

Innovations

A Reassessment of African Theology in the Period After *Africae Munus*

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Abstract

The Second African Synod culminated in the publication of Africae Munus in 2011. This post-synodal apostolic exhortation from Pope Benedict XVI, while acknowledging the identity of the Church in Africa as the Family of God, assigned the Church in Africa the coherent mission of reconciliation, justice and peace, therefore, placing emphasis on the social apostolate of the Church without undermining her spiritual engagement. This development marked a new dawn for the development of theology in Africa. While there are several works on the interpretation of the different dimensions of Africae Munus, the present work distinguishes itself by its interrogation of the state of theology from the period after Africae Munus. It raises three major questions: has African theology advanced from the period after Africae Munus? What are the challenges that have affected the advancement of African theology? What are the areas in African theology that require more attention for the achievement of the vision of Africae Munus? Rather than adopt the purely scholastic approach towards theology, the present piece employs a social science approach involving surveys and interviews. All these were done in the spirit of Igwebuike theological framework. From data collected, it argues that even though theology has fared well in the past 13 years in terms of discourses, it has been limited by several factors. In view of the vision of Africae Munus, and her mission for the Church in Africa, the paper submits that African theology has progressed. It further indicates basic areas for the consideration of African theology and theologians.

Keywords: *Africae Munus, African Theology, Reconciliation, Justice, Peace*

Introduction

The movement of the Church from the First African Synod in 1994, that gave birth to *Ecclesia in Africa* in 1995, to the Second African Synod in 2009,

which brought about *Africae Munus in 2011* unveils the steady growth, maturity and vitality of the church and theology in Africa, especially, as it concerns the nature of the Church and her mission in Africa. While the First African Synod gave the Church a distinctive identity as the “family of God” (John Paul II, 1995), the Second African Synod assigned a new and coherent mission to the Church in Africa: “in the service of reconciliation, justice and peace” (Benedict XVI, 2011).

In the contention of Orobator (2011), the definition of the identity of the Church in Africa and the assignment of mission to her touches at the core of Africa’s contemporary, socio-economic, political, religious and cultural predicaments. This is significant as our continent is synonymous with deep crises, contradictions and strife. While the idea of Church as family represents an opportunity for attaining reconciliation, justice and peace, which seems to elude Africa, the mission of reconciliation, justice and peace, for a continent “infamous for its high levels of poverty, abuse of human rights and disregard for human dignity” (Orobator, 2011) does define clear imperatives for the involvement of the Church in Africa in social transformation.

The title of this paper on African theology in the period after *Africae Munus*, provides an opportune moment for African theology to take stock of its historical evolution, challenges and areas in need of greater attention going forward. This paper will, therefore, attempt at bringing the past, present and future realities of the African theological enterprise into a sharper focus. It is designed to serve two interrelated purposes: raising substantial matters about the nature of African theology in the past few years, and second, to provide impetus for more conversations within African theology on the nature and mission of the Church in Africa. This is very significant given that *Africae Munus* is a catalyst document that has launched a process in theological conversations, which is now shaping, guiding, sustaining and unfolding theological narratives of self-understanding and mission of the Church in Africa.

The Igwebuike theological Framework

The Igwebuike theoretical framework will define the dynamics for the interactions that would be responsible for the development of this paper. Igwebuike, the keyword, is a combination of three Igbo words: *Igwe*, a noun, which means *number* or *multitude* made up of entities with ontological identities and significance, however, part of an existential order in which every entity is in relation to the other. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is a noun, which means *strength* or *power* (Kanu 2020). Put

together, it means 'number is strength' or 'number is power'. Beyond this literal sense, it means *otu obi* (one heart and one soul) – *cor unum et anima una* (Kanu 2020, 2022, 2023).

It is a unifying concept and an explanatory theory of African thought, especially, that aspect concerning the human person's conception of the spiritual and material universe in which he or she lives. It interprets the puzzle of our complex relationships and strives beyond all forms of particularities, peculiarities, paradoxes and contradictions and espouses the path of complementation, therefore, showing how realities can relate to one another in a mutually harmonized non-absolutistic mode (Kanu 2022 and 2023).

This theoretical framework is very significant for this research for two reasons: the first is that it borders on African theology, requiring the employment of African categories; second, is owing to the synodal approach, and a methodology that listens and is, therefore, open to alterity, which this piece has adopted. The Igwebuiké theological framework is relevant as this research pays attention to the development of theology in relation to the development of theological discourses among the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN). As an indigenous approach with a social science taste, it would open the aperture for the accommodation of survey and interviews- different perspectives.

