A THEOLOGY OF EVIL

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As the appalling situation in ZImbabwe continues to unfold, these words from Andrew Walls on the contribution of Africa to a developing Christian theology seem very appropriate. Sorry, but it's a longish quote:

> *Africa is already revealing the limitations of theology as generally taught in the West. The truth is that Western models of theology are too small for Africa. Most of them reflect the worldview of the Enlightenment and that is a small-scale worldview, one cut and shaved to fit a small-scale universe. Since most Africans live in a larger, more populated universe with entities that are outside the Enlightenment worldview, such models of theology cannot cope with some of the most urgent pastoral needs. They have no answers for some of the most desolating aspects of life - because they have no questions. They have nothing useful to say on issues involving such things as witchcraft or sorcery, since these do not exist in an Enlightenment universe. Nor can Western theology usefully discuss ancestors since the West does not have the family structures that raise the questions. Western theology has difficulty coping with principalities and powers, whether in relation to their grip on the universe or to Christ's triumph over them on the cross. The reason is that it is hard for Western consciousness to treat them as other than abstractions. So Western theology has difficulty in relating personal sin and guilt and structural and systematic evil and sometimes offers different gospels for dealing with each and quarrels over which has priority. Perhaps Africa, which knows so much about systemic evil and where the principalities and powers are not a strange concept, may open the way to a more developed theology of evil as the issues already appearing in African pastoral theology are thrashed out.*

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