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FROM THE PRESIDENT	3
FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY	5
MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING	6
PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY	10
CONFERENCE REPORT	19
AAR/SBL 2016	36
ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN AFRICA	39
AGLS AHP AWARDS 2016	55
CALL FOR PAPERS	58
IAHR XXII WORLD CONGRESS	59
REVIEWS	60
PERSONS & POSTS	63
RECENT PUBLICATIONS	65-99



# AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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## AASR EXECUTIVE 2015-2020

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Continued on inside rear cover, p. 100

# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Colleagues,

We extend greetings to all of you during this holiday season.

We thank all of you who attended our biennial conference in Ghana this past July and Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego who led the local arrangements committee for their excellent work and the warm welcome they gave us in Ghana. We also thank our colleagues who presented papers at the recent AAR and SBL Annual Meeting in San Antonio that met from November 19-22 2017 and at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting that met in Washington DC December 1-3, 2016.

I extend our thanks to members of the executive, the regional and country representatives, the web team, the editorial team for the AASR Bulletin and the AASR E-journal for the hard work they do behind the scenes to promote our mission and the goals of our academic association.

We expect to complete consultation early in the New Year and send out an announcement and invitations to the next AASR biennial conference that will hold in Cameroon in 2018. We encourage you to make plans to attend that conference.

Happy holidays from members of the Executive Committee and your Regional and National Representatives.

Sincerely,  
Elias Kifon Bongmba  
AASR President



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<sup>1</sup> Cf. <http://www.a-asr.org/holiday-greetings-from-the-aasr/>

## THE ORLANDO MASSACRE<sup>2</sup>

As AASR Bulletin 44 goes to print, we note with sadness that on June 12, 2016, a lone gun man, Omar Mateen, armed with assault rifle went to a club where members of the LGBT communities gathered to relax, opened fire and killed 49 people and wounded several others before he was shot and killed by police. We do not have all the facts about this horrific deadly attack but we do know that this was a terrorist attack and hate crime. On behalf of the African Association for the Study of Religions, I extend our condolences to families and loved ones whose relatives were killed or injured in this gruesome attack. In recent years, at our conferences and panels, we have started a conversation about religion, the politicisation of homosexuality, and the struggle to recognise LGBT rights in contemporary Africa. The Orlando massacre only stimulates us to continue and build these discussions, as our scholarly contribution to a world that recognises the human dignity and rights of all people.

Discrimination against members of the LGBT communities has a long history, but this particular crime has taken it to a new level. We must insist here that such actions are not an exercise of faith even if the one who committed the violence claimed that he acted on the convictions of his faith, Islam. No one who knows anything about the different religious traditions would argue that those religions are in and of themselves violent, let alone, the thought that any religious person would endorse such a horrific act of hatred. Regardless of where anyone stands on all the issues that surround the debate on homosexuality around the world, hatred is inconsistent with religious principles. Furthermore, just because an individual does not like a lifestyle does not justify lawless and brutal attacks aimed at intimidating, taking away their liberties, or in this case, taking the lives in this senseless manner. Read in context, no sacred text would justify these actions

On June 14, 2016, I visited Attorney Alice Nkoum, the brave Attorney who has defended members of the LGBT community in Cameroon and we talked about this horrific crime. I visited the memorial she had created at her office for the victims of the Orlando Massacres. She asked me why African governments have been so slow to publicly condemn this crime. At the time I did not have an answer. On June 15, 2016 I met His Excellency Michal S. Hoza, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, and asked him the same question. He told me that he has received many messages of condolence from the Cameroon authorities. At the time, he also pointed out that the United Nations Security Council had passed a resolution condemning the attacks in Orlando. The international community needs to do more to encourage dialogue on the growing threat members of the LGBT communities face around the world. It is time for all to stand up and support the basic rights of members of the LGBT community. It is the right thing to do.

Elias Kifon Bongmba  
AASR President

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<sup>2</sup> This message from the President came in just a day or two late for inclusion in *AASR Bulletin 44* (May 2016) and is therefore published in this bulletin.

## JOINT ARG & AASR STATEMENT ON US IMMIGRATION BAN

Statement Issued by the African Religions Group in the American Academy of Religion, and the African Association for the Study of Religions, on U.S. Executive Order “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”

January 31, 2017

The African Religions Group (ARG) in the American Academy of Religion (AAR), and the African Association for the Study of Religions (AASR), denunciate the US Executive Order “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the statement recently issued by the AAR Board,<sup>4</sup> which we fully support, we wish to specifically foreground the fact that three of the seven countries currently targeted by the immigration ban are on the African continent: Libya, Somalia, and Sudan. We are deeply concerned about the fact that colleagues from these countries will not be able to attend the AAR annual meeting, and to participate in ARG and AASR activities during this meeting, as long as the ban is intact. We are equally concerned about students from these countries who are currently studying in the US, or are planning to study in the US, and are directly affected by the ban.

The ARG and AASR are strongly committed to the academic study of all religious traditions found on the African continent, including Islamic traditions, as well as to the active collaboration and the free exchange of ideas between scholars of African religions regardless of their national or religious affiliation. Clearly, the ban hinders us in achieving this mission. Moreover, this ban is in conflict with the decolonial, intersectional frameworks which underpin our academic inquiry and our commitment to epistemic and other forms of justice.

Hence we call upon the members and sympathizers to join the global protests against the ban as a way of expressing their commitment to our mission and core values.

