

INTRODUCTION

West African Women Doing Theology that Liberates from Oppression

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This book *Sankofa: Liberation Theologies of West African Women* is among a series of publications by the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle) through the initiative of Prof Musa Dube the current coordinator to mark the *Sankofa* conference in Ghana in July 2024. A home coming after over three decades since the inception of the Circle, home, because Ghana is where it all started in 1989. Moreover, Mercy Oduyoye the founder of the Circle hails from Ghana and is currently residing in Ghana after worldwide missions that was dedicated to the liberation of African women and many more.

Liberation theologies of the Matriarchs of the Circle and other relevant voices in West Africa and beyond who wrote to address issues that confronted and still confront women in West Africa are presented in this volume. The general context and particularly the socio-cultural and religious context, then and now, in Western Africa has not favored women. One may argue that recently, there are women occupying various prominent spaces and positions in society, however gender-based discrimination, oppression and subjugation still linger. This volume seeks to identify and appreciate outstanding West African women theologians and their significant contributions in shaping liberation theologies and ideologies.

Sankofa

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in July 2024 will have its Pan-African conference in Ghana, where it all started. The conference theme will be *Sankofa 2024: Earth, Pandemics, Gender, and Religion*. The Sankofa 2024 conference hopes to be a gathering of our founding mothers and following generations of African women theologians

who have kept the torch burning and have striven amidst great accomplishments and challenges. It promises to be an intellectual and social interactions and engagements along the issues that have confronted women in the society at large, the church, Islamic and African religious and cultural contexts from the time the Circle was started till now and the way forward. This volume gives a glimpse of what is expected to take place.

Sankofa is an *Adinkra* symbol and concept in the Akan culture in Ghana signifying the importance of learning from the past to build a better future. Why *Sankofa*? Although West African cultures originally have patriarchal systems, it is also established that colonialism, Christianity, and Islam exacerbated the situation. Ifi Amadiume (1987, 2015) reported from her ethnographic research among the Igbos of Nigeria that women comfortably held positions of power in the society economically, politically, socially, and religiously until the advent of colonial rule and Christianity, which began to entrench patriarchal notions and engendered roles leading to the oppression and subjugation of women.

Moreover, the significant roles queen mothers play in our cultures, priestesses in African Religions and the place of women in matrilineal heritage show that, after all, women hold positions of power in the traditional settings aside the biological roles of motherhood, wifehood, and servitude. Women have unreservedly contributed to the sustenance of families, churches, and society at large but usually unacknowledged. Imagine a community without a woman! The prophetic voices of Mercy Oduyoye and other Matriarchs in West Africa have been the voices in the wilderness proclaiming redemption for African women. The approach has been from the onset to call the church to account in solidarity with women in ending the sin of oppression (Oduyoye, 1986, 1990, 2002; Oduyoye & Kanyoro, 1992; Phiri & Nadar, 2006; Amenyedzi, 2021). Sankofa is the call to turn back to appreciate the significant roles African women play politically, economically, spiritually, and socio-culturally. This can only enhance the full inclusion and participation of women in the society.

Oduyoye (2002) asserts that the absence of God brings disorder and chaos including oppression. In other words, the presence of God (God-Talk) brings liberation. God has been portrayed as a male who seem to

endorse the oppression and subjugation of women. However, most African women experience God differently; we experience God as one that loves us and redeems us from oppression through salvation in Christ and creation. Biblically we understand that, when God created humankind, God created them as male and female (in God's image hence we are equal image bearers of God, and co-managers of God's economy (Oduyoye, 2002). From this perspective when we say *Sankofa*, we are just going back to creation to reclaim our identity as African women created in God's image and endowed with all the abilities to excel in whatever we do.

The book is a reprisal of the liberation theologies of the mothers who have fought through their writings for the liberation of African women. They have touched on different aspects of the lived experiences of African women ranging from spirituality, political, economic, health, violence among other situations women encountered. The Matriarchs represented in this book are West African women who belong to the Circle or not but have contributed significantly to shaping theologies that concerns African women in the contexts of Christianity, African Religions, and Islam.

