

for agendas quite different from theological consideration. The interlock between the ambition of indigenous peoples to maintain originality and stay relevant to contemporary development also emanates in this discourse. In all, the author did justice to his stated objectives and challenged scholars of religion to pursue 'academic fairness' in the academic study of indigenous religion. The book is a must-read for scholars of religions, especially phenomenologists.

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Kumalo, Simangaliso, 2013, *Religion and Politics in Swaziland: The Contributions of Dr JB Mzizi*. Bloemfontein: SUNPRESS, 360 pp., ISBN: 978-1-920382-29-2, R375

This book is an anthology of a decade (1995-2005) of short and long essays by the late Dr Joshua B. Mzizi, a former Senior Lecturer at the University of Swaziland. Some of these papers were written for formal academic conferences, where they were delivered, but the majority of them were written for the two big newspapers in Swaziland, *Times of Swaziland* (www.times.co.sz) and *The Observer*. Mzizi was a dedicated liberation theologian and he used his knowledge and skills of this sub-discipline to reflect on the religio-political dynamics of his country of birth, Swaziland. His writings are a minefield of knowledge for those interested in the history, politics and religion of Swaziland. The book is a collection of pieces that were scattered mostly in newspapers, journals and books. By compiling these works Kumalo has not only produced a comprehensive volume on Mzizi's work but has also provided information on Swaziland, a country about which very little is known.

The book has five main sections. The first section concentrates on introducing Mzizi's works. Using a postcolonial theoretical approach to critiquing the historical and political developments of Swaziland, it locates Mzizi's writings into its proper context in this theological discourse. It draws from the postcolonial theories of Galati Speak, Homi Bhabha and Michel Foucault to reflect on Mzizi's writings. The rationale for writing the book is to share, preserve and pass on to future generations Mzizi's contribution to the struggle against the lack of freedom and rights experienced by Swazis under the monarchical government of King Mswati. Basic in this struggle is how the monarchy has used religion to justify its domination and claim for absolute power over the nation. This section argues that Mzizi's writings unpacked the misuse of religion by the system so that it can keep the ordinary citizens of Swaziland, who happen to be very religious, obedient to the government. According to Mzizi, religion was used to convince the Swazis that to be against His Majesty's government is to be against God.

With this background, Mzizi's own biographical story, the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious dynamics of Swaziland receive attention in the second section. Again the aim of this section is to bring to awareness the foundation of the unjust

political system. It introduces the reader to the way people experience life under the current system in Swaziland, showing how the government is structured and the implications of that structure towards people's rights and freedoms. The appropriation of religion to Swazi ethnic-culture and politics is adequately discussed in this second section. It is precisely concerned with analyzing what it calls the *Swaziazation of Christianity*, because it is concerned with how Christianity was co-opted by the monarchy and the ruling elite to serve their interests in the name of God. This started at the time of the late king Sobhuza II and was continued by the present monarchy. Mzizi's writings challenged the manipulation of the gospel, because he believed that it is no longer good news to the poor and the oppressed whom he referred to as 'the voiceless'.

The focus of the book then moves to the articles themselves. The third chapter focuses on Mzizi's reflections on religion, politics and the monarchy. His writings argue for religious pluralism and tolerance and warn against a civil religion which is exclusive of other religious bodies in the country. He also calls for the promotion of ecumenism and the freedom of religion under the law. He argues that more work has to be done if religion is going to add value to the political development of the country. Mzizi was a very controversial figure in Swaziland. His writings brought a new perspective to understanding religion in the country. Citizens responded in a variety of ways to his writings. For instance, those who come from the evangelical stream, which ironically is Mzizi's background, did not like his writings. As a result he was rejected by his church. However, those who came from the mainline churches generally accepted and embraced his prophetic writings. Another group that embraced him were those who came from the civil society and political movements as chapter four demonstrates. This chapter focuses on how Swazis responded to Mzizi's writings by drawing on the writings of six people who knew him in different capacities.

The final chapter deals with the legacy of postcolonial Swaziland. It describes Mzizi as an intellectual-activist, whose tool was liberation theology. It identifies the significance of liberation theology in a postcolonial African country and how it can be used by the progressive movements to campaign for democracy. Although this is much appreciated, Mzizi just like his contemporaries did not focus on how for example the Bible was used to justify the oppression of women in Swaziland. Yet it is obvious that women are marginalized through polygamous marriage among others. This omission demonstrates how patriarchy in Africa still remains a problem even after years of African theologians fighting for the liberation of African theologies and cultures.

Despite this shortcoming, this book is a voice of the voiceless against the powerful rulers who silence their cry for freedom. It is a voice that no committed human right activists, democrats and theologians can afford to ignore. The uniqueness of this anthology lies in the fact that it is written by a Swazi, who is addressing the issues faced by his country from his own experience and the experiences of those he was in dialogue with. It is a contribution to the world-wide concern for human rights and the democratization of the world's last absolute monarchy.

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