 4 (1970): 450-456; Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*. (James Clarke & Co., 1991).

²²Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)* (2nd revised ed.). (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. (1975) [1965]). ISBN 9780664223014.

²³John P. Anton, "Some Logical Aspects of the Concept of Hypostasis in Plotinus". *The Review of Metaphysics*. 31 (2),: . (1977): . 258-271. JSTOR 20127050.

²⁴Iaria Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis". *The Harvard Theological Review*. 105 (3),: (2012):. 302-350. doi:10.1017/S0017816012000120. JSTOR 23327679.

²⁵Alexei Fokin, "St Augustine's Doctrine of the Trinity in the Light of Orthodox Triadology of the Fourth Century." *In The Trinity*, (2003). 131-152. Springer, Dordrecht,.

Eschatological Christology in African Christianity is a subject that draws quite a lot from the ‘rich African context’ - the African traditional religion philosophy and cultural contexts - and the western Christian religious contexts. It is therefore a tripartite eschatological Christology. Eschatological Christology in African Christianity is about how African Christianity in its unique religious context understands and interprets biblical prophecies about the End Times and the assertion of Jesus’s distinctive status about his relationship to the Father and divinity and humanity. Eschatology in African Christianity, therefore, is reflective of the repositories of religious and theological reflections from Africa’s rich cultural and religious cosmology as well as already existing and available Western Christian theological praxis.²⁶ These two contextualised and brought together under the perspectives of African Christianity present an eschatological Christology and Christopraxis that addresses questions of the End Times and Jesus’s “status” and relationship to the Father; divinity and humanity in relation to the here-and-now and the hereafter.

According to Bediako the tripartite nature of the African Christian theological context provides a unique Christopraxis that presents an appropriate response to the various questions of indigenous African spiritual cosmology.²⁷ Mayemba puts it this way, eschatology in the African context ‘is not just about the future (the not-yet-there), it is also concerned with the present (the already-there) and the past; the memory of the past, through the act of remembrance.’²⁸ Gathogo identifies six Christological approaches in two Christological trends that emerged in the 20th century in the Christology of African Christianity. These include (1) Christological trend about interpreting and adapting Christology to modern mentality and condition; (2) Christologies exclusively concerned with the historical Jesus; (3) Christology that uphold the Trinitarian theology; (4) Christologies based on the proclaimed Christ and the historical Jesus; (5) Asian Christologies of inculturation and liberation; and (6) African Christologies of inculturation and liberation.²⁹

Wachege categorises African Christologies as comprising two sets - Christologies of liberation, and inculturation. African liberation Christologists present Jesus as not just a liberator from oppressive systems, but also from sin - which is the root cause of estrangement and oppression.³⁰ Taylor asks a very profound question, ‘Christ has been presented as the answer to the questions a Whiteman would ask, the solution to the needs a Western man would feel, the Saviour of the world of the European worldview, the object of the worship and prayer of historic Christendom. But if Christ was to appear as the answer to the questions Africans are asking, what would he look like?’³¹ Definitely not in the context that has been presented to the African.³² Moreover, according to Nyamiti Jesus is regarded as one who died as He fought against injustices, oppression and dehumanisation and was subsequently raised as a fruit of struggle - a move that invites African Christians to team up and gallantly participate in Christ’s liberating mission.³³

²⁶ M. A. Masoga, & A. Nicolaidis, Christianity and Indigenisation in Africa. *European Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, 1(4), (2021). 18–30. <https://doi.org/10.24018/theology>. (2021) 1.4.33

²⁷ Kwame, Bediako. *Theology and identity: The impact of culture upon Christian thought in the second century and in modern Africa*, (Oxford: Regnum, Oxford. [1992] 1999).

²⁸ Bienvenu Mayemba, *The notion of eschatology in African ancestral religions: A category of deliverance, promise, remembrance*, (Chestnut Hill, Mass: Theology Dept., Boston College, 2009) 9

²⁹ Julius, Gathogo. ‘Reconstructive hermeneutics in African Christology’, *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 71(3), (2015) Art. #2660, 8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2660>

³⁰ Patrick, N. Wachege. *Jesus Christ our muthamaki (ideal elder): An African Christological study based on the Agikuyu understanding of elder*. Phoenix Publishers (Nairobi, Kenya, 1992).

³¹ Taylor, John Vernon, and Anglican bisschop van Winchester. *The primal vision: Christian presence amid African religion*. London: Scm Press, (1963). 16

³² Who is Jesus Christ for Africans today? Prophet, Priest, Potentate’, in J.N.K. Mugambi & L. Magesa (eds.), *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and diversity in African Christology*, (Nairobi: Acton, 1998), 33–42.

³³ Charles, Nyamiti. ‘African Christologies today’, in J.N.K. Mugambi & L. Magesa (eds.), *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and diversity in African Christology*, (1989). 17, 29, Initiatives, Nairobi.