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (The Circle), West Africa

The Circle was formed by Mercy Oduyoye in the 1980s. It is believed that she had started gathering African women theologians dated back to the 1970s (Kanyoro, 2006). It was at a time that it was almost a taboo for a woman to be seen in the theological scene. Theology then was a man-thing and now remains a male dominated field, however, it is seriously challenged. As a female theologian in academia in West Africa (to be precise in Ghana where she comes from and then in Nigeria her matrimonial home) who also rose to prominent positions and networks globally at the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), her influence was significant in the formation and sustenance of the Circle (Kanyoro, 2006; Russell, 2006; Oredein, 2016).

African women who were in religion and theology decided to embark on a journey of academic research and publication as a means to voice their quest for liberation from the society and religious settings which in

fact encompassed all facets of womanhood as religion and culture are enshrined in the African livelihood. Martha Frederiks (2003) identified the focus of the Circle in the 1980's on religion and culture at the time when inculturation theology was becoming popular. Although these women affirmed the need for contextualization, it was also evident that culture was gender biased hence the need for a feminist discourse even within contextualization and inculturation. African women employed methodologies, philosophies, and frameworks such as storytelling, which was very relevant in telling the experiences of women, gender, gospel and culture, gospel and justice, and cultural hermeneutics, among others in framing their liberation theologies.

Among the African women theologians founding members were those from West Africa. These included Elizabeth Amoah, Rosemary Edet, Rose Zoe Obianga and Mercy Oduyoye who were at the first international planning committee meeting. Rosemary Edet was teaching religion at the University of Calabar, Nigeria, she remained an active member of the Circle till her demise in 1993; Elizabeth Amoah was teaching religion at the University of Ghana, and Mercy Oduyoye was then the Deputy General Secretary of the WCC (Kanyoro, 2006). There are altogether 31 West African founding members of the Circle. Although they were all not part of the first international planning meeting that launched the Circle, they caught the fire and ran with it. They were instrumental in the formation and development of the African women's Circle of Theologians. One of them is Rabbiatu Ammah the first Muslim member of the Circle. She was then a lecturer at the University of Ghana; she is a founding member of the Circle to whom this volume is dedicated.

Generally, in terms of structure, the Circle has been devoid of hierarchy avoiding such titles like president, chairperson, or general secretary but a welcoming space for women theologians to connect, mentor, learn and also publish. In terms of leadership, the Circle has depended on the services of coordinators. The Circle has been an academic space from the onset but also sought to address issues that affect women at the grassroots and community engagement. The Circle does not charge membership fees, hence the members who have been at the helms of affairs have to find ways to generate funds for their activities, conferences, and publications; this remains a huge challenge. The Circle has over the years seen

emerging women theologians in Africa and there are several publications based on liberation theologies focused on African womanhood in Christianity, Islam, interrelated with African cultures and African Religions. It is worthy to note that there are men who have been in solidarity with African women theologians since the beginning until now. It is for this reason we have men theologians like Mark Aidoo and Daniel Aryeh who have also contributed to this volume and continue to support the worthy course of the Circle. This is a reflection that African women theologians are not at war but acknowledge that in the community, we need each other; hence, the voices of women cannot be ignored at any point in life.

In West Africa, Ghana precisely, a significant achievement of the Circle is the establishment of the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture at the Talitha Qumi Centre, Legon Ghana in 1999, which attracted many voluntary services from male and female clergy and academics in Ghana. Joyce Boham and Lily Joy were the staff members at the Institute. Joyce remains a staff at the Institute which is now passed on to the Trinity Theological Seminary where it resides. Joyce Boham was a personal assistant to the then Circle coordinator Musimbi Kanyoro, the Liaison officer for the Circle and a personal assistant to Mercy Oduyoye who was then the director of the Institute. Boham's accounts on the Talitha Qumi Centre is in this volume (see Chapter Three).

African Women Theologies – Circle Theology

We start with Mercy Oduyoye's answer in an interview while we seek to understand the nature of Circle theology.

Oluwatomisin: I've seen in your work that you identify as an African women's theologian. I've also seen in your work that you identify as an African feminist. What does it mean to be an African women's theologian? How would you describe your brand of theology?