On behalf of the AAR African Religions Group:  
Mary Nyangweso & Adriaan van Klinken, co-chairs

On behalf of the African Association for the Study of Religions:  
Elias Bongmba, President



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<sup>3</sup> Cf. <http://www.a-asr.org/joint-arg-and-aasr-statement-on-us-immigration-ban/>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. <https://www.aarweb.org/about/board-statement-on-us-executive-order-%E2%80%9Cprotecting-the-nation-from-foreign-terrorist-entry-into>

## FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

**Minutes of the AASR Business Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday, 27 July 2016 from**  
**17:30-19:00 at the**  
**University of Ghana, Legon**  
**Accra, Ghana**  
**On the occasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa**  
**General Secretary: Corey L. Williams**



Balme Library, University of Ghana

### *Opening and Welcome*

Due to changes in the programme, the business meeting took place on Wednesday, 27 July instead of Friday, 29 July. The President, Elias Bongmba, presided over the meeting along with the General Secretary, Corey Williams. The President welcomed everyone on behalf of the AASR Executive Committee and thanked everyone for attending and participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa.

### *Adoption of Minutes*

The President referred to the minutes of the last business meeting and motioned for their adoption. Jan Platvoet made the first motion and Adriaan van Klinken made a second motion. The President asked all AASR members in attendance to indicate their support with a motion of ‘all in favour’. A majority of members raised their hands in support and the minutes were adopted.

# AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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## *Report from President*

The President referred to his recent report in AASR Bulletin 44 (May 2016). He noted that a steering committee had been elected for AASR panels at the annual AAR/SBL meetings. The details of this are available on the AASR website and AASR Bulletin 43 (November 2015). The President extended congratulations to Afe Adogame, AASR member and former AASR General Secretary, on his election as Secretary General of the IAHR. Greetings were also extended on behalf of Rosalind Hackett, who was unable to attend the conference due to her ongoing recovery from a recent injury.

## *Report from General Secretary*

The General Secretary, Corey Williams, noted that his duties are primarily devoted to:

- (1) maintaining records of the association activities (for instance, with detailed minutes which are available to all members in the AASR Bulletin); and
- (2) to facilitate communication, which is performed through several platforms.

First, general emails are sent on a semi-regular basis. These emails always contain the most critical information. They are often a distillation of the abundant information found in the AASR Bulletin or on the website. Those who are not currently receiving these emails were encouraged to sign-up. Secondly, he noted that the AASR website has greatly improved in recent years in terms of communication. There are regular posts related to upcoming conferences and workshops, funding opportunities, recent publications, etc. AASR members were reminded that if they have relevant information to share, they should email it to the webmasters (i.e. Adriaan van Klinken and Corey Williams). Lastly, the General Secretary noted that the AASR utilizes social media platforms such as Facebook. The AASR Facebook group contains cross-postings of information found on the AASR website. In addition to Facebook, the webmasters are considering reviving the AASR Twitter account, which would provide another avenue of reporting, communicating, and interacting with both AASR members and non-members.

The General Secretary requested that conference attendees submit written reports (500-1,000 words) for inclusion in the next AASR Bulletin. These reports should reflect upon the various conference experiences, including academic, social, and cultural events.

## *Report from the Webmasters*

Co-webmaster, Corey Williams, reported that the webmasters are currently enlarging the online archive section of the AASR website. Currently, there is an archive of AASR Bulletins dating back to June 2010. The archive also now contains information from the Cape Town conference in 2014 and the IAHR conference in 2015. There is a lot of possibility for expansion. All AASR members were encouraged to submit digitized information that would be considered for inclusion in the archive.

Along with Jan Platvoet, the webmasters are planning on introducing a database system on the AASR website. Corey pointed out that one of the goals of the AASR is to 'facilitate the exchange of resources and information'. An online database would greatly assist in this goal. All members with ideas or content for inclusion in the database should contact the webmasters.

## *Report from the Treasurer*

The Treasurer, Abel Ugba opened his report by referring to the financial report for 2015, which was published in AASR Bulletin 44 (May 2016). He noted that one item, 'Donation returned to

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Nijmegen Institute of Mission Studies', was a result of having no submissions to attend the AASR Conference at Cape Town in 2014 from graduate students located in Africa.

The Treasurer reminded members that the fees for the association were simplified in Erfurt (either \$30 or \$60 depending on location) and the fee for students/retirees/those not having regular employment is half the amount. He noted that in 2012 at the Kenya conference, it was agreed that those not paying fees would be de-registered as members. He reflected that it has been very difficult to implement, but proposed that those who have not paid fees for 2015 and 2016 will be de-registered by the end of this year.

Following the report, AASR member David Ogunbile pointed out that the registry is not the major issue. Instead, he suggested that the AASR must confront issues like technology and how people are able to pay their fees. In particular, transferring money can be cost-prohibitive. He also noted that national representatives should encourage their members to pay.

### *Executive Committee Proposals*

The President noted that there are several pressing issues that the AASR needs to address. The Executive Board offered the following proposals:

- Appointing a financial secretary/auditor to assist the Treasurer with AASR finances. The Treasurer reported that this would mean that a second pair of eyes would be on the finances, which would hopefully engender greater confidence in the accounting process. The individual(s) would also assist with membership fee collection and in conjunction with the General Secretary would assist in keeping track of the membership registry.
- Delineate what the Vice-Presidential duties are.
- The AASR should return to the question of how to raise funds for the organization.
- The idea had been previously raised that the AASR have a student award and/or book and paper award. Should the AASR have these awards and if so, what should the rewards include/what criterion should be used?

The idea was raised that a volunteer committee be formed to address these proposals and ideas. The President requested motions from the attendees. Jan Platvoet made the first motion and Gerie ter Haar made a second motion. The President asked all AASR members in attendance to indicate their support with a motion of 'all in favour'. A majority of members raised their hands in support of forming a volunteer committee.

Volunteers were requested from AASR members in attendance. The following members volunteered: Jan Platvoet, David Ogunbile, Adriaan van Klinken, and Loreen Maseno.

