

Jacob Kehinde Olupona  
AASR-President

## FROM THE CHAIR

In February 2004, AASR will meet in Ghana to deliberate on the West African situation and to examine the role of religion in the social and cultural transformation of the region. The meeting also culminates our efforts to convene meetings in the three major regions of AASR activity on the continent - Southern, Eastern, and Western Africa. I trust and hope that a good number of you will come. There are several reasons why we choose the topic of religion and social transformation. First, there is an explosion of religious organisations and movements in West Africa – especially Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, Islamic groups, and neo-traditional religious movements. This exponential increase is unprecedented in West African history. With large number of adherents comes also physical growth of denominations, mosques, and temples in West African urban centers. Remarkably, many religious organizations command larger numbers of constituents than some popular West African politicians and political leaders command.

However, during the last two decades a sobering rift has risen between unprecedented growth and the mobilisation of West African masses to develop social and cultural transformation comparable to this growth. West Africa is a region embedded in war, violence, and enormous economic ‘crises’ certainly requiring critical intervention.

Participants at the conference will examine possible roles religion may play in tackling these issues, as much as how religion itself is implicated in these crises. We are delighted that many members of AASR in Africa, Europe, and the United States indicated strong interests in attending this significant regional meeting!

While in Ghana, members will also deliberate on the future of AASR, especially as we prepare for the IAHR Congress in Japan. Information about the Congress has appeared in several issues of the AASR Newsletter. It appears in this one, as well. Our members are encouraged to send their proposals to the organizers of the Congress. Similar to AASR’s 2002 Congress in Durban-Westville, South Africa, our new challenges are to provide funding to allow African-based scholars to participate. As usual, I welcome your suggestions on these matters. I look forward to seeing you in Ghana!

Happy New Year, 2004!

## CONFERENCES AHEAD

2<sup>ND</sup> AASR CONFERENCE IN AFRICA  
& IAHR REGIONAL CONFERENCE,  
5-8 February 2004,  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, GHANA

supported by  
International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR),  
International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM)  
& the University of California, Davis

### THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF WEST AFRICA

Deadline for abstracts: 30 November 2003

This is an IAHR Regional Conference for scholars of religion in the West Africa sub-region and the Second AASR-Conference in Africa. It will explore the relationship between social and cultural institutions and religious practices in contemporary West African societies. The ongoing wars, civil disturbances and turmoil in West African nations provide a unique opportunity for scholars to investigate the role of religion in the social and cultural transformation of the region. The following topics provide some guidelines for the conference but they do not exclude any other topics on the general theme:

- = Religion: Conflict and Peace
- = Religion and state in the region:
- = The Role of Voluntary Organizations
- = West Africa and Global (Dis)connections

#### *Conference details and organisation*

The three-day conference will be held from 5th to 8th February 2004 and hosted by the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, at Legon. The conference will be an important forerunner for the next international IAHR Congress planned for Tokyo 24-30 March 2005.

Please send topics and an abstract of 200 words to all the following:

Professor Elom Dovlo: <edovlo@ug.edu.gh>

Professor Abdulkader Tayob: <a.tayob@let.kun.nl>

Dr. Matthews A. Ojo <matthews\_ojo@yahoo.com>

Costs (subject to change): Registration Fees (\$100); Accommodation (\$300); Transportation (\$85)

Partial support is available to scholars who are based in Africa.

### *Introduction*

In accordance with the Constitution of the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR), which reads at Section 5.b that 'The AASR will endeavour to organise a major regional conference in Africa at least once every five years', the Executive Committee of the AASR proposes to hold a conference at the University of Ghana, in Legon, Ghana, in January or February 2004. The proposed conference constitutes the second AASR conference to be held in Africa since the founding of the Association in Harare in 1992. The first conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya 27-30 July 1999 under the theme, 'The Religions of East Africa, and Their Study in the Age of Globalisation'. The founding Harare Conference and the subsequent Nairobi Conference were recognised as Regional Conferences of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). So is this conference.

### *The Conference Theme*

Ongoing war, civil disturbance and turmoil in West African nations provide a unique opportunity for scholars to investigate the role of religion, positive and negative, in the social and cultural transformation of the region. Today, many West African nations – Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Ivory Coast – are embroiled in civil unrest. The African Association for the Study of Religion (AASR), therefore, proposes to organise a regional conference in Ghana to bring together scholars from Africa and abroad to explore the relationship between social and cultural institutions and religious practices in contemporary West African societies.

Significantly, the conference will raise issues with Western ideals that separate 'church' and state. This model is based on the residue of enlightenment modernity and assumed secularisation. In other parts of the world, this residue continues to serve as a universal norm and framework for analysing the relationship between religion and the social order. However, in West Africa the paradigm fails to explain the passion and widespread participation of Africans in embracing varieties of religious practices, beliefs, and religious organisation. The conference will provide space to explore and compare different perspectives and many aspects of the specific role and impact of religions in West Africa.

Among the questions to be discussed are the following. How can religion ameliorate civil strife, conflicts, and social cleavages? How do religious institutions alleviate poverty, human rights abuses, physical violence, environmental degradation, cultural abuses and the ongoing civil disorder that has resulted in large-scale wars, famine and migrations? How should religion assist the state in formulating social policies that will transform chaotic social and cultural systems into peaceful, productive communities in a civil society?

As current events across the continent clearly demonstrate, religion has enormous capacity to play significant positive roles in social and cultural transformation of African societies. To cite a few successful examples: nation states such as Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya and South Africa embarked upon democratisation processes, while the religious institutions of these civil societies responded by pacifying implicit tensions and thus provided tangible peace.

Another central goal of the conference is to theorise about the meaning, relevance and limitation of religion in African contemporary social and cultural life, especially in the last few decades of independent nation-states. This exploration will focus on the role, if any, that religious institutions played in the formation of public policies, the rule of law, and the emergence of a civil society. How have religious institutions been implicated as sources of conflict? Have religious organisations played active roles in conflict resolutions? How do indigenous African religions, Islam, and Christianity relate to, or support, social and cultural transformations of African states and societies – especially in their public roles as advocates for economic social and environmental justice? How do religious institutions, as part of a civil society, alleviate or intensify poverty, human rights abuses, AIDS epidemics, environmental degradation, war and communal and civil disorder?

Among other themes, the conference will explore the following issues: religion and ethnic conflict, religion and peaceful coexistence, Muslim-Christian relations, inter-religious dialogue, religion and civil society, religion and human rights, law and order, and religion and economic and social justice. The conference, we hope, will offer a multidimensional understanding of these issues and thereby revitalise the discussion of the place of religion in the social and cultural development of Africa.

We hope to publish the proceedings of this conference in Ghana with distribution widely throughout Africa and abroad.



