CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN AFRICA: TOWARDS A SOUL-MAKING THEODICY OF JOHN HICK AS A SOLUTION TO THE ANXIETY CAUSED BY EVIL.

By

Beth Mugechi Chege

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ABSTRACT

African Christians suffer from the effects of evil in equal measure as all other people of other faiths living in this part of the continent. The suffering has been in most cases very intense leading to untold anxiety, which in turn pushes the African Christian to seek solutions outside the Christian faith, one being relapsing back to the African traditional diviners and healers for help. This however, need not be the case since it depicts the Christian faith as inadequate in speaking fully to the life of its African convert. African Christians can find a solution to the problem of evil within the Christian faith and if not a total solution at least away of making it bearable. This thesis offers the theodicy of the Soul-Making as a solution to the African Christian problem of evil. It approaches the question of suffering not from the past but it looks into the future for its explanation to the question of evil.

This thesis therefore, argues that if the soul making theodicy of John Hick is well conversed with the problem of suffering affecting the African Christian, relapse by the African Christian will be resolved or at least minimised. Soul-Making theodicy exonerates men and women from the burden of sins, which they therefore do not need to struggle to overcome. It places evil besides humanity and thus allows the two to co-exist without humanity bearing the burden of suffering and feeling the anxiety. The Soul-Making theodicy gives hope that this world is the best world that human beings needs for them to be prepared and made to become like their creator. The suffering then does not just exist by accident but by divine plan. Hope is one of the ingredients that African Christians need for them to remain strong and find a home in the Christian faith. Therefore only the Africans already in Christianity benefits from this study.

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