This indigenous theoretical framework will direct attention to the collective voice of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria, as a group, with the understanding that the voice of the group provides a collective perspective. Beyond the group, attention will also be paid to the perspectives of individual theologians through interviews. It is believed that the differences in background and experience will enrich this research. Thoughts relating to one another will be discussed as a theme in the main body of the work. The voices of the different theologians will, therefore, form the themes for discussion.

The Focus of *Africae Munus*

Africae Munus has given great impetus to the growth of the Church in Africa, and reinforced ecclesial dynamism with outlined programme for pastoral activity for decades to come. The document has two parts. Part one discerns the fundamental structures of the ecclesial mission on the continent, a mission which aspires to reconciliation, justice and peace, and has its origin in the person of Jesus Christ. The document drew attention to the

paths towards reconciliation, justice and peace, which include authentic conversion, the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, the spirituality of communion, the inculturation of the Gospel, the protection of life, migrants, displaced persons, refugees, the good governance of States, and ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue especially with traditional religions and Islam (Benedict XVI, 2011; Obiefna and Kanu, 2013).

In part two, the document invites all members of the Church to contribute to communion and peace in the Church and society. It also identifies areas for the apostolate: the Church as the presence of Christ, the world of education, healthcare and communications media. The Exhortation opens a horizon of hope to Africa which, by welcoming Jesus Christ, must free itself from the forces which paralyze it (Benedict XVI, 2011). *Africae Munus* offers the Church in Africa practical guidance and suggestions for pastoral activity over coming decades. These include: promotion of evangelization and the fostering of reconciliation, justice and peace; the announcement of the Gospel to those who still do not know Jesus Christ; promotion of new evangelization in Africa, especially among people who have distanced themselves from the Church or who do not behave in a Christian fashion; Discovering the fresh ardour of the many saints and martyrs, confessors and virgins of the African continent, devotion to whom should be renewed and promoted; recognizing among servants of the Gospel in Africa those who could be canonized according to the norms of the Church; Strengthening the bonds of communion between the Holy Father and the bishops of Africa, as should the bonds among African bishops themselves, at the national, regional and continental levels. Bishops are to help support the Bishops' Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) as a continental structure of solidarity and ecclesial communion'; celebrating a continental Eucharistic Congress, for a deeper appreciation of the mystery of the Eucharist; celebrating yearly a day or week of reconciliation, particularly during Advent or Lent (Benedict XVI, 2011).

The essence of *Africae Munus* is to allow the grace of God to reconcile the Church in Africa to God and to one another.

African Theology after *Africae Munus*

In studying African theology in the period after *Africae Munus*, the researcher adopted the social science approach of sampling, which is a statistical process of selecting a subset of a population of interest for the purpose of making observations and statistical inferences about general patterns of behaviour of the population. The subset here is the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria, representing the theological climate in Africa. While it does not capture the entire climate of theology in Africa, it captures something about the theological climate of Africa. The researcher

decided to choose CATHAN for the purpose of feasibility, cost constraint and time factor.

Thus, the table below presents the themes of CATHAN conferences from 2011 to 2023. This presents the trend in theological discourses in Nigeria for the period after *Africae Munus*.

Table 1: Themes of CATHAN Conferences from 2011-2023

S/N	Year	Themes	Theological Focus	<i>Africae Munus</i>
1.	2011	Theology and Liturgy in the life of the Church	Worship & Church Identity	Chapter III • The sacraments • The Eucharist • Reconciliation Nos. 150-156
2.	2012	The Church in Africa, Witness to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation: A Post-Synodal Reflection and Reception	Justice, Peace and Reconciliation	Chapter I-II • In service of reconciliation, justice and peace • Paths towards reconciliation, justice and peace Nos. 15-146
3.	2013	Religious Faith and Public Service in Nigeria: Ambiguities and Paradoxes	Public Service & Witnessing	Chapter II • The Lay faithful Nos. 129-131
4.	2014	The Church in Nigeria and Ecumenical Question	Ecumenism	CHAPTER II • Ecumenical Dialogue Nos. 70-78
5.	2015	The Family and the New Evangelization	Evangelization	• CHAPTER II • Young People and Children Nos. 60-68 CHAPTER III • The New Evangelization Nos. 159-171
6.	2016	Theology and Ecological Issues	Ecology	CHAPTER III • The protection of life