THE UNIVERSITY OF JOS, NIGERIA,  
FACULTY OF LAW & DEPT. OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

announce an international conference on

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES  
ON SHARIA IN NIGERIA

DATES: 15-17 JANUARY, 2004

VENUE: MULTIPURPOSE AUDITORIUM,  
BAUCHI ROAD CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF JOS

PROGRAMME

*Thursday, 15 January, 2-5 p.m.:*

= Opening,

= Addresses by:

Saudatu Shehu Mahdi, Secretary General, Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA)

Danny McCain, Department of Religious Studies, University of Jos

*Friday, 16 January, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.*

Abdulkader Tayob (Cape Town & Nijmegen Universities): 'The Demand for Sharia in African Democratization Processes: Pitfalls or Opportunities?'

Commentators: Warisu Alli (Unijos) & Isawa Elaigwu (IGSR)

Rosalind Hackett (University of Notre Dame): 'Rethinking the Role of Religion in the Public Sphere: Local and Global Perspectives'

Commentators: Theresa Adamu (TCNN) & Muslih T. Yahya (Unijos)

Ruud Peters (University of Amsterdam): 'A Survey of Sharia Implementation in the Muslim World Today'

Commentators: Joseph Kenny (Unibadan) & Auwalu Yadudu (BUK)

Cole Durham (Brigham Young University): 'Nigeria's "State Religion" Question in Comparative Perspective'

Commentators: Musa Gaiya (Unijos) & Ibrahim Na'iyā Sada (CILS/-ABU)

*Saturday, 17 January, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.*

John Reitz (University of Iowa): 'Freedom of Religion and Its Limitations: Judicial Standards for Deciding Particular Cases'

Commentators: Titus Mann (CLO) & Jamila Nasir (Unijos)

Sanusi Lamido Sanusi (United Bank for Africa): 'The West and the Rest: Reflections on the Intercultural Dialogue about Sharia'

Commentators: Umar Danfulani (Unijos) & Isiage Oloyede (Unilorin)

Gerrie ter Haar (Institute of Social Studies, The Hague): 'Religion: Source of Conflict or Resource for Peace?'

Commentators: J.D. Gwamna (Unijos) & Sama'ila Mohammed (Unijos)

Abdullahi An-Na'im (Emory University): 'The Future of Sharia'

Commentators: Ali Ahmad (BUK) & Andrew Walls (Princeton & Unijos)

All interested persons are invited to attend. There will be no registration charge or entry fee. Transportation, accommodation, and feeding are at personal expense. For further information contact:

Philip Ostien, Faculty of Law, University of Jos: [ostienp@unijos.edu.ng](mailto:ostienp@unijos.edu.ng) or [ostienp@yahoo.com](mailto:ostienp@yahoo.com);

Umar Danfulani, Department of Religious Studies, University of Jos: [dademu@unijos.edu.ng](mailto:dademu@unijos.edu.ng); or

Franz Kogelmann, Lehrstuhl für Religionswissenschaft, Universität Bayreuth: [franz.kogelmann@epost.de](mailto:franz.kogelmann@epost.de).



RELIGION,  
PEACE-BUILDING, &  
CONFLICT IN AFRICA

APRIL 1-3, 2004,  
JINJA NILE RESORT, UGANDA

CALL FOR PAPERS

On April 1-3, 2004, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame will convene a conference entitled,

*Religion in African Conflicts  
& Peace-building Initiatives:  
Problems & Prospects for a Globalizing Africa*

at the Jinja Nile Resort in Uganda. In an effort to develop the promising new sub-field of religion, peace-building, and conflict in the African context, with an emphasis on the cross-fertilisation of theory and practice, we are inviting submissions from scholars, activists, and practitioners from inside and outside of Africa.

*Conference Theme*

Why is it that, in contemporary Africa, such apparently progressive and universalising processes as democratisation and liberalisation have been accompanied by an unprecedented increase in religious conflict and revivalism? By focusing on the increasing salience of religion in the public sphere, as well as changing religious-state configurations, we seek to generate new perspectives on conflict and peace-building in the African context. We invite papers on a broad range of issues concerning the role of religion in African conflicts and peace-building, covering regions throughout the continent. Some topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- = religion, African states, and the crisis of governance,
- = multi-religious peace-building initiatives
- = Islamic activism
- = the politics of indigenous revivalism
- = media access and representation

- = gendered and generational dimensions of religious conflict and conflict transformation
- = religion and the AIDs crisis
- = proselytisation and social conflict
- = the development of new local-global religious networks (including the 'NGO factor'), and
- = the role of religious ideologies and organisations in the popularisation of human rights discourses.

Deadline for submissions: December 15, 2003.

*Conference Package: US\$ 2000*

The conference fee will cover air-transport from Chicago to Entebbe via British Airways, six day accommodation and all meals at the Jinja Nile Resort for the full duration of the conference and an excursion to Kampala. Flights will leave out of Chicago on March 29 and return on April 6, 2004.

As funds are limited, the organizers will not be able to provide financial support. Participants are encouraged to seek their own funding. For further information consult: <http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/research/religion.html>  
Or contact: PRCP Coordinator [Omar@nd.edu](mailto:Omar@nd.edu)

*Additional note by Prof. Rosalind Hackett in e-mail of 5.11 and 8.11.03:*  
'Please be advised that some funding may be available for selected African participants based in Africa'.





EASR/SECR/IAHR  
Special Conference

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE  
& INTOLERANCE

Santander, Spain,  
8-11 September 2004

*The conference*

The European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) will hold its 4<sup>th</sup> conference and general assembly in Santander, Spain, from 8 to 11 September 2004 under the auspices of the Spanish Association of the Science of Religions (SECR) and in association with the Department of Historical Sciences at the University of Cantabria in Santander, Spain. Apart from being the 6<sup>th</sup> SECR and 4<sup>th</sup> EASR conference, it is also an IAHR Special Conference which will serve as the venue for the IAHR Executive Committee and the editorial boards of *Numen* and the *Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions*.

*The conference theme*

In various forms and degrees religions have played, and still play, important roles at social as well as individual levels. Specific forms of religious beliefs, rituals and symbols have contributed towards the construction of identities, the integration of individuals in large and small scale groups, and the expulsion of other individuals from the same groups. The history of religions demonstrates a great variety of ways in which religions have conceived other religions, their truth claims, their gods, their rituals, and their adherents. Some have shown largesse, or even tolerance; others have been explicitly hostile and intolerant, in principle and practice. The religious history of humankind has been stamped both by peaceful co-existence and bloody conflicts, mutual understanding and a total lack of it, tolerance and intolerance, and various positions in-between. History shows that religion can be used to justify oppression, segregation and discrimination, and to generate fanaticism, hatred and violence; and also that internal controversies contributed to strong tensions within religious groups culminating in persecution, aggression and violence. Constant change and renewal in established religions and the emergence of new religious movements reinvigorate controversies. Claims of religious freedom generate discourses of tolerance, while

intolerance fosters marginalisation, persecution and extermination of minorities. In Europe, and elsewhere, human rights, including freedom of religion, are on the political and religious agenda. Freedom of religion, however, is sometimes equal to freedom for some religions only. In the process of the construction of the European Union (EU), multiculturalism and the protection of minorities become essential elements of debate. The attitudes of the different states and the EU towards religious diversity constitute a pressing theme for discussion.