Mercy: Ok, we – I'm saying "we" because by the time I got on the open market as it were – there were more of us. I was the one that decided that we would call ourselves African women theologians. Because that's the simplest – we are Africans, we are

women, and we are theologians. We were kind of off-line people. We were a minority. People were wondering “What are they doing here?” So, we wanted to state clearly that we are women, African, we are theologians. I didn’t have any of these nice words like womanist and feminist to go on. And also, it was important for us to identify ourselves as women, because the theologians in Africa – and now I’m talking the seventies, sixties to seventies – they were all men. So, we have to underline the women when we talk about African women theologians (Oredein, 2016:158)

Basically, the Circle theology is ‘African women’s theologies.’ Undoubtedly, although it is daunting to name the theologies of Circle, the bottom line is that, our theologies are focused on the liberation of African women. Oduyoye attests that when it all started, there were no fancy names like feminism or womanism. Since these terminologies have evolved over the years, we seem to clamp what we do together along the lines of feminism and womanism sometimes prefixed with African. Feminism is adjudged as Western while there have been arguments that regarding womanism, the experiences of African Americans from where womanism hails, are different from African women on the African continent (Phiri & Nadar, 2006; Kanyoro, 1995; Dube, 1996). Musa Dube the current coordinator of the Circle is famous with her postcolonial feminist hermeneutics. Masenya’s *bosadi* approach is also worthy of noting (Masenya, 1997) so is Amenyedzi’s (2022) Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm worthy of mention.

Isabel Phiri and Sarojini Nadar have proposed that we keep the trilogy of race, gender and class while making room for formulating new methodologies that are relevant to framing our liberation theologies as African women theologians. It is important to highlight what we do in the Circle as cultural hermeneutics, liberation hermeneutics, narrative activism, feminism, womanism, and employing a liberation paradigm with a commitment to the lived experiences of women at the grassroot (Oduyoye, 1995, 2002; Masenya, 1997; Dube, 2000; Phiri & Nadar, 2006; Amenyedzi, 2021a, 2021b, 2022). This volume *Sankofa: Liberation Theologies of West African Women* presents liberation theologies of West African women within the frameworks and approaches as mentioned above.

Liberation Theologies of West African Women

The works of West African women usually overlap between theology, African Religions and Philosophy. Here, a highlight on the path these formidable women have traveled in shaping African women theology is presented while the chapters deal more deeply with their theologies in details.

The Circle having been a home that connects African women theologians. It has been a space for women in Christian, Muslim, and African Indigenous Religions to connect and engage intellectually and socially. History records that Christian missions did not accommodate the presence and participation of those who identified solely with African Religions. However, the Circle theologians have engaged extensively with African Religions and cultures in their theological liberation discourses, appreciating those dignifying values and denouncing the dehumanizing rituals and cultural practices that do not favor women.

Rabiatu Deinyo Ammah was the first Muslim woman among the founding Matriarchs (Kanyoro, 2006). Since this book is dedicated to Rabiatu Ammah, it is appropriate to start with pinpointing her immense contribution to West African 'women's liberation theology. As an Islamic scholar, her contribution has been along the lines of the trilogy of Islam, Christianity and African religion proposing a 'Women's Dialogical Model'. She stands for multi-faith and interfaith dialogue, having been an academic at the University of Ghana, her scholarship has birthed many men and women in Islamic and interfaith/interreligious theologies. In her footsteps is the current country coordinator of the Circle in Ghana, Fatimatu Neyare Sulemanu who is also an Islamic scholar at the same university.

Mercy Oduyoye the founder of the Circle remains the mother of African women theologians (Gathogo, 2010). Her publications since the 1970s and 1980s already explicitly tackled Christianity in Africa, the plight of young people and African women in theology, culture, and society. Among her many publications is the book *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa* published in 1986, though not her first publication, this book encompasses Mercy Oduyoye's ideologies and liberation theologies. She had already by then identified patterns of coloniality, Christianization of Africa, acculturation and inculturation. Then,

as the one-woman theologian among men, it was easy to identify the notions of masculinity that informed theology, ethos and praxis, there was no room for women in such 'sacred' spaces. Women were constructed as inferior, Christianity and Islam reinforced African Indigenous Religion and culture to oppress and subjugate African women. Her theology since the onset has been one that identifies oppression as sin that needs redemption. Hence salvation through Christ must also bring liberation from oppression.

Elizabeth Amoah, also a founding member of the Circle has significantly contributed to the theological liberation discourse on the continent. She unreservedly casts the net of liberation abroad upon the waters of African Indigenous Religion. Her focus has been mainly on African Indigenous Religion, critiquing religious and socio-cultural systems in her quest for abundant life for all. Elizabeth Amoah approaches her liberation theologies by using oral sources such as, proverbs, songs, stories, and prayers among others. As a founding member, her immense contributions to the Circle is worthy of acknowledgement.