### *Report on AASR connections with IAHR affiliated organizations*

As indicated earlier, Afe Adogame was recently elected as Secretary General of the IAHR. Afe noted that the AASR has a very good relationship with the IAHR. However, the request from the AASR General Secretary for funding was denied due to unstated IAHR regulations regarding the length of time between requests and planned events. The IAHR is currently working to create clearer guidelines.

The President reported that the AASR continues to have strong connections with the AAR, SBL, and ASA. Afe pointed out that the AAR Collaboration Grant is still open for 2016. Information can be found on the AAR website.

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Jan Platvoet noted that there are organizations in Africa and Europe that the AASR could form structural and regular partnerships with such as NASR, ASRSA, and EASR. It was suggested that perhaps the AASR Vice President could take the lead in creating and sustaining these partnerships.

### *Updates from Regional and National Representatives*

Based on the conversation that took place, there is a sense that the current system of national and regional representatives is not working. While the roles are laid out in the constitution, the AASR needs to address how to make it work more effectively. It was suggested that this issue be added to the list of issues to be discussed by the volunteer committee that was formed earlier. The Executive Board and the volunteer committee agreed.

### *AASR Bulletin*

The President encouraged AASR members to use the Bulletin for their benefit. It can be used for various announcements and publications, but this requires that members get more involved.

### *AASR e-Journal*

Afe Adogame, the AASR e-Journal General Editor, (re)announced that the AASR has a peer-review e-journal. Issue 1.1 is already available on the AASR website and issue 2.1 will be available in the coming weeks. Afe pointed out that both members and non-members are invited to contribute articles and special issues.

### *Ghana Conference Publication*

The lead conference organizer, Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, announced that there would be a peer-reviewed edited volume produced based on the Ghana conference. A deadline of 1 September 2016 was set for those interested in contributing a chapter for consideration. Contributions should be emailed directly to Rose Mary.

### *Festschrift for Jan Platvoet*

The editors of a festschrift in honor of Jan Platvoet suggested that they intend to complete compiling the volume by December 2016.

### *Future AASR Conference Locations*

The possibility of hosting the next AASR conference (2018) in a Francophone country was raised. The President offered strong support for Cameroon as an option. Gerrie ter Haar also offered strong support for Cameroon. She mentioned that this possibility of engaging Francophone countries has been discussed for many years. The President motioned for a vote of 'all in favor' in order to explore Cameroon as a possible location. A majority of members raised their hands in support and the President indicated that he would begin exploring the possibility immediately. Additionally, it was suggested that Zambia be considered as a location for 2020.

### *Closing*

The President offered a motion of thanks to Rose Mary and her team for organizing the conference. The meeting closed with drinks and dinner at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), at the University of Ghana.

AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Elias Kifon Bongmba  
AASR President

**PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY:**

WELCOME REMARKS AT THE 7<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION

JULY 26-29 2016

INSTITUTE OF STATISTICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Thank you Dr. Rabiatu Ammah, Chairperson of the 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the African Association for the Study of Religion.

Professor Ernest Aryeetey, The Vice Chancellor, University of Ghana,  
The Provost of the University

Professor, Provost of the University of Ghana

Dean of the School of Arts,

Professor Afe Adogame, Secretary General of the International Association for the Study of Religion

Head of the Department of Religions at the University of Ghana,

Professor Emeritus John S. Pobee

Professor Opoku Asare

Professor Jan and Mrs. Platvoet

Invited Plenary Speakers

Dear Colleagues

I thank the Vice Chancellor on behalf of the members of the African Association for the Study of Religion, for the warm he has extended to us as we make this beautiful campus our home for the next three days. I also thank the Vice Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and the Head of the Department of Religious Studies for their generous financial contributions which have made it possible for us to host this conference here at the University of Ghana. I want to thank you and the entire University administration for supporting and working with the Conference Coordinating Committee that has worked very hard under the leadership of Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego during the last two years to convene the 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of AASR here at the University of Ghana. Your support for us is a strong statement of your administration's support for our colleagues in the department of Religion. We note that at a time when significant cuts are taking place across the board in the Humanities in general and in Departments of Religion and Religious Studies, the University of Ghana continues to support its historic and path breaking Department for the Study of Religions where many luminaries like Christian G. Baëta, or distinguished keynote speaker, professor John S. Pobee, Professor Kofi Asare Opoku, our former President Professor Elom Dovlo, and many other distinguished colleagues have taught and continue to teach.

# AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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ISSER Conference Centre, University of Ghana



AASR President, Prof. Elias Kifon Bongmba, delivering his welcome address. Behind the table, from left to right, are Dr. Rabi-  
atu Ammah, chairing the opening session; Prof. Dr. John Samuel Pobee, to deliver the keynote address; two University of Ghana  
officers; and Prof. Afe Adogame, IAHR Secretary General

The theme of our conference is “Religion, Sexuality, and Identity in Africa and the African  
Diaspora.” This timely theme brings all of us together to read research papers that deal not only

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

with the specific words of the theme, but with a broad range of issues spelled that was spelled out in our call for papers included:

- Religious and moral underpinnings of gender in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Sexuality in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Teaching African sexualities in Africa and/or the African Diaspora
- Masculinities and masculinity studies in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Femininities: plurality and the debate on feminism in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Religion, masculinities, gender-based violence and HIV
- Queering, xenophobia and violence in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Sexualities, sexual orientations, violence and human rights in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Religion, migration, class and sexuality
- Religious views of humanity and the LGBT debate in Africa
- The LGBT debate and North-South ecumenical/interfaith relations
- Religion, sexuality and the media
- Religion, sexuality and law
- Philosophy, person and gender
- Philosophy, human identity and sexuality.<sup>5</sup>

