bodies in the United States. The result, for Harris, is that the true consciousness of the Black human being is simultaneously hidden from the White oppressor and from the Black oppressed. The self-consciousness and self-identity of the slave in chattel American slavery “goes unacknowledged” (65), while the slave’s consciousness is experienced and known primarily through the lens of the oppressor. The slave is conceived of as a dehumanized other, without agency over her/his own identity and consciousness. This deep othering continues into postbellum, Jim Crow America. The danger is that the enslaved/oppressed person has a separate self-consciousness that is not validated by the oppressor, or the larger society. This refusal to acknowledge the self-consciousness of Black souls is the “veil of racism” to which Harris repeatedly refers.

Reading Harris missionally, we should be reminded of the ways in which we operate in alterity; caught “in a matrix of despair and hope” (11). As individuals and communities seek to partner with the Holy Spirit to engage the *Missio Dei*, we must be ever-mindful of the ways that our broken systems ‘other-ize’ individuals and communities. It is precisely in this othering that we construct our own veils that blind us from the visceral realities of our fellow humans, and mute their cries of pain and suffering. Harris argues that to address the pain, we first need to hear and acknowledge it. His work calls us to this awareness and action.

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Chammah J. Kaunda and Julius Gathogo, eds. *African Theology, Philosophy, and Religions: Celebrating John Samuel Mbiti's Contribution*. Lanham, Boulder, New York and London, Lexington Books, 2020. Pp. 332. \$ 123.

This anthology is not merely a commemoration of an important person with a vision. Much more significantly, it is a considered testimony regarding a movement, now known universally as “African Theology,” whose life owes its existence predominantly to the dream, audacity, determination, and dedication of an African philosopher-theologian called John Samuel Mbiti (1931–2019). The movement’s impact on the intellectual, spiritual and ecclesial lives of millions of people throughout Africa and beyond has been, and continues to be,

profound. In only half a century since its 1969 publication, Mbiti's *magnum opus*, *African Religions and Philosophy*, has transformed the way countless African peoples perceive themselves as well as their Christian faith – despite protracted systems of cultural, social, and spiritual-religious peripheralization and domination historically imposed upon them by colonialism and mission Christianity, and today, by the so-called globalization process, so often detrimental to African peoples' identity, freedom, and dignity as human beings.

The caliber of scholarship displayed alongside of the wide-ranging themes and the depth of the reflections offered by academics on the continent and in diaspora underscores Mbiti's impact and legacy with African Theology, now an indispensable genre in and of Christian faith reflection and practice. As a wide-ranging compendium for understanding Mbiti's lifetime endeavor, as well as for appreciating the shape of African theology and ecclesiology, the importance of the present work cannot be overemphasized.

A firm adherent of African wisdom, Mbiti's life work embodies the truth of the African proverb, "One finger cannot lift a pebble." His readiness to cooperate with his contemporaries – people like Kwesi Dickson, E. Bolaji Idowu, Vincent Mulago and Jean-Marc Éla – as well as to mentor younger generations in an effort to articulate an African theology is evident in this well-knit narrative. Loreen Maseno, for instance, highlights an unexpected area of influence that Mbiti himself could hardly have imagined in 1969: that of "African Women Theologies." As Maseno writes, "African women theologians, in a steady and consistent engagement with earlier theologians on the African continent, continue to bring along fresh insights to theology. They attend to various themes such as hospitality, community, ecclesiology, Christology and others" (39) – all central *leitmotifs* with Mbiti.

Perfection is not guaranteed to anyone. Some essays are therefore to be commended for their honesty in critiquing some of Mbiti's scholarly limitations. Was he an authentic "African patriot," or a truly "African philosopher"? Despite these isolated deficits, the overall picture that emerges is one of rare broadmindedness and deep thought. It is one of commitment to the values of the peoples of the continent and – *mutatis mutandis* – these insights' potential to contribute to the fullness of life in Africa and the world spiritually (religion and ethics), politically (national identity and international harmony, peace and security), economically (holistic development), and socially (human solidarity and survival, and ecological and environmental integrity).

Kaunda's assertion serves as an accurate résumé of Mbiti and his legacy: "As an ancestor of the study of religions, theology, culture and philosophy in Africa, Mbiti's ideas continue to reincarnate in different forms and discussions.

The timeless values of his work are shown in our ability to bring them to bear on different contemporary and possibly future topics related to the experience of Africans and beyond" (128).

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