*Aim of the conference*

The aim of this conference is to discuss the concepts of religious tolerance and intolerance, their historical development, and their expressions in society in theory and practice in the past and the present. The conference aims to be a forum for the exchange of ideas between scholars working in the broad field of the academic study of religions. Historical, anthropological, sociological, legal and psychological approaches to the topic are welcome. Abstracts of papers must be submitted before 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004. Further inquiries, proposals for papers and abstracts may be addressed to:

Prof. Ramon Teja, Dpto. Ciencias Historicas, Universidad de Cantabria,  
39005 Santander, Spain. E-mail: [tejar@unican.es](mailto:tejar@unican.es)

For information on registration, travel, accommodation and programme one may consult the EASR website: [www.easr.de](http://www.easr.de)



IAHR 19<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONGRESS,  
TOKYO, JAPAN,  
24-30 MARCH 2005

RELIGION:  
CONFLICT & PEACE

The 19th World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) will be held in Tokyo, Japan, 24-30 March 2005. Its general theme is:

RELIGION: CONFLICT AND PEACE

The Congress Organisers, however, welcome proposals for papers on any aspect of the study of religion. Papers may treat phenomena from any culture and historical period, and from a wide variety of academic disciplines, including philosophy, history, sociology, philology, anthropology, psychology, and iconography. The presentation of papers will take place during the time set aside for group sessions. Members of the IAHR can propose organised panels, symposia, roundtable sessions or individual papers.

*Important deadlines*

- \* **31 March 2004** for proposals for individual papers, panels, symposia, and roundtable sessions (note that the deadline has been extended).
- \* **April 2004:** Notification of acceptance of proposals.
- \* **30 September 2004** for payment of early registration fees, and submission of abstracts to the Congress Secretariat.

For full information, see the previous AASR Newsletter No. 19 (pp.13-17), or consult the IAHR Congress website at:  
<http://www.l-u-tokyo.ac.jp/iahr/2005/>



## PERSONS & POSTS

**Dr. Afe Adogame**, Department of the Study of Religion, University of Bayreuth, Germany, has been awarded a Senior Fellowship at the Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR), Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA during the 2003-2004 academic year. During this period, he also embarks on field research on African religious communities in the USA as part of his ongoing research project on African Religious Diaspora in Germany (Europe) and the USA under the auspices of the Special Research Projects with focus on Africa (SFB/FK 560) at the University of Bayreuth. His address details for this period is: Afe Adogame, Ph.D, Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University 42, Francis Avenue, Apt. # 4, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA; Tel. +1 (617) 493-4076; Fax. +1 (617) 496-1520. See also: <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/cswr>

**Dr. Richard Hoskins** has been appointed Visiting Senior Research Fellow in Sociology of Religion in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College, London. Despite the 'visiting', his appointment at King's College is a permanent one.

**Dr. Wotsuna Khamalwa** returned in mid-2003 from the University of Wales Lampeter at Ceredigion, UK, to the Institute of Languages at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. He was posted in the University of Wales Lampeter as Leverhulme Senior Research Fellow & Coordinator of the Africa Outreach Programme in the School of Anthropology, Theology, Religious Studies & Islamic Studies. Currently, however, he is in Bayreuth, Germany, on a visiting lectureship till end of January 2004, when he will return again to Makerere.

**Prof. Pratap Kumar** (Dept. of Science of Religion, University of Durban-Westville) has been appointed as Co-Editor of the *Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions* (of E.J. Brill at Leiden). The series will be managed by an editor from Europe (Prof. Wouter Hanegraaff, Amsterdam University), one from North America (who is still being sought), and prof. Pratap Kumar for the regions outside Europe and North America. The IAHR-Executive serves as the Advisory Editorial Board.

**Prof. Jacob K. Olupona**, Chair, African American and African Studies, University of California, Davis and the president of the AASR is currently on sabbatical leave at Yale University African Studies Center, New Haven.

He will also be at the Bellagio Rockefeller Center in Italy for research in April/May 2004.

Prof. **Frans Wijsen**, director of the *Nijmeegs Instituut voor Missiologie* (NIM), will spend his study leave, from January to mid-April, 2004, at Tangaza College, Nairobi, Kenya. He will teach there and study recent developments in theology of religions.



## IAHR NEWS

Prof. Gary Lease  
University of California, Santa Barbara

## OBITUARY

### PROF.DR. ANEMARIE SCHIMMEL 1922-2003

Born on April 7, 1922 in Erfurt (Germany), Annemarie Schimmel died on January 26, 2003 in Bonn (Germany). One of the leading Orientalists and Islam scholars of our time, she worked tirelessly for over 50 years to educate the Western world about Islam. In over 100 books, essays, collections and published lectures, she sought to build a bridge between Islam and the West. In 1995 the German Book Fair awarded her its prestigious Peace Prize. Schimmel learned Arabic at 15, and took her first PhD at the University of Berlin. Her habilitation followed in 1946 at the University of Munich; a second doctorate was gained in Marburg under the direction of Friedrich Heiler. Her career and success were marked by many honorary doctorates, prizes, and honours. In 1967, she was called to Harvard and in 1970 Schimmel was promoted to professor at that prestigious university, where she stayed until retirement. Her many translations were from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Hindi. Schimmel was also the president of the IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions) from 1980-1990; in 1995 she was elected an honorary member of the IAHR, the world's most important scholarly organization for the study of religion.

## OTHER IAHR NEWS ITEMS

### *IAHR Nominations Committee*

The IAHR Executive Committee has appointed Professors Michel Despland, Yolotl González Torres and Michael Pye to the Nominations Committee. They will draw up a list of candidates for the next Executive Committee (2005-2010) and deliver it by summer 2004.

### *Proposed affiliations and disaffiliation*

The IAHR International Committee will recommend to the IAHR General Assembly in Tokyo, 2005, the affiliation of the Romanian Association for the History of Religions and the Greek Society for the Study of Culture and Religion. It will also recommend the disaffiliation of the Taiwan Association for Religious Studies (TARS) as a national affiliate, but also that TARS be recognised as a 'corresponding member'.

### *IAHR Honorary Life Memberships*

It will also recommend to appoint Professors Louise Bäckman, Noriyoshi Tamaru and R.J. Zwi Werblowsky as the Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee with the mandate to choose five candidates for Honorary Life Membership at the Tokyo Congress.