These presentations fulfil the mission and goal of our academic association as enshrined in our constitution: “The AASR is an association for the study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora. AASR is a regional member society of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). AASR is an interdisciplinary, non-confessional association for the academic study of religions”.<sup>6</sup> Our purpose is to: “... to promote the study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora worldwide through the international collaboration of all scholars in Africa and elsewhere whose research has a bearing on the subject”.<sup>7</sup> One of the ways we achieve our purpose is



Drummers and dancers getting ready for the festive opening of the conference

to hold a biennial conference in Africa on the study of the religions of Africa and the African Diaspora. We are gathered here to fulfil that obligation. We have a full and exciting program and look forward to the Keynote and plenary addresses, the research papers our colleagues will present and the exchange of ideas and debates on different aspects of the study of religion in Africa and the African Diaspora because our task is to interrogate

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.a-asr.org/meetings/> accessed July 25, 2016

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.a-asr.org/constitution/> accessed July 25, 2016

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.a-asr.org/constitution/> accessed July 25, 2016

and push the boundaries of discourse. Holding our work and that of our colleagues under critical scrutiny, informs and expands our horizons and contributes to a robust debate and broad understanding of religion and religious communities in Africa and increasingly today, in a global context. Our theme, religion and sexuality, and Africa and the African Diaspora offers us an opportunity to push our research in an area where there is great discussion in Africa. One way to look at this theme is to highlight a key term in the theme. The word identity is a complex term. Some dictionaries describe it as “remaining the same one or ones, as under varying aspects or conditions”. Identity in this context does not imply something that is fixed, a broad designation which serves as a starting point for understand some of things that define people. We are interested in all the factors that contribute to shaping our identities which include the social, economy, political, linguistic, religious, and increasingly in a world where we must stress that in Africa and its Diaspora black lives matter. We are shaped by so many forces, and aspects of our identity shift from time to time and make us the individuals we are. At a time when we can claim that we have come so far and made a lot of progress, it is important that we maintain a dialectical perspective on identity. In many ways people of African descent have confronted questions of identity in for a long time and have carried an undue burden to raising the question of what it means to be human in our world. It is therefore important that we continue to explore the interplay of sexuality and gender from the lens of the academic study of religion.

Our theme brings scholars together to explore questions of sexuality in Africa and the African Diaspora. Such an interrogation is important for many reasons, but permit me to mention only two reasons. First, Africa and the African Diaspora have been misunderstood when it comes to issues of sexuality. I am not referring to the broad generalization that our people are not romantic, or the false so-called virility of black men, or claims that Africans are mainly consumed



with sex and having many children. Some past studies have tried to convince people that there is something inherently strange about black sexuality. Literature such as Boris Rachewiltz’s *Black Eros: Sexual Customs of Africa from Prehistory to the Present*, and Felix Bryk’s *Voodoo Eros*, were written to convince people that we do have a strange sexuality, which is devoid of love, romance, delicacy or finesse, and in some cases far short of human.<sup>8</sup>

Their drumming, dancing and songs inspire Prof. David Ogungbile (OAU, Ile-Ife) and Dr. Ulrich Kleinhempel (Nürnberg, Germany) to join in

<sup>8</sup> Boris de Rachewiltz, *Black Eros: Sexual Customs of Africa from Prehistory to the Present*, Translated by Peter Whigham, (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1964); Felix Bryk, *Voodoo Eros: Ethnological Studies in the Sex-Life of the African Aborigines*, Trans. by Mayne F. Sexton, (New York: United Book Guild, 1964).

One study that also attracted great attention in the wake of the HIV and AIDS pandemic was John Caldwell, Pat Caldwell and Pat Quiggen controversial essay “The Social Context of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa,” in which they argued that HIV and AIDS “rest ultimately upon social knowledge that is at present vestigial and upon sophisticated social research of a type toward which we have only just begun to grasp”.<sup>9</sup> They emphasized that such research would unmask a different civilization at work in Africa, which previous researchers did not document; a claim which ignored much of the negative perspective on African sexuality in the ethnographic record. The Caldwells and Quiggen studied fertility trends in Africa searching from what they described “homo ancestralis,” through a focus on sexual behavior.<sup>10</sup> Citing studies by George Murdock and William Goode, they argued that “there is a distinct and internally coherent African system embracing sexuality, marriage, and much else, and that it is no more right or wrong, progressive or unprogressive than the Western system . . . of Eurasian society”.<sup>11</sup> They pointed out that there is a strong belief in family ancestry in which the ancestors played an import role in the affairs of the members of the community.<sup>12</sup> Since the survival of the lineage is important with fertility linked to the ancestors, reproduction is an important virtue. Rituals associated with these often introduced one into sexual practice (read: loose sexual practice) rather than marriage. African marriages are therefore weak and economic activity is separated between the spouses. Bride wealth is paid to the wives’ family. There is a widespread practice of polygyny, which means that the household consists of a woman and her children. Husbands are generally older than their wives. Divorce is common among the ethnic groups. Women abstained for sexual intercourse after giving birth for years.<sup>13</sup>

Caldwell, Caldwell, and Quiggin found support for their thesis in the social anthropological literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but they insisted: “that these aspects of society and individual behavior are features of a system and that most of the characteristics listed are logically related to one another, although the direction of causation is usually debatable”.<sup>14</sup> For example they argued that the weak conjugal bond is strengthened by the lineage system; polygyny reinforces the weak emotional and economic conjugal bonds, and the age gap between spouses and non-sexual activity in the post-partum period for a few years. The system does not consider illegitimacy in birth an issue.

