**Westminster Christian Institute Uganda**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Bachelor of Arts in Theological Studies**

**BH47: African Church History**

**Response Papers on Chapters 1-3 of Mark Shaw – The Kingdom of God in African, 2006**

**Lecturer: Happy Robert**

**Student: Asemererwe Britten (Include Registration number)**

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**Outline Section**

I. Four Approaches to African Church History

1. Missionary Historiography
2. Nationalistic Historiography
3. Ecumenical Historiography
4. The kingdom of God Perspective
5. The Kingdom as the providential and Theocratic rule of God (OT Perspective)
6. The Kingdom as the redemptive rule of Christ (NT Perspective)
7. The Kingdom as the promotion of justice (Eschatological Perspective)

II. Christianity in Egypt to AD. 640

1. Egypt before Christ
2. Egypt as an African Country – the presence of Judaism
3. Egyptian view of death
4. Egyptian Religion
5. Egyptian divine kingship
6. Jewish Christianity in Egypt AD. 200
7. Hellenistic Christianity AD. 200-300
8. Coptic Christianity in Egypt AD. 300-600

III. Christianity in North Africa to AD.640

1. Two visions of Carthage
2. The City of God
3. The City of Man

IV. Challenges of the Church in Egypt and North Africa

A. Persecution and martyrdom

B. Heresies

1. Egyptian paganism
2. Imperial Cult
3. Gnosticism
4. Asceticism
5. Donatism
6. Vandalism
7. Arianism

V. Leadership in Egypt and North Africa

A. Antony

B. Clement and Origen

C. Tertullian and Cyprian

D. Athanasius

E. Augustine

**Significant Points Section**

The following were points I considered to be signification in this reading: -

* Constructing African Church History requires consulting all the four approaches described in chapter 1 of this reading (PP.7-18).
* I noted that the kingdom perspective on African Church History structures a proper framework for understanding God’s working in the history of the church in Africa. This approach looks at the kingdom of God as the providential and theocratic rule of God; as the redemptive rule of Christ; and as the promotion of justice (PP.16, 17).
* Looking at history from a kingdom perspective makes believers restless in a sinful world where everyone seeks to establish his own kingdom. This perspective enables men and women to judge the world in which they live will complete objectivity and calls for peace, justice and freedom (PP.17, 18).
* “The kingdom as a future reality of justice and righteousness on earth can produce churches of protest that witness to the kingdom by fighting the structures of poverty and injustice” (P.18).
* The African story of Christianity like the story of the church in Egypt is mixed up with the earthly social and political rule and the inward rule of Christ over sin and the demonic powers (P.21).
* I noted that Egypt being the center of business selling ivory, ebony and ideas and the fact that it was occupied by Jews especially in the town explains why the gospel spread as across Africa as early as the 1st Century and the following centuries (P.22).
* I noted on page 24 that the view of death in the Egyptian mind corresponded with the Christian view hence the concept for the promise of eternal life was not burdensome for a typical Egyptian. Thus, Christianity would receive early reception on this very ground.
* The tradition that Mark preached the Gospel in Egypt is important as it shows that the Church in Egypt as early as the 2nd century was closely linked with the early church in Acts (P.26).
* Mark Shaw points out several evidences suggesting that the gospel had penetrated Africa as early as first and second centuries.
* In the verge of great persecution, there was still a process of restoration and reconciliation by the church (P.33).
* Shaw quoting Adolf Harnack regarding the aims of the Christian religion wrote, “One of the cardinal aims and issues of Christian religion was to draw a sharp line between the worship of God and the honor due to the state and to its leaders” (P.33).

**Reflection Section**

Here you choose few points to reflect upon, about four to six points are enough. Give your personal thoughts, your critical analysis of the main ideas which stood up to you in the reading, suggest whether you agree or disagree with the author in some areas, indicate why or why not you agree or disagree, raise the main arguments for your analysis, make appropriate applications of each point being discussed. Apply at personal, family, ministry and societal levels; close with recommendations of what needs to be included in the revised publication.