### *Numen*

The IAHR is on the verge of signing a contract with E. J. Brill concerning the NUMEN Book Series. The IAHR Executive Committee will function as Advisory Editorial Board of the series and assist in appointing three managing editors ideally representing Europe, North America and a third country or region from elsewhere in the world. The IAHR Executive Committee gave special thanks to the following out-going and in-coming editors of NUMEN. Out-going: Managing Editors Michel Despland, Einar Thomassen and Reviews Editor Brigitte Luchesi. In-coming: Managing Editors Gustavo Benavides, Einar Thomassen (second term) and Reviews Editor Maya Burger (from the end of 2004). Brigitte Luchesi has graciously volunteered to continue as Reviews Editor until Maya Burger can take on the job.

### *New website*

The International Association for Psychology of Religion (IAPR) was reconstituted in 2001. It now announces its new website: <<http://www.iapr.de>>. IAPR also publishes the journal *Archiv für Religionspsychologie*.

## SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

### YALE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN THEOLOGY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Yale University Divinity School and Yale School of Public Health, together with Yale's Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS, announce the availability of a 2003–2004 Fellowship for women theologians addressing HIV/AIDS in Africa. This post-doctoral research fellowship aims to combine theology, faith-based initiatives, and empirical research. Research proposals must focus in some way on HIV/AIDS prevention and/or care in Africa, and they must incorporate both theological research and empirical research (whether qualitative or quantitative). Any proposals not meeting these basic criteria cannot be considered. This fellowship is open to African women theologians who have earned a Ph.D. degree.

#### *History of this Research Fellowship*

In Africa, faith plays an important role in individual and community life and can influence social and health behaviour. Despite this fact, very little empirical, scholarly research has been done to examine the actual or potential impact of faith-based prevention initiatives on the African continent. In December, 2002, the Yale Divinity School began a project entitled, *Gender, Faith, and Responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa*. Participants in this project established a partnership with the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (Circle), one of whose goals is to improve awareness and effectiveness of faith-based organisations in areas related to HIV prevention.

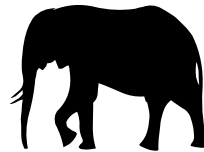
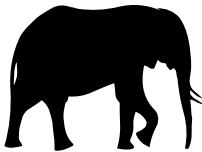
In the spring of 2003, the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies at Yale (CIRA), in collaboration with Yale Divinity School (YDS) and the Yale School of Epidemiology and Public Health (EPH), and with support from the Fogarty International Center, provided research fellowship training grants to three African women, members of the Circle. These women worked with mentors and colleagues from the Divinity School, School of Epidemiology and Public Health, and CIRA. Their semester at Yale allowed them to study with faculty from YDS, EPH, and CIRA, and to develop research proposals for implementation in their own countries.

*Provisions of the Fellowship*

This Research Fellowship provides funds to cover travel to and from Africa to the U.S., lodging and living expenses while at Yale, and implementation of a research project upon return to Africa. While travel and expenses are fully covered, there is no stipend provided that is in addition to these. Each research fellow is expected to be at Yale during the academic year, August of 2003 to May of 2004. Questions for further information may be addressed to: [margaret.farley@yale.edu](mailto:margaret.farley@yale.edu), or to: [letty.russell@yale.edu](mailto:letty.russell@yale.edu).

*Applications:*

An application must be filled out and accompanied by a personal resume and an expanded version of proposed research. These are to be sent to Dr. Isabel Phiri at the University of Natal ([Phiril@nu.ac.za](mailto:Phiril@nu.ac.za)) and to Dr. Margaret Farley at Yale University Divinity School ([margareth.farley@yale.edu](mailto:margareth.farley@yale.edu)). The application must contain (1) the name of the applicant; (2) her mailing address; (3) her E-mail address; (4) her telephone and fax numbers; (5) her institutional connection; (6) her position in it; and (7) a brief outline of her proposal for her research project, delineating its focus, objectives, who (what population) will be the subjects of the research, and what will the research consist in (method, goal, process, etc.)? The application must be received by June 30, 2003.





AFRICAN STUDIES CENTRE (ASC), LEIDEN,  
& CENTRE D'ETUDES D'AFRIQUE NOIRE  
(CEAN), BORDEAUX

CALL FOR  
APPLICATIONS FOR FELLOWSHIPS

ISLAM,  
DISENGAGEMENT OF THE STATE,  
& GLOBALISATION  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The African Studies Centre (ASC) in Leiden and the Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire (CEAN) in Bordeaux, pending final budgetary approval, are launching a project to study the relationship between Islam, society and the state in Sub-Saharan Africa that will culminate in an international conference to be held in the Spring of 2005. A number of fellowships are available for innovative field research projects in Africa. Although research projects will be considered in any country in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is particular interest in projects in Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Proposals may focus on one or more countries or regions. The proposed research should make a significant contribution to the understanding of the dynamics of contemporary Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa, with particular reference to relations with the state, processes of political and economic reform/liberalisation, globalisation and transnationalism.

*Applicants*

All researchers (including those with university teaching or research posts) and PhD students are eligible to apply for a fellowship. There are no restrictions due to age or nationality but all candidates must be able to demonstrate a knowledge of Islam and their fieldwork site(s). All proposals will be reviewed by the Scientific Committee. The committee's decision is final. It is envisaged that as many as 15 projects may be funded.

*Applications*

Applications must be accompanied by the following:

- A full CV clearly detailing the applicant's qualifications and ability to undertake the proposed research.
- A list of publications on Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa and/or a copy of the applicant's completed thesis or a detailed outline and summary of any PhD still in progress.
- A letter of reference from the applicant's head of department or director of research or his/her PhD supervisor.
- A research project (5-10 A4 pages in total) outlining the objectives and feasibility of the study, methodology, a bibliography, time schedule, and one paragraph abstract.
- A detailed project budget for travel and accommodation costs and related-research expenses (one page only).
- A list of contacts in the country or countries where the project will be undertaken.

*Time schedule*

- 10 February 2004: deadline for the submission of applications to both the ASC and CEAN.
- April 2004: notification of successful candidates.
- mid-April 2004: Informational meeting for all successful candidates with the Scientific Committee (date and place to be announced)
- 31 October 2004: deadline for the completion of field research projects.
- 15 January 2005: deadline for the submission of the final report.
- April/May 2005: conference.

N.B.: Successful candidates will have until 31 October 2004 to complete their field projects, and a final project report will be due by 15 January 2005. For more information please contact:

Benjamin Soares (ASC): [Islaminafrica@fsw.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:Islaminafrica@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

René Otayek (CEAN): [r.otayek@sciencespobordeaux.fr](mailto:r.otayek@sciencespobordeaux.fr)

Applicants must send a copy of their applications both to CEA, Bordeaux and the ASC, Leiden at the following postal addresses:

= Islam in Africa Fellowship, African Studies Centre, Postbus 9555, 2300 RB Leiden, The Netherlands

= Directeur, CEAN, 11 Allée Ausone, 33607 Pessac CEDEX, France

N.B.: Applications sent via fax or email will not be considered.