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for creation and ecosystem Nos. 70-80
7.	2017	Youth Formation and Globalization in the Nigeria Context	Formation	<p>CHAPTER I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the church • Seminary Nos. 121-124
8.	2018	The Christian, Elections and Faithful Citizenship in a Pluralist Society	Citizenship	<p>CHAPTER II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church as the presence of Christ Nos. 133-146
9.	2019	African Intellectual Heritage and the Church Tomorrow: Trends and Directions	African Culture and Religion	<p>CHAPTER II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional African Religions Nos. 92-93
10.	2020	COVID-19 Year No Conference held	-----	-----
11.	2021	Christian Mission and the Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria	Human Security	<p>CHAPTER III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African vision of life • The protection of life Nos. 70-78
12.	2022	Communion, Participation and Mission in the Church: Theological Perspectives on the Synod on Synodality	Synodality	<p>CHAPTER 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Church Nos. 121-124
13.	2023	Theological Perspectives on the Relationship between Religion and Politics in Nigeria	Religion and Society	<p>CHAPTER II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church as the presence of Christ Nos. 133-146

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From Table 1, the following can be said about African theology in the period after *Africae Munus*:

- ✧ *Africae Munus*, from the time after 2011 has shaped not only the manner of our being Church and our mission, but also the African theological enterprise.
- ✧ Theological discourses and exchanges have not failed to continue since the period after *Africae Munus*.

- ✧ The faculties of theology in different parts of Africa are thriving, feeding and sustaining theological discourses in Africa.
- ✧ The associations of theology in different African countries and regions have continued to make unique theological contributions to major international discussions within theology.
- ✧ Theology in Africa has become more open to issues bordering on society and human social well-being since the publication of *Africae Munus*.

These developments notwithstanding, there is the question of the impact of these developments.

The Impact of theology after *Africae Munus*

In other to determine the impact of African theology, the researcher engaged in a survey during which he interviewed 50 African theologians. The participants were highly skewed in gender towards male. However, participants represented a range of ages and distribution across the major regions in Nigeria, with some that teach theology abroad.

Table 2: Participants' Gender and Location

Characteristic		Category	Number of participants No: 50
Gender		Male	39
		Female	11
Locations		East	10
		West	10
		North	10
		South	10
		Outside of Nigeria	10

Table 3: The Major themes in participants' responses on the impact of African theology

Theme	Sub-Theme	Theme Dimensions	#Cited
1.	Has African theology advanced from the period after <i>Africae Munus</i> ?		
2.	What are the challenges that have affected the advancement of African theology?		
3.	What are the areas in African theology that require more attention?		

The advancement of African theology	• African theology has developed	11
	• African theology is at its early stage of development	16
	• African theology is growing at a very slow pace	23
The challenges of African theology	• The cost of producing African theology	22
	• The need for a creative theological approach	11
	• African categories for African theology	10
	• The challenge of making Theology alive	7
Areas in need of attention in African theology	• The Church as family and the structure of relationships	15
	• Dialogue with African Religion	10
	• Reconciliation, justice and peace	13
	• African Eco-Theology	12

Discussions

All the respondents to the first question (has African theology advanced from the period after *Africae Munus?*), agree that African theology has progressed over the years, from the period after *Africae Munus*. However, there are different perspectives as regards the level of the development of African theology. For some, it has advanced considerably, for others it is at its early stage of development, and for some others, it is growing but at a very slow pace.

It is also observed that all the respondents to the second question (what are the challenges that have affected the advancement of African theology?) agree that African theology has some challenges, however, they differ on what these challenges are. And this helps the understanding that African theology can fare better and make more impact if these challenges are managed.

All the respondents to the third question (what are the areas in African theology that require more attention?) agree that there are areas that require attention in the African theological enterprise. And just as in the case of their responses to the first and second questions, the emphasis on areas requiring attention differ. Taking from the information obtained from the different respondents, the researcher will now engage in a systematic discussion on the challenges and areas requiring attention in African theology after *Africae Munus*.

The Challenges of African Theology

The responses from African theologians will shape the discussion on the challenges facing African theology in the period after *Africae Munus*.