Rosemary Edet is recognized as one of the first African Catholic Feminist Nuns focusing on a biblical theology, African tradition(s) and biblical hermeneutics. Her inculturation theology is a huge contribution to African women's liberation theology within Christianity and the traditional Nigerian culture(s). As a New Testament scholar her focus on Pauline notion of community is an impressive work which has enhanced the shaping of African women's liberation theologies. Edet had also done work on creative literature. She is particularly known for designing the logo of the Circle.

Teresa Okure's is also worth mentioning, her work is a major contribution to African women liberation theologies, biblical hermeneutics and praxis. Okure was the first African woman with a PhD in biblical studies. She specialized in New Testament studies, particularly in John's gospel. Writing from the Nigerian context, her primary focus has been on understanding abundant life for all as in John 10:10 while addressing marginalization and gender. Teresa Okure's hermeneutic of life is a major contribution to liberation theology and praxis (Okure, 1988, 2000).

Dorothy BEA Akoto is a significant African woman theologian who has made major contributions in framing African women's theology from the Old Testament and biblical studies dimensions. Theological contributions in the light of gender and women's liberation, from the perspective of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible studies. She addresses colonialism, patriarchy, racism, sexism, tribalism, education, culture, marginalization, and discrimination among others. Also focusing on children, marriage, widowhood, witch camps and HIV/AIDs etc. A significant book she co-edited with Elizabeth Amoah and Dorcas Akintunde is *Culture Practice and HIV and AIDS: African Women's Voice, from the presentations at the third Pan-African Circle Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2002*. Her major contribution is the "Hermeneutic of Grafting" in Hebrew studies and is recognized as the first Old Testament woman scholar in West Africa.

Grace Sintim-Adasi is another amazing woman theologian whose contributions undoubtedly have played a vital role in theology, praxis or ethos. Her research focuses on gender, leadership, women in ministry, hierarchies, inclusion, seclusion, and culture. Her book, *Gender and Change: Roles and Challenges of Ordained Women Ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana* which was published in 2016. Her own experiences as a minister and educationist come to bear as she addresses issues that concern women and are relevant in education.

Oyeronke Olademo although is not a member of the Circle, we have included her in the Matriarchs as her enormous contribution to African women theologies are very significant. Her work is on the cultural, political, religious, and economic contexts of Yoruba religion, Christianity and women. She uses oral literatures, orature, or folk literature and has significantly contributed to the Yoruba cultural gender paradigm.

In terms of philosophy some of the African women have trodden the philosophical paths in building their liberation theologies. **Celestina Omoso Isiramem** is one of such, as an African feminist philosopher, she makes philosophical-theological propositions while interrogating religions and cultures, identifying those dehumanizing aspects making a case against the sin of discrimination. She works mainly from the Nigerian context and has served as a coordinator in the Nigerian South-South Zone of the Circle.

Furthermore, is **Martina Iyabo Oguntoyinbo-Atere** whose focus has been on the inclusion of women, and children in all facets of life. As an African feminist philosopher, in her inclusive approach, she emphasizes patriarchy and marginalization while arguing that women and children be fully included in societal life.

The Circle West Africa, Ghana in particular has worked extensively on HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 through community engagements and publications. The book: *People of Faith and The Challenges of HIV/AIDS* edited by Mercy Oduyoye and Elizabeth Amoah in 2004 is an evident output. Similarly, the recent publication on the COVID-19 pandemic: *COVID-19: African Women and the Will to Survive* edited by Helen A. Labeodan, Rosemary Amenga-Etego, Johanna Stiebert and Mark S. Aidoo, is very significant.

The above-mentioned matriarchs and their liberation theologies are but a few of what African women theologians have been up to over the years, the book presents a lot more matriarchs and summaries of their liberation theologies. It is imperative to indicate that there are generations after these profound women who are following their footsteps. Many of them are the authors who have contributed tremendously towards this volume. The Circle in preparation for the future is grooming the next generation. Hence, there are the Rising Stars, these are identified up and coming African women theologians who are being mentored and they are leaving no stone unturned but striving hard in order to keep the flame burning towards liberation from oppression and women's empowerment.