## ASC ONLINE ABSTRACTS

Africa Studies Centre (ASC), at Leiden, The Netherlands, announces the first issue of its African Studies Abstracts Online. It is available on the web now on the journal's website <http://asc.leidenuniv.nl/library/abstracts/asa-online/>, where it can be consulted free of charge! It is a PDF file that you can download and print at your own convenience. We are developing a browse-version that will permit you to select relevant abstracts in your field or region of interest. Like *African Studies Abstracts*, its printed predecessor, *African Studies Abstracts Online* provides an overview of articles from periodicals and edited works on Africa in the field of the social sciences and the humanities available in the library of the African Studies Centre in Leiden (<http://asc.leidenuniv.nl/>).

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Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya, Dharmaram College in Bangalore, India, and the Nijmeegs Instituut voor Missiologie (NIM) of the R.C. University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, have concluded an agreement for the development of an MA-programme in 'Mission and Globalisation' by e-learning. Its first module will be 'on the air' in January 2004. For further information consult < [www.nim.kun.nl](http://www.nim.kun.nl) >, or send an e-mail message to: < [nim@nim.kun.nl](mailto:nim@nim.kun.nl) >.

The publisher of the series *Church and Theology in Context*, Rodopi at Amsterdam, The Netherlands, has changed over from printing a set number (a 'run') of books for each edition to printing on demand. A copy will now be printed only after it has been ordered. Electronic copies may also be requested, not only of the new volumes of the series, but also of the past ones. For further information, consult < [www.rodopi.nl](http://www.rodopi.nl) >.



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## REVIEW

### WITCHCRAFT VIOLENCE

- Kgatla, S.T., Gerrie ter Haar, Wouter E.A. van Beek & Jan J. de Wolf 2003, *Crossing Witchcraft Barriers in South Africa; Exploring Witchcraft Accusations: Causes and Solution; A Research Report*. Utrecht: Faculty of Social Sciences, 40 pp., ISBN 90-393-3415-3
- Pelgrim, Riekje, 2004. *South Africa Police Service Attitudes towards Witchcraft and Witchcraft-related Crime in the Northern Province*. Leiden: Africa Study Centre, 148 pp., ISBN 090.5448.056.4, € 10.00 (= ASC Research Report no. 72/2003).

These are two reports on research into the perennial problem of witchcraft accusations in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The first is by staff and students of the University of the North (UNIN, South Africa), which is located in that area, and of Utrecht University (The Netherlands). The other is by a young Dutch female student of Anthropology who combined participant observation, including open-ended interviews in both the local communities and among the police, with an analysis of the literature and the study of primary sources such as police files and local historical documents.

In recent years, the problem of witchcraft violence in that area became visible by the changes in the reporting policy of the police, as a result of which reports of it rose from some fifty a year in the early 1990s to over 1300 in 2000 (3-4). Its basic cause, however, is the deterioration of the social relations in South Africa in the apartheid and post-apartheid eras. The first report notes: 'As the drama of the struggle for survival unfolds, the vulnerable and the weak in society become victims' (6).

The research for the first report was undertaken between 1999 and 2001 and funded by the South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD). It aims to promote high-quality, multidisciplinary, collaborative and policy-oriented research by scholars posted in the historically disadvantaged universities of South Africa and Dutch scholars, and thereby foster an institutional research culture and international research collaboration in these South African universities (5).

One aim of this research project was to provide empirical findings concerning witchcraft accusations in the Limpopo Province, in particular in its rural areas, as in them their incidence is much higher than in urban areas.

Another aim was to contribute to a reduction of the number of witchcraft accusations and of the sufferings they cause. Some of the accused were cruelly killed and others had to put themselves under police custody or were forced into a miserable exile. The report contains the findings, opinions and recommendations of the research team, but they are based also on the views of participants in a conference of the researchers with policy makers and representatives of community-based organisations held in March 2001 (1).

As scientific proof of 'witchcraft' (and other religious beliefs) is not possible, the research team opted for an agnostic operational definition of it as 'a manifestation of evil believed to come from a human source' (4-5). It leaves undecided whether witchcraft fears and accusation are based on true or false beliefs (5). As the research could not cover all the rural areas afflicted by witchcraft accusation epidemics, the research team also drew on published data and analyses in respect of witchcraft beliefs and accusations elsewhere in Africa for support of its findings in the Limpopo Province (5-6). This comparative approach, however, also gives this report a much wider scope than the area of research only.

But the basic cause of this pandemic is in South Africa itself with 'its violent history of foreign settlement and apartheid' (9). The report indicates it as follows: 'On the basis of the evidence at our disposal, it is clear that there are serious flaws within the present social structure in South Africa with regards to human rights, economic justice, an effective education system and proper health care policies. [...] At the heart of the problem [of witchcraft beliefs and accusations] are tensions, suspicions and hatred generated by racial, class and other differences and prejudices. As long as these anomalies are in place, interpersonal relations in South Africa will remain conflictual' (6), and continue to fuel witchcraft beliefs, accusation and violence.

Apart from a Preface (1-2) and an Introduction (3-7), the report consists of a chapter on Witchcraft Discourses in the Limpopo Province (9-27), and Conclusions and Recommendations (31-35) as well as a Select Bibliography (36), and a number of photographs.

In the chapter on Witchcraft Discourses, the authors first state how they approach 'witchcraft' (9-11). Then they discuss the characteristics of 'witchcraft discourses'. They are muted, self-perpetuating and foolproof discourses which may be easily conceived (11-13), but can be explained (13-14). They are, however, hard to control by institutions (14-15) and relatively timeless (15-16), for they reveal existential problems (16-17), being centred on problems in social relations (17-18), in particular in close relationships (18-19). Witchcraft accusations differ after the particular notion of evil African societies use, their definition of social relations and human agency, divination practices, inter-group relations and judicial situation (19-21). Then they present a model of the six steps in which witchcraft violence

may escalate. It was developed on the basis of the research reports into cases of witchcraft accusations by UNIN students (21-26). On the basis of that model, strategic points are discerned at which witchcraft accusations may be stopped (27). The authors oppose the proposal that witchcraft accusations be tried in court, because there are structural incompatibilities between witchcraft accusation and law enforcement (28-30).

In their conclusions and recommendations, the authors draw attention to the need to reflect critically on the power of words, i.e. on witchcraft terminology as a weapon in situations of social tension (31), e.g. in the media (35). The sloppy perpetuation of popular witchcraft discourse by Western academics is also unhelpful to resolve the problem of witchcraft accusations (33). For the development of policy it is important, they state, to keep in mind that people are free to believe in witches. But it is criminal to convert that belief into accusations, for they infringe the rights and freedom of other individuals. Belief in witches and witchcraft is therefore limited both by national and international law (31, 34). Witchcraft accusations need 'to be taken up as a serious human rights issue. The killing of alleged witches violates the most basic human right of every human being, which is their right to live, and the integrity of the person as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (35).