1. Inventing Creative African Theological Approaches

There are several unjust systems in Africa: unsustainable global economic systems that disadvantage the poor, internal ethnic, resource-based and religious conflicts (Majavu, 2010), poor governance and the cost of corruption on the poor, poverty (Soede, 2011), unemployment, marginalization, negative impact of global financial crisis, remittances and individual financial flow in Africa (Te Velde, 2009), cooperate propaganda that genetically modified food is a solution to the food crisis in Africa (Opongo, 2011), brain drain, deterioration in living standard, poor educational system (Meredith, 2005), among others.

Elias Opongo refers to these issues as “complex interactive systems of injustice that calls for vigilance and full engagement” (Opongo 2011). The complex nature of these issues poses a serious challenge to the church and theologians, and these, even though have undermined economic and political progress in Africa, are yet to receive adequate attention from the African theologian. There is need, therefore, for the invention of creative theological approaches grounded in faith, courage and confidence. These inventive theological approaches might include:

- a. replacing the prevalent reactive response with an active approach that seeks to find ways of engaging agents of power in a process of dialogue for change (Opongo 2011).
- b. a theology that promotes not only the image of a prophetic Church but one that is strongly vigilant, engaged and constantly in solidarity with the people of God (Elenga, 2011).
- c. advancing the capacity to engage in research on national issues, documenting its research and participating in policy-development processes. Theologians need to move beyond the parameters of theorizing to the realm of application (Kaulem, 2011).
- d. there is need for a new methodology in theology that has elements of the social science approach. This will guide the Church in addressing Africa's complex, social, economic, health, political and educational needs. The old method of theologizing grounded on Scholastic philosophy, which relies on philosophy as the handmaid of theology needs to be reassessed (Mybangizi, 2011).
- e. The new methodology will have to reflect on the African context by critically examining the social, economic and political realities in Africa (Orabator, 2005).

2. Cost of Producing Theology

The production of theology is at a cost, and there is poor funding for the production of theology. This constitutes one of the greatest challenges of doing theology in Africa. A greater number of Church theologians are in the seminaries and other ecclesiastical institutions. Publishing of theological books, organizing theology conferences and attending one, and publishing of articles in reputable journals require funding. It is also disturbing that the purchase of books is not given priority in some theological faculties in Africa as a good number of the books in some libraries are old books. With low incomes and inflation, investing in the purchase and publication of books is becoming more difficult.

There is need for special funds to be established to support authors within theology in Africa and for the subsidization of publications. This will ensure that the theologian is predisposed towards carrying out the professional and indispensable role of articulating grassroot experiences, liaising with broader theological discourses, transforming compelling experience into Christian argument, helping the magisterium to deepen comprehension,

clarification and application of doctrine on the basis of specific African experiences (Mkenda, 2011).

3. African Categories and African theology

Categories used for African theology are still heavily Western. This is partly owing to the fact that many contemporary African theologians were trained according to the Western model of doing theology. There is need for an adjustment which may require that African categories be employed in doing African theology- so that the theologian can speak in a language that the African understands. This may include the use of African parables, proverbs, songs, etc., in such a manner that it does not disrupt the substance of the Christian faith (Kanu 2020).

4. Making Theology Alive

The power of theology in Africa has been affected by the challenge of living out the theology that the theologian teaches, that is, the challenge of translating the Catholic faith that we teach into action in concrete historical circumstances. It, therefore, becomes a theology that is not professed or holistic, and thus, a weak theology.

African Theology: Areas in need of Attention

The following may be considered areas in need of the attention of the African theologian.

1. Church as Family and the Structure of Relationships

At the Second African Synod, three female religious were given the opportunity to speak for five minutes to the assembly, and the three of them pointed to the same issue (Uti, 2011). The first was Sr Felicia Harry, OLA from Ghana. She insisted that the feminine genius of gentleness, tenderness and openness to listening need to be brought to bear in the life of the Church, beginning from our parishes, thereby beginning reconciliation, justice and peace from home. The second female religious was Sr Pauline Odia Bukasa, FMS from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She told the synod that African women are marginalized at all levels. The third was Sr Genevieve Nwamariya, SSMN from Rwanda. She called for the acknowledgement of the abilities of women and the amazing variety of gifts that they can offer (Arabome, 2011). John Paul II (2009) decried that in some parts of Africa women are treated like slaves, which is an affront on their dignity. These perspectives point to a problem with the structure of relationships within the Church as family.