A good evaluation of an organization would not ignore the weaknesses as it is in identifying them that they may be addressed. Hence, although the Circle has achieved so much in the West African region, it has not been without challenges. First of all, while we acknowledge the enormous contributions of our Matriarchs, it is observed that the fire that burned in the beginning and the unity that kept them together seem to wane. Perhaps, the older generation may have been satisfied with their achievements, however, their vibrant and continuous engagements could encourage a lot more rising stars and future generations of African women theologians.

Admittedly, theology still remains typically a man's world. Therefore, there is the need to identify, encourage and mentor a lot more women in the theological field for a greater representation. There is also the need for

the Circle in the West African Region as a whole and the individual countries to endeavor to light up the touch again, which means relentless efforts in unity and purpose in organization, fellowship, and publication.

Overview of the Book

The book *Sankofa: Liberation Theologies of West African Women* sought to answer questions as posted in the preface by the coordinator (see preface). Mainly, the objective is to rewrite the theologies of the West African Matriarchs. In so doing we sought to investigate the contexts that motivated their work, their sources of theological ideologies, their unique theologies and how they confronted the issues of patriarchy, tribalism, colonialism, capitalism, racism, sexism, and many others socio-cultural and religious issues that affected women. The book also had the objective of interrogating some male dominant theologies vis-à-vis that of the Matriarchs. Admittedly, space did not allow for even the theologies of the Matriarchs to be exhausted, let alone compare and contrast with other male counterparts. Notwithstanding, masculine and patriarchal notions in theology, ethos and praxis were addressed. The book is divided into three sections,

- Section One: Methods and Theories of Liberation
- Section Two: Biblical Hermeneutics of Matriarchs
- Section Three: African Women Theologies of Liberation

Section One: Methods and Theories of Liberation

The book opens with an engagement with Ifi Amadiume's ethnographic findings through an Afrocentric-Womanist lens by Seyram Amenyedzi. Amadiume in her book *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* which was first published in 1987 and republished later in 2015, tells the story of how Igbo women of Nigeria assumed economic, spiritual, political, and social powers until colonization and Christianity robbed them of such powers. Ifi is not a member of the Circle but her work lays a solid foundation for the theologies of African women as this provides a scientific evidence of the realities of African women especially that of the Igbo women of Nigeria.

Chapter Two is a reflection on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* by Gesila Nneka Uzukwu. This book is a weighty piece of work that is crafted beautifully to tell the story of patriarchy, colonialism, and sexism. A theological engagement of the relevant themes undoubtedly adds a lot more to the discourse and liberation theologies of African women.

Chapter Three captures a major achievement of the Circle by Joyce Ewura Adwoa Boham who has been a long-standing staff of the Circle. Joyce, the current director of the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture at the Talitha Qumi Centre in Legon, Ghana writes about the achievements of the institute.

In **Chapter Four**, Daniel Nii Aboagye Aryeh presents a review of Rabbiatu Ammah's work on gender and justice in religion, mainly on Islam. Rabbiatu identifies interpretations and misinterpretation of Qur'anic passages that dehumanize women and reinforce patriarchal tendencies in both Arabian and African societies. She highlights gender justice and how the oppression of women also affects them economically.

Chapter Five is Oluwatoyin Adebola Gbadamosi's presentation of Helen Labeodan's philosophical propositions and theology. From the Yoruba cultural context in Nigeria, Helen's liberation theologies are focused on interpretations and re-interpretation of African Philosophy especially metaphysics and cultural beliefs from a feminist dimension. Her work on HIV/AIDS is worthy of noting.

Section Two: Biblical Hermeneutics of Matriarchs

Chapter Six is Caroline N. Mbonu's appreciation and interrogation of Teresa Okure's Biblical Hermeneutics in a Nigerian Context. She presents her contextual liberation theologies and her hermeneutical approach to issues that concerns African women particularly in the Nigerian context.

Chapter Seven presents the Matriarch BEA Akoto's African Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation. Written by Agnes Acha Ifeyinwa the chapter highlights BEA Akoto's approach and theologies on gender in the Bible that tackles marriage, missions, ministerial education, poverty, masculinity, racism and classism, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS.

In **Chapter Eight**, Marceline L. Yele writes on the Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics of Alice Yafeh-Deigh. Yafeh-Deigh is a Cameroonian, her liberation theologies are mainly biblical hermeneutics that are centered on culture and postcolonial tendencies that subjugate African women, particularly from the Cameroonian context.