Contrary to Africa, they argued that marriage and class in Eurasia are tightly controlled to ensure that one married in the right group. Thus people of European and Asian descent have developed a theology and morality that supervised female sexual behavior. Women were restricted and this gave rise to poetry and literature which universalized this system. “The morality and its

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<sup>9</sup> John C. Caldwell, Pat Caldwell, and Pat Quiggin, “The Social Contest of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa,” in *Population and Development Review* 15.2 (June 1989): 185-234, p. 185

<sup>10</sup> The authors described death rate and sero prevalence rates at the time of their study and identified risk factors such as urbanization, several heterosexual partners, and genital lesions from venereal infections. They postulated that lifestyle plays a major role, and that the breakthrough in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS would come through lifestyle change, and not by a medical breakthrough. However, they cautioned that some current research is a hindrance because its authors do not want to be racially insensitive, citing the conclusions reached by some researchers that “there is no evidence that Africans are more likely to be sexually promiscuous than people from any other continent,” and their further argument that there was no evidence that there were sexual excesses on the continent (p. 186).

<sup>11</sup> p. 187

<sup>12</sup> p. 188

<sup>13</sup> p. 188

<sup>14</sup> p. 188-189

aesthetic expression linked sexual relations with only the noblest and deepest emotion and abhorred sexuality that contrived, especially commercial, components. Payments or material returns for work was noble—the same for sexual services was execrable”.<sup>15</sup>

Caldwell *et al* make a big jump to today’s world and conclude: “Millennia later this system was to provide some protection against AIDS, but in the meantime it confined much of Eurasian society to a permanently inferior condition and maintained women in a rigidly confined situation. Much of the history of the West has been a struggle to loosen the bonds”.<sup>16</sup> They emphasize the fact that in the Eurasian cultures at the time of marriage it was important that the bride be a virgin and this developed into a picture of the virtue of abstinence which they argue has been reported in India, Ireland, and the Mediterranean world.<sup>17</sup>

However, this negative portrait of African sexuality and negative comparison with Europe and Asia is not correct and must be rejected. African scholars can however not run away from the fact that in many African societies so called sex education involved having young girls have sex with an initiator, nor can we deny that widow cleansing remains a problem and must be rejected.

In religion and theology the phenomenal critical work done by Mercy Amber Oduyoye and her colleagues in the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have addressed the gender issues that we continue to face since a long time. The history of the Circle is still being written, but I know for a fact that history will record that the Circle called us to think justice on issues of gender. At the recent Joint Societies Conference in South Africa, Nico Botha told a wonderful anecdote, that he once asked Oduyoye what she thought about the debate for a moratorium on missions, and she answered that we first need a moratorium on patriarchy. Gender is on the table here and will always be because we still deal with issues that affect gender identity. In that remarkable publication, *The Will to Rise*, The Circle called for an end to sexual and gender practices that hold African women back, and I think a lot more has been documented in the studies members of the Circle have done on HIV and AIDS.

My point here is that our analysis need to explore what the issues are in each context and move away from studies of sexuality that suggest that there is some kind of African sexuality that is not in synch with the rest of humanity. Recent studies by Sylvia Tamale have started to address those issues, making it clear that we have our own issues which we must address, but also that we are sexual beings as everyone.<sup>18</sup>

Scholars of religion need to continue to research sexuality in a holistic manner that takes into consideration the human body, emotions, broad social issues, or even restrictive sexual practices which have been promoted at the disadvantage of women. We love the human body in Africa. In many of our traditions, we decorate it, pierce it, protect it and hang medicines and powerful charms. Recent controversies regarding practices like female genital cutting do not merely oppose accepted ritual practices but call attention to the human body. It is in that sense

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<sup>15</sup> p. 192

<sup>16</sup> p. 192-193

<sup>17</sup> Caldwell, Caldwell, and Quiggin, p. 193. They report several studies, which show that lack of sexual abstinence in a woman affected the honor of the family. They refer to several studies that link the sexual purity of the woman to the honor of the family. Mary Douglas writing about India stated: “wives are the door of entry to the group . . . Through the adultery of the wife impure blood is introduced to the lineage.” p. 194, See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.

<sup>18</sup> Sylvia Tamale, *African Sexualities*.

that many of these rituals were described as mutilation of the female body. Enriching sexual experience does not call for some of the practices that have been carried out in the name of rituals or to enhance male sexuality.

During the studies of sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS, a psychologist reported that the So people in Uganda have a word for male ejaculation but no word for female orgasm; no masturbation for women, only men do that when they are away from home. The genitals of one's partner could only be touched to enable a quick penetration of the penis. The breast of women were not viewed as something erotic, but for children's milk. There was no love play, lubrication of vagina and women often found male penetration painful.<sup>19</sup>

There is need for some new perspectives on sexuality that would make sacred the desires and pleasures of sexuality for all sexual partners. A visiting professor of medicine has described her visit to Africa where she worked with women to become acquainted with the erogenous parts of their bodies.<sup>20</sup> The visitor to Africa argues that most people believe that sexual intercourse is for the pleasure of the man and for childbearing. "Female orgasm is considered inappropriate, unhealthy, and even dangerous to both the female and her partner. Male orgasm, however, is a sign of potency, and men will seek sexual relief even when abstaining from intercourse".<sup>21</sup> Initiation of sexual intercourse is male activity and the prevalent position is male-above, and coitus takes place with no love play. In Ghana where some educated youths are trying new forms of love play, fellatio and cunnilingus are abhorred. Women are shy about touching the penis and men to not feel comfortable with women touching them. Dry sex makes sure that there are no vaginal secretions, no sexual arousal and the woman experiences pain during intercourse and has no orgasm.<sup>22</sup> Women prepare for dry sex by "mixing the powdered stem and leaf of the *Mugugudhu* tree with water, wrapped in a bit of nylon stocking and inserted in vagina for 10 15 minutes before intercourse. Other women use soil mixed with baboon urine, which they obtain from traditional healers, or detergents, salt, cotton, or shredded newspaper. These swell the vaginal tissue, make it hot, and dry it out. The women admit that sexual intercourse is 'very painful. . . but our African husbands enjoy sex with a dry vagina'".<sup>23</sup>