The theological idea of Church as family in the service of reconciliation, justice and peace after more than a decade requires a critical attention from African theologians. Proposition 47 of the Lineamenta of the Second African Synod was dedicated to issues around women which have not yet been realised. According to Teresa Okure, “The issue of internal and structural relationships between the different bodies in the Church still remains to be courageously addressed Christologically from the gospel perspective” (Okure, 2011).

Unfortunately, even among theologians, when the word Church is used, it is usually not in relation to the People of God (Paul VI, 1964) or the Family of God (John Paul II, 1995), but in relation to the hierarchy in exclusion of the laity (Okure, 2008). This concept of church does not take into cognizance that the laity are “the faithful who have been fully incorporated into the Church through baptism, confirmation and communion” (O’Collins and Farrugia, 2000) or as members with gifts, offices and ministries of the Holy Spirit given for exercise in harmonious collaboration within the Church for the common good.

These create a bipolar concept of the Church that does not conform to the image of the Church as family. It is within this context that Okure (2011) raises the following questions which require the attention of African theologians:

What concrete action can we take with deep humility to promote reconciliation, justice and peace within the Church of God? To what extent does the notion of ‘Church as family of God’ actually affect our manner of being Church in Africa? ...what sustainable gospel-based ways can we adopt as church-family of God in Africa.. so that we can truly be ‘salt of the earth’ and ‘light of the world?’

Until we get the meaning of the Church right, the role of the Church in the areas of reconciliation, justice and peace will not be achieved. Tied to this poor self-understanding are the practical problems that we face today around governance, exercise of authority, power, financial and ministerial accountability, interpersonal relationships among the clergy, with the lay faithful and women. Even the issue of sexual abuse cannot be understood entirely outside of this. These require the attention of African theologians.

2. Dialogue with African Religion

A major breakthrough in the Second African Synod is the emphasis on interreligious relations in Africa, especially between Christianity and the religion of the African people. Visionary missionaries like Fr Francis Libermann of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Fr Daniel Comboni of the Verona

Fathers had called for dialogue with African Religion (Baur, 2009) and the need to become Negroes with Negroes in evangelization. In this they expressed the sentiments of the Second Vatican Council which asked missionaries to acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral good found among people of other cultures (Paul VI, 1965). The importance of this relationship between Christianity and African Religion was acknowledged in the Second African Synod and *Africae Munus*, which also further made a connection between the need for dialogue and the demands of justice, implying that African Religion as an expression of the being of the African person requires justice in treatment.

There is need for African theologians to begin to reinterpret the available literal, deplorable and fundamentalist interpretations of biblical traditions that are shaped by the principles of prejudice, exclusion and eradication of the religiously different other. There is need to provide alternative hermeneutic by focusing on texts like that of the Acts of the Apostles, where Saint Paul, who “though by his own admission an orthodox Jew, thoroughly trained in the Torah under the best teachers, miraculously transcended this myopic view of the faith (Acts 9:1-19)” and became the main protagonist of the ‘inculturation’ of the gospel for non-Jews (Magesa, 2011). Another important text is that of Peter’s miraculous vision during the baptism of Cornelius and his household to expand his narrow perception of Israel’s election as exclusive (Acts 10:34-35). There is also the need for a reinterpretation of the initial contact between Christianity and African Religion that were not dialogical but domineering, dictatorial and alienating. According to Mangesa (2011),

Instead of the previous campaign by the Churches to annihilate African Religion as the purpose and goal of Christian mission, the future lies in genuine conversation between Christianity and African religion, to discover and uncover as much as possible God’s presence in each. Unqualified antagonism against African Religion not only breeds ... deep-seated resentment against Christianity.. but also does not help Christianity to pay attention to, learn from, and so enrich itself from the divine values found in African Religion.

There is need for African theologians to provide more grounds on which dialogue between Christianity and African Religion can take place.

There are several questions regarding the ‘experience of life’ that are yet to be responded to. Some of these questions were articulated by Mkenda Festo thus: “What does it mean to be childless in a context where children are almost the only security one can have in old age? ... What does it mean to view one’s good relatives who have gone on to the afterlife as pitiable

souls perpetually in need of prayers of the living, rather than as good ancestors on whose intervention the living can depend?” (Mkenda, 2011) Many Africans are finding it difficult to reconcile themselves with the radical divide between Christianity and African Religion. These and similar questions places dialogue first and foremost within the Church itself, making it an intra-church exercise for the theologian.

