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**An Analytical Biography of Byang Henry Kato (1936-1975): His  
Theological Legacy and Contribution to Biblical Hermeneutics,  
African Christian Identity and Evangelical Theological Education**

By

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**A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Historical Theology**

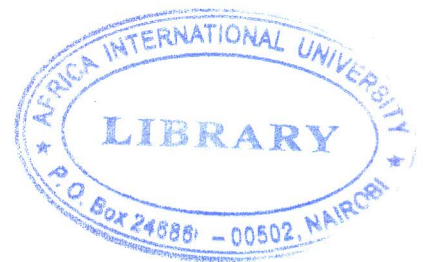
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## ABSTRACT

This study was an analytical biography of a pioneering church leader—Byang Henry Kato (1936–1975)—in shaping African evangelicalism, in the subject area of Historical Theology. The purpose of the study was to explore Kato's life story and theological legacy to contribute to leadership development and maturing of the church in contemporary Africa. Specifically, the study explores Kato's biblical hermeneutics, Christian African identity and contribution to evangelical theological education in sub-Saharan Africa, using empirical and qualitative approaches, literary and field interviews.

Kato was a young Nigerian theologian and the first African General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA), among other roles. He was renowned to be father of evangelical theology in sub-Saharan Africa. Kato was immersed in African traditional religion, as a child and was on course for succeeding his father as fetish priest when he converted to the Christian faith. Kato rose from humble beginnings to a world class evangelical leader and scholar, before his tragic death by drowning.

Byang Kato made important theological contributions, contending for biblical fidelity on several issues related to relationship between traditional African religions and Christianity. He was opposed to much of what other influential liberal-leaning African theologians of his time taught. He raised an alarm and warned the Church in Africa about the theological pitfalls—syncretism and universalism and advocated for discontinuity with the African traditional religious worldview, especially aspects that were inconsistent with Scripture. Unprecedentedly, Kato helped to establish a number of premier theological institutions, to remedy the theological pitfalls in sub-Saharan Africa. Exploring some theoretical and biblical foundations demonstrated that Kato's views were mostly consistent with mainstream evangelical perspectives. The findings and data collated formed the basis of constructing a corpus of theological material that characterised Kato's theology, which I have dubbed as Katoan theology.