Relevance and significance of eschatological Christology in African Christian Theology and Christology for African Christianity

One cannot but notice the richness of the uniqueness of the cosmological context within which African Christianity attempts to articulate its understanding of eschatological Christology. This rich cosmology according to Kanu represents Africa's pursuit of the sense of life, and an unconscious but natural tendency to arrive at a unifying base that constitutes a set of a meaning every so often is viewed as *terminus a quo* (origin), and as *terminus ad quem* (end).³⁴ This worldview is the underscoring rationality and link that holds together Africa's value system, philosophy of life; societal conduct, moral principles, rites, rituals, rules, and spiritualities. Bediako identifies a characteristic feature of African Christianity which according to him is unique; it was not a pretentious exotic, inquiring expression of an incomprehensible universe but uniquely built into a cosmology of an active African universe of spirituality.³⁵

In African Christianity, therefore, eschatology is not necessarily Christocentric because Christ is seen as an ancestor. the African universe consists of two contrasting but at the same time complementary worlds; (a) the world of the spirits (spiritual universe) – those who have been on this earth as family and community members and divinities and (b) the world of those who still sojourn in societies, families and communities (the physical universe). These two worlds, though contrasting are more complementary; the spiritual universe is considered a very special and close part of the physical. Accordingly, African cosmology involves both active mystical and corporeal realms, which despite their separate spheres interact with each other. God in the African world, according to Quarcoopome is a realism; not an immaterial concept.³⁶ Idowu claims that he is a personal being with whom one can enter into intimacy and conversation. He is amicable on all occasions of life.³⁷

Eschatological Christology in African Christian theology and Christology is the theological and theoretical paradigm that provides the context, content and motivation for an African Christian eschatological Christology, theology and Christopraxis. As far as the charge is concerned, there is an urgency and need to ensure an active Christian mission to the nations. There is mission consciousness and an approach that emerges within the African philosophical concept of ubuntu derived from Zulu and Xhosa, (Nguni Bantu). A very powerful concept, "Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu" or "I am, because you are" is the meaning of Ubuntu. It expresses the element that all humans are connected and that one can only grow and progress through the growth and development of others. The African is completely made aware that the individual's life and the pursuit of life are not achievable in loneliness, apart from one's fellows because life is somewhat communal and possible only in a network of mutual interdependencies amongst an individual and his/her community. As a consequence of this, mission is undertaken with intentionality and purpose. This sharply interconnects with salvation in the African Christian eschatological concept.

In African indigenous religions, the certainty of human salvation is associated with the experience of life. Africans, therefore, place great emphasis on life; the continuity of family life and life after death must be seen from the viewpoint of salvation. For Africans, faith and life are inseparable, belief is essentially experienced in the community; the community's character of faith is emphasized and exemplified in the daily living of members. In African circumstances, faith is not simply a rational understanding of what one believes, but faith has a corporate and communal character. In view of this, salvation in African Christian eschatological Christology is seen as the responsibility of the community. It is worked out by the whole community and family, everybody in

³⁴ Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony. "The dimensions of African cosmology. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion*. Vol. 2 No. 2 (2013)

³⁵ Kwame, Bediako. *Africa and Christianity on the Threshold of the Third Millennium: The Religious Dimension*, African Affairs Vol. 99, No. 395, Centenary Issue: A Hundred Years of Africa Oxford University Press (2000), 303-323; see also Olupona, Jacob K. "African spirituality: Forms, Meanings, and Expressions." (2000).

³⁶ Theophilus-Neil Quarcoopome. *West African traditional religion*. Ibadan: African Universities Press. (1987). See also Sarpong, P. "Peoples differ: An approach to inculturation in Evangelism, sub." (2002).

³⁷ Idowu, E. Bọlaji. "Olodumare: god in Yoruba belief." (1970).

the family or community is to achieve salvation. If this is going to be possible, in African traditional and cultural ethics and values every member of the family has a duty and a responsibility towards the other.

Perception of the African universe is yet another serious sphere. The concept of the African universe of active spirituality motivates members to be careful. Many Africans express intense disapproval towards all forms of diabolical wickedness personified in witchcraft, because not only does it prostitute the rules of nature by intentional manipulation of malevolent forces for destructive purposes, it negatively contaminates human relationships, in so doing threatening the communal nature of society. It is against the background of frightful terror and profound revulsion against activities such as witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or necromancy that the traditional African is apt to call every premeditated enmity, hatred, evil talk or acts directed towards the destruction of the life of others witchcraft and intolerable. This consciousness pulls the African Christian into a continual relationship with God for protection and relief from the malevolent wishes and activities of evil people in the society.

CONCLUSION

The article attempted an African Christian Christological reflection of the relevance and significance of the concept for African Christianity and Christopraxis. It engaged various theological discourses that establish the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guide and direct the theological discourses of the general concept of eschatological Christology and Christology within African Christianity. Through engagement dialogue with various literature, particularly, a teleological conceptualisation of eschatology, that dealt with expectation, hope, death, and the future that relied on the belief that not everything about human beings is over after death revealed that death is not the human being's radical end or absolute destination, but that there is something beyond. But in African theology or African Christian theology, eschatology is not only about the future (the not-yet-there). It is also about the present (the already-there) and the past, (memory of the past). As identified, this is a result of the stark impact of the concept of eschatology within African theology. African indigenous religions generally did not have the belief of a future resurrection of the bodies as such; but life after death, lived in the "invisible world", in the "village of ancestors", where all the righteous dead meet and dwell, and that access to this invisible village depended on the quality of life in the land of the living. This eschatological concept of the afterlife village of the ancestors shapes peoples' actions and provides them with a sense of orientation and hope in living a life characterized by personal virtue, cosmic harmony, clanic solidarity and ancestral wisdom reconceptualised within African Christianity and African Christian theology provides a unique concept of eschatological Christology within African Christianity that informs a perfect Christopraxis within African Christianity irrespective of the plethora of syncretistic debates regarding its nature.

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