There are signs of hope emerging because new challenges to sexual practice that inhibit female sexual pleasure. There have been attempts underway in Kenya to replace female genital cutting with a ritual of words undertaken during a week-long rite of passage when young women are given instructions on all that they are expected to do as adult women. This is followed by celebrations and feasting.<sup>24</sup>

The second reason we have to continue to explore sexuality, is the very fact that there is a tough and unhealthy debate going on in many African communities today about sexuality, especially the questions of homosexuality. Many Africans, argue that homosexuality is against African culture and against the Bible and Christian values. A number of studies demonstrate that the charge that same-sex relations are unAfrican is not correct. I have no time to discuss this in detail partly because I do not want the Ghanaian Chamber of Commerce to think that we are gathered here to recruit someone to become a homosexual, but let me make three points.

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<sup>19</sup> p. 59

<sup>20</sup> p. 60

<sup>21</sup> p. 62

<sup>22</sup> p. 63

<sup>23</sup> p. 63, See M. Schoofs, "AIDS: The Agony of Africa," *The Village Voice*, New York, 2000, at: [www.villagevoice.com/specials/Africa/](http://www.villagevoice.com/specials/Africa/)

<sup>24</sup> M. Lacey, "Genital Cutting Showing Signs of Losing Favor in Africa," *The New York Times*, A3, June 8 2004

First, just because a lifestyle is not predominant, does not mean that it does not exist. Second, we also know that there are different ways of reading ancient texts on questions of same sex relations that will demonstrate aspects of what Mark Jordan called the *The Invention of Sodomy*. Third, we can have a different kind of conversation on this topic by doing two things. As Africans we are committed to values that prefer and emphasize the person. Whether we call that *Ubuntu*, or *ulantu* as our colleague Ezra Chitando has argued recently. If we care about people and our communities, then their sexual preferences should not be used to determine acceptance of others in the community.

The second thing here is that as those of who study religion and seek to understand how religions are constituted, their teachings, the impact their teachings have on individuals and communities, have a contribution to make on this debate. One area which our study can contribute is to remind religious communities that as important as they are, they do not operate in a vacuum. Re-



ligious communities operate in political communities that govern according to civil laws and a key component of those laws calls for respect of human rights. The major judgement issued by Judge Albie Sachs which legalized same sex marriage in South Africa more than 10 years ago, was centred on the question of rights.

Participants on the steps between the conference hall and the pavilions

While the disagreement on these issue remain, the question for us as researchers is, can we explore questions of sexuality and other broad issues related to it in a manner that is open to the evidence of research in a changing world? What the Christian community could do is reject what Sylvia Tamale has described as the instrumentalization, the control and regulation of African sexuality, especially the sexuality of women, through the “intersection of religion, statutory law and reinterpreted traditional customs”.<sup>25</sup> Steps like these may seem small, but when scholars work with other communities of discourse, we could enrich the dialogue on human sexuality in Africa and the African Diaspora.

<sup>25</sup> Sylvia Tamale, “Exploring the Contours of African Sexualities: Religion, Law and Power” *African Human Rights Law Journal*, (2014): 14, 1, 150-177.



Enjoying the excellent food at the pavilions



Prof. John S. Pobee, Dr. Rabiatu Ammah, Dr. Fatimatu N.-Eyare Sulemanu, and (in green dress) Professor. Emerita Elizabeth Ammoah in conversation

AT THE BATTLEFIELD OF  
SEXUAL DIVERSITY:  
THE 7<sup>TH</sup> AASR CONFERENCE IN AFRICA,  
LEGON, GHANA, 26-29 JULY 2016

*AASR Conferences in Africa*

AASR was founded on Friday 18 September 1992 during the concluding session of the IAHR Regional Conference, on 'The Study of Religions in Africa', at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe.<sup>26</sup> At the first AASR meeting, during the IAHR Congress at Mexico City, 5-11 August 1995 in which AASR was admitted to the IAHR as one of its four 'regional' [non-national] members, AASR adopted its first constitution. It stipulated in article 5, b: 'AASR will endeavour to organise a major regional conference in Africa at least once every five years'.<sup>27</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> AASR Conference in Africa, on 'The Religions of East Africa in the Age of Globalization', convened at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya, 28-30 July 1999.<sup>28</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> AASR Conference in Africa, on 'The Role of Religion in the Socio-Cultural Transformations of West Africa', was hosted by the Department for the Study of Religions of the University of Ghana and met at Legon, Ghana, from 5 to 8 February 2004.<sup>29</sup> After having met in East Africa in 1999, and in West Africa in 2004, it was therefore meet that AASR organise its next conference in Southern Africa. The 3<sup>rd</sup> AASR Conference in Africa convened therefore at the University of Gaborone, Botswana, from 8 to 13 July, 2007, on 'Health, Healing & the Study of Religions of Africa', particularly in view of HIV/AIDS afflicting Africa, and most severely Southern Africa.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Jan G. Platvoet, Jacob Kehinde Olupona & James L. Cox (eds.) 1996, *The Study of Religions in Africa: Past, Present and Prospects*. Cambridge: Roots and Branches, 393 pp.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *AASR Newsletter* 5 (April 1996): 11. Note, however, also that Prof. Jacob Olupona, AASR President 1995-2005, organised also a one-day AASR Symposium and Workshop at the Institute of Church and Society, Ibadan, Nigeria, on 15 December 1998; for his report cf. *AASR Newsletter* 11 (June 1999): 1, 7-9