3. Theological Foundation for Reconciliation, Justice and Peace

Reconciliation, justice and peace constitute the assigned mission to the Church as family in the Second African Synod, however, the implications of these concepts are yet to be deeply reflected upon by the African theologian. Deepening these concepts involves interpreting them within categories that are familiar to the African people, and in areas where they are practically applicable. It is also important to discover the basic facets of reconciliation, justice and peace from the African perspective. This for the African begins with reconciliation with oneself, given that the human person is sacred, significant and his or her well-being the criterion for good (Shenk, 1997). Reconciliation with oneself is followed by reconciliation with the world with “emphasis on human sociality, on interpersonal relations, on the need which each person has for others in other to be herself or himself” (De Gruchy, 1995). The third stage is reconciliation with the invisible world (Bere, 2011) , which involves “the community’s ancestors and other spiritual forces” (Tutu, 2000) .

Justice, peace and reconciliation touch on Catholic social teaching, but unfortunately, as Mubangizi observed “Catholic social teaching still remains the Church’s best kept secret” (Mubangizi, 2011) . There is, therefore, a need for a development of these aspects, and a curriculum that incorporates this at every level of Catholic education as a way of developing awareness and instilling a faith that expresses itself through justice, peace and reconciliation.

4. African Eco-Theology

In a continent under threat “from uncontrolled, profit-driven extraction of minerals and biological reserves of the continent” (Knox, 2011), there is a need for a greater investment in African eco-theology. Africa is blessed with endemic species of plants and animals that are not found in other parts of the world (Kanyandago, 2011). Places that come to mind include the Niger Delta region in Nigeria that has been devastated by all kinds of pollutions (Turner, 2001); the South African gold fields that have been poisoned by leaking acids (Tutu et al, 2008), heavy metals and toxic wastes through a century of gold-mining activities (McCulloch, 2003); asbestos mining in Northern Cape Province of South Africa, the depletion

of fishing reserves in Namibia, and the wholesale destruction of tropical forests in different parts of Africa (Knox 2011).

In *Ecclesia in Africa*, Pope John Paul II emphasized the need to make known our Christian convictions about the environment in the midst of the savage exploitation of the resources of the continent (John Paul II, 1995). In *Africae Munus*, there is a huge resource for the development of an African theology of the environment. Three of the fifty seven propositions of the Second African Synod deal with the environment: 22 speaks of “Environmental Protection and Reconciliation with Creation”; 29 speaks of “Natural resources”; 30 speaks of “Land and water”. African theologians cannot wait for all these to happen by itself as there is no benevolent uncle that is coming from abroad to address our problems from a theological perspective.

Conclusion

The Second African Synod gave birth to new perspectives and requires new approaches to both our pattern of being Church in Africa and the approach towards doing theology. The emphasis on justice, peace and reconciliation now require more than attending to the spiritual needs of the people; there is the need for social action (around reconciliation, justice and peace). With the new identity of the Church in Africa as the Family of God, following the First African Synod (articulated in the post-synodal document *Ecclesia in Africa*) and the new mission of the Church in Africa assigned by the Second African Synod (articulated in the post-synodal document, *Africae Munus*), there are clear steps not only in the maturation of the Church in Africa, but also in the development of African theology.

This research has revealed that in the period after *Africae Munus*, that the theological enterprise has progressed in Africa. *Africae Munus*, from the time after 2011 has shaped not only the manner of our being Church and our mission, but also the African theological enterprise. Theological discourses and exchanges have not failed to continue as faculties of theology in different parts of Africa are thriving, feeding and sustaining theological discourses. Associations of theology have continued to make African theological contributions to major international discussions. More so, theology in Africa has become more open to issues bordering on society and human social well-being. This progress notwithstanding, theology in Africa has several challenges, which are at the base of the recommendations of areas of attention for the African theologian.

General, *Africae Munus* has set a new direction for the Church in Africa, in terms of “service of reconciliation, justice and peace” (Benedict XVI, 2011). The emphasis on reconciliation, justice and peace imply that the Church in Africa is now being moved in a profound manner into the parameter of politics and social well-being, which is not entirely sitting on the primary responsibility of the Church: building up the spiritual life of the people. There is, therefore, the need to strike a balance between the spiritual engagement and social apostolate of the Church in Africa. And Church theologians have a very big role to play in this direction.

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