The authors draw attention too to the gender bias in the selection of victims, but also to the active role of women in their accusation; and to that of youth as executioner after the adults have branded them as witches. The role of healers is an ambivalent one: they may be instrumental in putting an end to witchcraft accusations, but often further both witchcraft beliefs and accusations (31-32). They should be invited to share their knowledge with others and be encouraged to use their skills constructively (34, 35). Education is the most important instrument for developing authentic African cultures without witchcraft accusation (33). Churches should use their store of rituals to heal the rifts manifest in witchcraft accusations (33).

In *Witchcraft and Policing*, Riekje Pelgrim discusses this subject from the point of view of the police. She investigates the dynamics between (a) the views and beliefs of the local community with its witchcraft discourse, (b) the stipulations of national witchcraft legislation and (c) the dilemmas facing the police with regard to local views (which they often share) and national legislation.



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## REVIEW

### MINIMAL & MARGINAL: CHRISTIANITY IN THE GAMBIA

Martha T. Frederiks 2003, *We Have Toiled All Night: Christianity in The Gambia, 1456-2000*. Zoetermeer (The Netherlands): Uitgeverij Boeken-  
centrum, 453 pp., maps, glossary, summary in Dutch, index, curriculum  
vitae, ISBN 90-239-1534-8, € 29.90 (= PhD Utrecht University, 16.10.-  
2003, cum laude; Missiological Research in The Netherlands, vol. 33).

#### *The book*

In 1910, the Methodist missionary in The Gambia, William Maude, wrote the following remarkable lines in his *Memorandum on Mohammedanism*:

For myself I can come to no other conclusion than that, despite all our resolu-  
tions and regrets, unless something very remarkable takes place, something there  
is no sign of, West Africa, outside the present spheres of Christian influence,  
will be Mohammedan [...] before very long. [...]

It seems to me as if the first thing to be done, if we are to win these Mohamme-  
dan people to Christ [...], is to *make ourselves neighbourly*. We must show that,  
differences notwithstanding, we are their friends. We must gain their confidence,  
ministering to their bodily needs, familiarising them with Christian ideas, getting  
the children, humbling ourselves, after the manner of our Master, and making  
ourselves of them [*sic!*] as far as we can innocently and healthily can [*sic!*].<sup>1</sup>

Maud's analysis and proposed missionary strategy went unheeded for half a  
century. Only at the time of independence, in 1965 (394), did another expa-  
triate, the Anglican bishop Olufosoye (a Nigerian by birth), present a similar  
analysis. By then, he saw only 'little Christian islands in a great sea of  
Islam' (357) and 'conventional methods get[ting] nowhere at all' (364). So  
he contacted the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) in Nigeria in 1967, because  
there was need for innovative thinking, for in The Gambia as 'in most Mus-  
lim countries people find a great gulf fixed between the Christian Church

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Frederiks 2003: 252; italics in Frederiks 2003. The *Memorandum* itself  
is in the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Archives, Box 295 H2709, microfiche 426,  
at the World Church Office in London (Frederiks 2003: 18-20, 252n238, 414-415).

and the Muslim community which they simply cannot bridge' (364). But Olufoseye's views and sentiments proved not at all to be those of the commonality of the various tiny Christian communities in the Gambia at that time, for 'good rapport [prevalled] between Christians and Muslims at the grass-roots level' in The Gambia throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (382-383). It took another two decades and two more expatriates before Christian-Muslim relations in The Gambia became an explicit object of study and policy (390-391). In 1985, the RC bishop Cleary made them a major object in his accession speech (346-350). And Olufoseye's successor, J. Rigal Elisée (1972-1986), became instrumental in 1986 in the appointment of an IAP-worker to the Gambian Christian Council. She was Rev. Cokkie van 't Leven, who served from 1987 to 1992 (364, 380, 383-385). After her term (1987-1992), the author of this volume served in that position from 1993 to 1999. This book is the rich outcome of her historical research and theological reflection in that post and as a PhD student of IIMO (Interuniversity Centre for Missiology & Ecumenics) at Utrecht University from 1999 to 2003. All this meant, however, that, 'reflection on the role of the Gambian Christian churches in society and [... their] relations to the Muslim community happened from the late 1960s onwards at the GCC [Gambian Christian Council] rather than at the denominational level' (333, 356). That is, it remained expatriate and top-down, and did not reach the grassroots, even though it had become clear by the 1960s that the Gambian context had shaped the Christian churches in stead of The Gambia being transformed by the churches.

Her book has three purposes. Its first aim is to present a history of five and a half centuries of Christianity in the Gambia: from 1455, when Cada-mosto – a Venetian captain in the service of the Portuguese crown – met with a Muslim Wolof chief in present-day Senegal who was eager 'to hear the articles of our faith recited', but met with hostility in the estuary of the river Gambia (163); till 2000, when roughly 95 per cent of the Gambians were Muslim, and Christians still counted merely 3,5 per cent of the population (1-2, 4, 5, 113n1, 153, 157, 389n274, 397). This history is presented in chapters 5 to 9 (159-391). It is a very exhaustive and often quite minute one, for it is based not only on a wide study of secondary literature, but also on an extensive and intensive research of the relevant archives, in The Gambia – often badly kept and mice-eaten – and in missionary headquarters in Europe. These two sources were supplemented with interviews, unpublished theses, pamphlets and other 'grey literature' (17-20, 414-429). All this material is well documented in the over 2000 footnotes which have been appended to the ten chapters of the book.

Its second purpose is to portray this story of the failure to christianise The Gambia in the contexts of its ethnic composition, political history and in particular its successful Islamisation. Therefore, after the introductory

chapter on the problem, the models (see below), method, and structure of the book and the sources (1-20), she surveys the odd ten major peoples of The Gambia and their indigenous religions in chapter 2 (21-75), and summarises The Gambia's 'general history' in chapter 3 (76-112). She devotes chapter 4 to the history of Islam in The Gambia and the wider Senegambian and West African regions (113-158). She follows this up in the chapters 5 to 9 with the history of Christianity in The Gambia, paying explicit attention to the indigenisation of Christianity in The Gambia (205-213, 233-237, 253-269, 272, 277-282, 313-317, 331, 343-346, 350-356, 359, 361-363), and the attitudes of the missionaries and the Christian communities to Islam and the Gambian indigenous religions (161, 180, 216-217, 231-232, 247-253, 272, 273, 284-285, 295, 309, 318-326, 329-332, 334, 346-350, 356, 357, 363-365, 365n158, 391). She distinguishes four 'models' in their theologies of religions.