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *AASR Newsletter* 8 (November 1997): 13-14; 9 (June 1998): 14-16; 10 (November 1998): 20-21; Jesse N.K. Mugambi & Mary N. Getui (eds.) 2004, *Religions in Eastern Africa under Globalization*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 267 pp. For a report on this conference by Dr. Mary Getui. Local Organizer, cf. *AASR Newsletter* 12 (November 1999): 4-6.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *AASR Newsletter* 19 (May 2003): 1-3; 20 (November 2003): 2-4 at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASRNewsletter20.pdf>. For the Minutes of the AASR General Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2004 by Dr. James L. Cox, cf. *AASR Bulletin* 21 (May 2004): 5-8. For reports of this conference by Matthews A. Ojo, Oluwafemi Abosede Okunlola, David O. Ogungbile, and Hajj Mumuni Sulemana, cf. *AASR Bulletin* 21: 9-14. Though Ojo confidently announced that 'the keynote addresses and a selection of the revised papers are presently being prepared for publication' (*AASR Bulletin* 21: 10), no such volume has so far been published.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *AASR Bulletin* 25 (May 2006): 3-6 at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASRBulletin25.pdf>. For a reports of this conference by Muhammed Haron & Lovemore Togarasei, Damaris Seleina Parsitau, and its financial constraints by Afe Adogame, cf. *AASR Bulletin* 27/28 (May/November 2007): 2-9. Despite the assertion in the AASR Business Meeting at Toronto on 17.08.2010, that the publication of selected, peer reviewed papers of this conference is on course (*AASR Bulletin* 33: 9), no such volume has so far been published. Some of the papers have, however, been

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Having thus completed its first circumambulation of the academic study of religions in Anglophone academic Africa from 1999 to 2007, AASR returned for its second round first to West Africa by holding its 4<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, from 16 to 20 January 2010 on the theme of 'Religion, Environment and Sustainable Development'.<sup>31</sup> The FIFA World Cup Football having been played in South Africa in June/July 2010, the 5<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa congregated at Egerton University, at Njoro, Kenya, to discuss the topic of 'Sports, Leisure, Religion & Spirituality in Africa & the African Diaspora' from 18 to 23 July 2012.<sup>32</sup> This second circumambulation of West, East and Southern Africa was again completed with AASR convening at the University of Cape Town in 2014, from July 30 to August 3, for the 6<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa on (again) 'Religion, Ecology and the Environment in Africa and the African Diaspora'.<sup>33</sup>

As this second circumambulation took six years only, 2010-2016, AASR unwittingly established a tradition of having a n AASR Conference in Africa every two years. The 7<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa, the first of the third round, was announced therefore as the 7<sup>th</sup> *Biennial* AASR Conference in Africa, conflating 7<sup>th</sup> AASR Conference in Africa, and 4<sup>th</sup> AASR Biennial Conference in Africa.<sup>34</sup>

### *The AASR Biennial Conference at Legon, 26-29 July 2016*

AASR met at the beautiful University of Ghana (UG) campus at Legon, Accra, Ghana, from 26 to 29 July, at which it conducted its sessions in the ISSER Conference Centre, of the UG Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research. It met there to discuss the hot issue of 'Religion, Sexuality, and Identity in Africa & the African Diaspora'. Though sexual diversity has been a highly controversial issue to various degrees all over the world for the past half century, it has become an explosive issue in most African societies, continental as well as diasporic, since some two decades, because complex and rapid social and cultural transformations, endemic as well as global, caused a formerly concealed diversity of sexual identities (and practices) to surface also in African societies. Those endowed with them began to actively vie for moral and legal room for them, and for recognition and for acceptance of them on a par with hetero-sexuality.

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published recently in the new electronic open access *AASR e-Journal for the Study of the Religions of Africa and its Diaspora* 1 (2015) at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Volume-1-Issue-1-August-2015.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *AASR Bulletin* 29&30 (November 2008/May 2009): 2-3 at:

[http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASRBulletin29\\_30.pdf](http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASRBulletin29_30.pdf)

Despite the unanimous decision at the AASR Business Meeting at Obafemi Awolowo University on 11.01.2010, that in the next five years top priority must be given to the publication of volumes drawn from past AASR conference (cf. *AASR Bulletin* 33: 5), no volume of selected, peer reviewed papers presented at this conference has so far been published.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *AASR Bulletin* 33 (November 2010): 3-4 at:

<http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASRBulletin33.3.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> For the Call for papers, cf. *AASR Bulletin* 38 (May 2013), 8-10 at:

<http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/AASR-Bulletin.38.pdf>. For the minutes of the AASR Business Meeting at Cape Town, and reports of the conference, cf. *AASR Bulletin* 41 (November 2014): 5-7, 23-29 at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/AASR-Bulletin-41.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> In addition to these 'biennial' conferences in Africa, AASR has met every five years at the World Congresses of the International Association for the History of Religions since 1995 (Mexico City; 2000, Durban, South Africa; 2005, Tokyo, Japan; 2010, Toronto, Canada; 2015, Erfurt, Germany; 2020, Dunedin, New Zealand), and has annually organized panels at the AAR/SBL congresses in November in the USA since 2006 (cf. *AASR Bulletin* 25 (November 2006): 9-13 (at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASRBulletin25.pdf>))