Chapter Nine is a tribute in memory of the late Dorcas Akintunde and her immense contribution to African women's liberation theologies from a Nigerian context. Bolaji E. Aderonke engaged Dorcas's widower and others while framing and rewriting her theologies which are basically on feminist biblical hermeneutics.

Chapter Ten is Mark Aidoo's presentation of Dorothy Akoto's liberation theologies on gender from the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible dimensions. He explores Dorothy Akoto's take on patriarchy, racism, colonialism, marginalization, sexism, tribalism, and discrimination among others.

Section Three: African Women Theologies of Liberation

Chapter Eleven is a womanist retrospection of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye's liberation theologies in the Circle by Seyram Amenyedzi. As the founder of the Circle, Mercy Oduyoye was a pacesetter in identifying the oppression and subjugation of African women in socio-cultural and theological settings. Mercy remains an untamed prophetic voice in Africa and beyond.

In **Chapter Twelve**, Estelle M. Sogbou pays a tribute to the late Rosemary Edet, a co-founder of the Circle who was among the first African Catholic Feminist Nuns. Her theologies and African tradition and biblical interpretations distinctly approached from theology of inculturation perspectives. Stemming from the Nigerian context, Rosemary's liberation theologies are focused on the dignity of women and colonization.

Chapter Thirteen is Sarah Korang Sansa's rewriting of Rose Mary Amenga-Etego's theologies. She does an analysis of her theologies that are towards addressing contemporary issues in Africa and Ghana specifically, through a theological lens.

Chapter Fourteen is Georgina Kwanima Boateng's account of Grace Sin-tim-Adasi's liberating Ecclesia. Writing from the Ghanaian context, Grace majors on inequalities in leadership and promotion in the ecclesiastical and academic spaces regarding men and women due to socio-cultural factors.

Chapter Fifteen is on the philosophical and feminist liberation theologies of Celestina Omoso Isiramen done by Esther Ojone Joseph. Isiramen's work delves into Yuroba traditional religion while framing her liberation theologies.

In **Chapter Sixteen**, Lydia Bosede Akande rewrites the liberation theologies of Oyeronke Olademo who also is not a member of the Circle, she is included in the Matriarchs as her enormous contribution to African women theologies is very significant. Her work is on the cultural, political, religious, and economic contexts of Yoruba religion, Christianity and women. She uses oral literatures, orature, or folk literature and has significantly contributed to the Yoruba cultural gender paradigm.

Chapter Seventeen is by two Cameroonian members of the Circle, Helen Namondo Linonge-Fontebo and Gertrude Kamgue Tokam who write on the theologies of Hélène Yinda who also comes from Cameroon. Hélène Yinda's work is on gender inequalities, gender-based violence, injustice and other discriminations women face in Africa from socio-cultural and Christian perspectives.

In **Chapter Eighteen**, Agnes Ini Solomon gives an account on the African pastoral bearings of Esther Acolatse. Esther comes from Ghana and her research on pastoral counseling cannot be ignored when identifying the enormous contributions of African women and their liberation theologies.

Chapter Nineteen is a summary of Fatimatu N-eyare Sulemanu's PhD research. She writes about the contributions of Ghana Muslim Mission Women Fellowship to development in Ghana. The chapter is a research that proves that Muslim women groups have made significant strides in contributing to development in Ghana.

Chapter Twenty is a reflection on Martina Iyabo Oguntoyinbo-Atere's inclusive approach to African women studies by Blessing Okojie Jeffrey-Ebhomemen through an Afrocentric-Womanist Paradigm. Martina

Iyabo, in her work considers the inclusion of women, mothers, and children in all aspects of life as vital.

Chapter Twenty-One is the last chapter by Yosi Apollos Maton on the late Rosemary Edet's Contributions to Feminist Theology in West Africa. The late Rosemary Edet is among the founders of the Circle whose contribution to liberation theology is outstanding. Moton notes her opinion that Mary Magdalene should have been accorded apostleship for having witnessed and announced the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, the volume ends with Georgina Kwanima Boateng's beautiful poem in honor of Elizabeth Amoah, a founding member of the Circle.

In **Conclusion**, herein, this book echoes the prophetic voices of West African Matriarchs of the Circle. It is impossible to have written everything about their theologies, but we hope that the book provides enough overview of their liberation theologies. We trust that the book will be useful for the now and in the future in framing feminist/womanist theologies and African women liberation.

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