The common one, prevailing from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with the missionaries, was the 'expansionist' one: 'pagans' and Muslims must both 'convert', and Christianity must be 'planted', and supplant all other religions, Islam included (5-8, 81-83, 161, 163-166, 172-176, 180-182, 392, 396-398). The author notes the intimate connection of this model of thought with power throughout the history of Christianity, and more in particular with Europe's maritime and colonial expansion in the period studied (7, 216-217, 397). And she also indicates that this missionary mind-set was virtually completely absent in the grassroots Christian communities of traders, Mulattos, freed slaves and recent refugees in The Gambia. They exhibited mostly a 'survivalist attitude' (353), being quite content 'merely' to cultivate their several (Mulatto, Akou/Krio, Wolof, Manjago and other) Christian identities in isolation in the margins of The Gambia, cultural and spatial – e.g. in their 'coastal captivity' (274; 75, 166-171, 174-180, 182, 216, 231, 334, 335-340, 389-390, 392-394).

In the nineteenth century, a second missionary model emerged, termed *diaconia* by the author (8-10, 398-400). It is that of serving those to be converted with the several 'works of charity', ranging from buying slaves in order to set them free in the abolitionist era (198-199, 216) to providing them with education and health care in colonial times, to agrarian development programmes and other NGO-type of relief work in the post-colonial era. The author, however, recognises that these 'charities' were completely subservient to Christian expansionism until recently. They served, or were meant to serve, as powerful instruments of Christian mission (272-273, 284, 393, 396, 398) and are still used as such by Evangelicals in The Gambia (10, but see 334, 388). Only after the expatriate Christian leadership in The Gambia became aware after 1950 that Muslims would definitively not be converted (228, 232, 243, 250-253, 272, 282, 286, 295, 309, 317, 322, 330, 334, 347, 363-365, 386, 390, 392), did it continue *diaconia* towards them

(not towards the ‘pagans’) without the ulterior purpose of their conversion (229, 286, 294, 331-332, 337, 347, 391, 397, 399). The separation of *diaconia* from the power purposes, however, seems far from complete. The author notes that even now *diaconia* is aimed ‘at spreading Christian influence in society and creating goodwill for the Christian community’, (284, 317, 322, 325, 330, 331, 342), by such secular means as development programmes and rebuilding markets destroyed by fire (399). She adds ruefully that ‘in an age [when] Africa is flooded with aid organisations, the Christian character of the diakonia has at times become difficult to distinguish’ (399).

At the time when *diaconia* became somewhat – at least in theological reflection – disentangled from expansionism in Christian-Muslim relationships in The Gambia, two more Christian ‘models’, ‘mind-sets’, or attitudes towards Muslims emerged: those of ‘presence’ and ‘dialogue’ (10-15, 325-326, 331-332, 346-350, 362-363, 400-406). The author defines ‘presence’ as ‘silent testimony’ and ‘non-confrontational witness to Christ by sharing the ups and downs of life’ (11). She traces it to a number of role-models: Christ himself, early Christian hermits, Saint Francis of Assisi; and in modern times to Cardinal Lavignerie, founder of the missionary society of the White Fathers, and in particular to Charles de Foucauld who lived a hermit’s life among the Tuaregs from 1905 to 1916. Max Warren’s ‘theology of attention’ is presented as another version of this model (10-13, 317, 400-402).

The attitude of ‘dialogue’, aimed at ‘mutual understanding and mutual growth’ [!], JP] (13n57), emerged from the several academic liberal Christian theologies in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were shaped by their confrontation with the Western sciences, the secularisation of Western and other societies, and the paradox of an increasing and permanent religious plurality in the West and the world at large despite the huge numerical increase of missionary, ‘theocratic’ Christianity and Islam in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Dialogue, says the author, ‘advocates an attitude of openness and respect to people of other faiths and the willingness of Christians to be challenged and changed in the encounter with people of other faiths’ as ‘fellow pilgrims’ who all, it is believed, have some grasp, however partial, of God through their respective religions (13, 347, 384). The Islam in Africa Project (IPA), and its successor, the Project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCURA), were inspired by this attitude (15, 317, 334, 383).

The third purpose of this book is explicitly theological. It’s aim is ‘to see dialogue as an opportunity to be challenged and changed and thus come to a *deeper understanding of God*’ (391, my emphasis). To achieve it in present-day The Gambia, the author proposes that *diaconia* be resolutely

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<sup>2</sup> This is mainly my analysis.



freed from the unilateral, inherently polemical, expansionist dream, and that the three mind-sets of *diaconia*, presence and dialogue be complemented by, and subsumed in, a new theological model: that of *kenosis* (Phillipians 2: 5-11). She defines this Pauline concept as the attitude of being ready as Christians to ‘empty oneself’ as (in Christian belief) Christ did in incarnation by becoming man ‘in order to show the love of God for humankind’ (403). She briefly traces recent theological reflection on it (403-406) and concludes her book by advocating it as the theological panacea for ‘the little Christian islands in a great sea of Islam’ in The Gambia (406-408).

### *Appreciation*

It is plain from this summary that this book deserves a wide reception and thorough study in the Departments of Religious Studies in Anglophone Africa for a few reasons. One is the sobering fact that five centuries of Christian presence and missionary effort in The Gambia produced such a minimal and marginal outcome. It shows that the results of missionary efforts – Christian and other – are thoroughly context-bound. Their outcomes are contingent upon, and constrained and shaped by quite other, secular forces and factors than the (presumed) truth of a religion, the sacrifices its missionaries make for its propagation, and the ‘grace’ which is said to induce converts to accept this ‘one and only road to salvation’. This is true not only for the failure of Christianity in The Gambia, but also for the resounding success of Christianity in other parts of West Africa, as well as for the success of Islam in The Gambia and in many other parts of West Africa, and its failure (so far) in others.

Another is the expert manner, richly documented manner, in which this very full but well-balanced history is portrayed. Many will also be inspired by her pioneering theology of religions. In the face of an African Islam that has become markedly more able intellectually, doctrinally assertive, and in places politically aggressive, it may be felt that her theology of ‘kenotic presence’ (353), combined with unselfish service and a completely honest dialogue, may perhaps serve to defuse the growing tension.

### *Reservations*

However innovative and attractive, it is precisely her theology, that raises a number of reservations in my mind. One respects her privileging, throughout her book, of (expatriate, elitist) reflective theology over against the lack of it, and disinterest in it, at the grassroots level of the ‘isolationist’ tiny Christian communities of The Gambia, which were ‘hardly “witnessing communities”’ (181, 183, 309, 390). She reports on the ‘inertia of the laity’ (341n36) and its ‘survivalist attitude’ (353). It turned Christianity into ‘a religion of and for foreigners’ (329, 334, 337, 366-367, 371-377, 390), ‘outsiders’ (325) isolated ‘from the *real* Gambian interreligious life’ (340, my

emphasis). She complains that ‘the conscious and supervised theological reflection on the interaction between gospel and culture (inculturation from above) is still in its infancy’ in The Gambia even in 2000 (395, 334, 391). Gambian Christians ‘consider dialogue a waste of time’, and question openly ‘the willingness of the Muslim community to engage in a true dialogue’ (385). They fear, and feel threatened by, Islam (347), and see dialogue only ‘as promoting respect and peaceful co-existence’, not ‘as an opportunity to [...] to come to a deeper understanding of God’ (402) and to ‘challenge each other [viz. Christians and Muslims] in enriching ways’ (403). The author rejects the inculturation of a Christian church in one ethnic culture only. She wants it to ‘take its roots in the wider Senegambian, West African soil, with its diversities of cultures and religions’ (390, 396).

But she admits several times that precisely the ‘isolationist’ Christian communities, content to cultivate their marginal and/or ‘foreign’ (actually immigrant) Christian identities, have maintained cordial relationships and peaceful co-existence with their Muslim fellowmen throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (113, 114, 156, 158, 284-285, 325, 330, 348, 364, 365n157, 382-383). ‘Only very few Christian families had no Muslim relatives’ (383). Christians and Muslims not only ‘joined in each other’s festivities and laboured side by side on the work floor or in the fields’ (346). They also ‘participated in marriages, funerals, and name-giving ceremonies’ (378), despite ‘reformist’ confrontation on both sides in the past (346-347), especially during the disruptive ‘Soninke-Marabout’ wars (1849-1900). ‘The model of presence is mainly lived out in the small Christian communities in the rural areas, which are predominantly Muslim’ (391). It is done by ‘offer[ing] Christianity in a non-obtrusive and non-offensive way’ (325), i.e. by ‘teach[ing] the Gospel without preaching it’ (326). And she agrees, that the Akou/Krio community, founded by liberated slaves in the abolitionist era, deserves to be seen, after nearly two centuries, as an authentic Gambian culture (216, 389-390) with a distinct culture and language of their own (363). That is, or will in due time be, equally true, however, for the other ‘ethnic’ Christian communities. In brief, Gambian Christian minorities practised a deft religious variety of the ‘consociationalism’ which political theorists like Lijphart say works best in plural democracies, The Gambia (and The Netherlands) included (104-105).

But more importantly, I suggest that scholarly impartiality demands that the grassroots inarticulate intuition of these ‘ethnic Christians’ about how they may relate, in the pragmatics of daily life, to the overwhelming Muslim majority of their nation, should have been examined on its own historical merits in stead of being condemned on theological, normative grounds. Rather, their cherishing their Christian ‘ethnic’ distinctness as a safe haven because of a historically well-informed suspicion should have been rated as another valid Christian attitude towards Muslim and ‘pagan’

fellows on a par with the models of an expatriate theology which has itself barely begun to indigenise (348-349, 364). It might have been examined as a prudent balance of neighbourliness and distance on the basis of accommodation to traditional beliefs, rituals and values, which these Christians (still) share with many Muslim fellowmen. That might have prevented the author from indulging in another top-down normativity when she writes that 'the majority of the Gambian Christians (and the Gambian Muslims) live a double life, a life at two levels: one is the Christian level; the other is the level of African traditional religions' (346). Top-down 'inculturation' is approved and promoted but will not work. Grassroots accommodation is the perfect inculturation and works well but is condemned as syncretistic.

Preoccupation with theology also prevents the author from asking the hard-nosed but pertinent question why Islam succeeded so admirably in The Gambia where Christianity, despite its intimate connection to European colonialism, failed so dismally. Sociological and political questions about majority and minority, and consequent superiority and inferiority, are all the more pressing, as her eagerness to promote dialogue (i.e. equality) and to practice kenotic presence (i.e. humility) seem to incline her to underrate the changes in the Gambian Islam. More confrontational positions are fostered by the 'development aid' it receives from the wealthy Muslim oil-nations, and the Islamic training which Gambian Muslims are liberally given there. Marginality and accommodation may still prove more beneficial for Gambian Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than the author's well-articulated theology of *diaconia*, dialogue and kenotic presence.

Lastly, readers with an average knowledge of the topography of The Gambia would have been greatly assisted if the book had had many more and better maps, of the kind of the kind provided in chapter 2, than the folded map at the end of the book, which is confused and confusing. Despite these reservations, the book is much recommended.



## BRIEF BOOK NOTICES

Silvester, Jeremy & Jan-Bart Gewald 2003, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, xxxviii + 370 pp., ISBN 90 04 12891 2, Pbk., € 41.00 (price excludes VAT, postage & packing).

The 1918 Blue Book Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and their treatment by Germany, is based on the voluntary statements taken under oath of no less than 50 African witnesses. This testimony was combined with numerous German colonial documents to produce, not only a stinging indictment of German colonial policy in German South West Africa, but also the first detailed eyewitness accounts of the first genocide of the twentieth century. However, within ten years of being printed, orders were issued for the destruction of all copies of the *Blue Book* within the British Empire. The editors have investigated how the *Blue Book* came into being, provided background information to the events and people described, and sought to discover the original German documents upon which so much of the *Blue Book* material is based. The particular usefulness of the book lies in the fact that it gives voice to African testimony regarding the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This book is volume 1 of the new book series Sources for African History published by Brill. (summary by Brill)

Roswith Gerloff (ed.) 2003, *Mission is Crossing Frontiers: Essays in Honour of Bongani Mazibuko*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 574 pp., ISBN: 1-875053-37-9, \$25.00 or £15 or R120.00

‘Missiology is the study of “the church as surprise”... Because of its frontier position it is well suited to raise issues for other theological disciplines, to remind them of dimensions that are overlooked, to point out that the Bible can be read in many ways, and to question many of the clichés of western theology’ (Bongani A. Mazibuko)

This book invites us into ‘frontier-crossing’ in three parts: The first is dedicated to the memory of a theological educator who influenced students and pastors in contextualising theology, liberating them from western-only concepts, building bridges over racial and cultural divides, and encouraging learner-centred dialogical education. The second shares with us some of his own writings, especially on pastoral training and intercultural learning in Birmingham (UK) and Umlazi, Durban, rendering culture a starting point for church and mission. The third, the ‘Legacy’, raises awareness of various contemporary issues such as African Christianity as a new religion, the significance of new religious movements, especially AICs, the impact of the

African Diaspora on Europe, liberating theological education, listening to women's voices, diasporic identity as hybridity, and interreligious dialogue. It may serve as a textbook for transcending barriers, not only in content but also in critical methodology. (summary forwarded by Dr. Roswith Gerloff)



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON THE RELIGIONS OF AFRICA

- Abbink, Jan, Mirjam de Bruijn & Klaas van Waveren (eds.) 2003, *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History*. Leiden: Brill (= African Dynamics, 2), x+370 pp., ISBN 90.04.12624.4, pbk., € 32.50, US\$ 38.
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