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

However, the field of problems to be addressed in this conference comprised not only this newly manifest diversity of sexual orientations - 'hetero' and LGTB -, but also those of gender, HIV/AIDS, and religion. Gender, with its subsets of masculinities and femininities, refers to the distinct sets of rules, prescribed in distinct ways by each culture, that govern the relationships between males and females. Due to the rapid and fundamental changes in the relative positions of males and females in societies in the past few decades worldwide, these gender rules have become much more fluid, brittle, complex, variable and uncertain, and at times more violent, especially in African societies that have also been deeply affected in the past three decades. by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The other main focus of the discussion during this conference was, naturally, the role the religions of Africa and its Diaspora played in these three sets of interlocking problems: sexual diversity, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. The lofty goal of this AASR conference was to 'to dispassionately deliberate, explore and provide informed contributions to the debate in this era of rapid social change'.<sup>35</sup>

### *The structure of the conference*

The conference consisted of a keynote address, three plenaries, some sixty papers,<sup>36</sup> and an outing. The sizeable (138 pp.) Program and Book of Abstracts of the conference scheduled 111 abstracts of papers that were to be presented by 116 applicants for participation: 59 from Nigeria, 15 from Ghana, 10 from South Africa, 10 from the USA, 6 from The Netherlands, 5 from Zimbabwe, 4 from Kenya, 3 from UK, 3 from Germany, 2 from Canada, 2 from Norway, 2 from Brazil, and 1 each from France, Senegal, Lesotho, Korea and Botswana.<sup>37</sup> The interest in the topic of this conference was therefore great. However, by far not everyone scheduled to present her or his views on the role of religions in the battle for sexual diversity in Africa and its Diaspora actually managed to make it to the conference. All in all, the conference drew some 80 participants, some 60 of which presented papers.<sup>38</sup>

### *The keynote address*

The subject matter of the conference having three foci: 'religion', 'sexuality', and 'identity', Professor Emeritus John Samuel Pobee, 78, felt free to explore the first and the third item in his keynote address 'Human Families Together Searching for Renewed Identity: An African Theological Contribution' and leave sexuality virtually untouched.<sup>39</sup> Though aware that AASR is a secular association for the academic study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora, and 'not an assembly of theologians at prayer', Pobee, pioneer of African Theology, craved indulgence to present an explicitly theological reflection on how a ecumenical hermeneutics for banning strife and violence from modern religiously pluralist human societies might be developed by heeding the 'heteronomous call of the other' of Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995).

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. the Call for Papers for this conference in *AASR Bulletin* 41 (November 2014): 15 at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/AASR-Bulletin-41.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> I regret that the list of those who actually participated in the conference is not yet available. I have therefore not been able to restrict this report to the presenters who actually took part on the conference.

<sup>37</sup> 8 proposed papers were to be presented by two or three participants.

<sup>38</sup> E-mail message from the Conference Organizer Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, dd. 17 November 2016. Note that four participants presented more than one paper

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 21-22.

Pobee only briefly touched on sexuality, asserting that 'gender is in the order of creation', and 'fundamentally about companionship and complementarity'. As both male or female bear the *Imago Dei*, neither is inferior or superior. Both are therefore entitled to the same dignity, honour and respect as a human right. As the 'sexuality of preference' was 'influenced by contextual, especially cultural norms', and is 'a person's private matter', and as its discussion was 'fraught with much politics and emotive language', Pobee merely remarked about it that he felt 'uncomfortable when a private agenda is flaunted publicly in a political manner'.<sup>40</sup>

*The three plenary sessions*

Of the three plenary sessions, two were delivered by invited speakers. They were Prof. Emeritus Kofi Asare Opoku and the ethno-archaeologist Prof. Kodzo B. Gavua, Dean of the School of Arts of the University of Ghana.

Gavua delivered his address on Thursday 28/07, the outing day devoted to a visit by bus to the two most famous stone castles of Ghana, São Jorge da Mina, in Elmina, Portuguese headquarters from 1481 to 1637, when it was captured by the Dutch and served as Dutch headquarters on the Gold Coast for trade, especially in gold dust and slaves, till 1872; and Cape Coast Castle which served as British headquarters for the same trade from 1664 till 1881.

Gavua's address was on the part religion played in identity development in South Eastern Ghana during the slave trade era. He found that those adopting Western European identities (by converting to Christianity) were deemed inferior to those who elected to maintain indigenous cultural and religious identities. As my wife and I could not take part in the outing, I can only go by the summary of Gavua's lecture. That seems to indicate that, like Pobee, he did deal with religion and identity construction, but not with religion's role in the battle of sexual diversity.<sup>41</sup>



View of Elmina Castle from the ocean

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<sup>40</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Pobee for sending me the full text of his address.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 23-24



View of the seaside courtyard of Cape Coast Castle



Conference organizer Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego in the front seat of the bus with other participants



At Cape Coast Castle



Colourful fishing canoes in Elmina harbour below the northern wall of Elmina Castle

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Neither did Professor Emeritus Kofi Asare Opoku (85, and still admirably vigorous and academically active) touch on religion and sexual diversity nor on religion and identity construction in his plenary address 'The Handle of the Axe: Theology and the African World View' on Friday 29 July. It repeated his oft stated view that the immigrant religions, Islam and Christianity, had unfairly demonized their co-religions, the African indigenous religions, by denouncing them as Satanic and depreciating them as 'a theological wasteland'. African Christian theologians, he asserted, have ignored the 'valid understanding of the world and wise insights into the meaning and significance of life' of African indigenous religions, and thereby have failed 'to make a distinctive contribution to theological scholarship in general'.<sup>42</sup>

The business to be transacted in this conference began therefore to be seriously addressed, as far as the keynote and plenary sessions is concerned, only in the third plenary session, on Wednesday 28 July, in the panel on 'Methodological and Theoretical Issues' in the study of sexual diversity in Africa and its Diaspora, organized by Adriaan van Klinken. It consisted of four paper presentations. The first was an introductory survey of feminist, postcolonial and queer perspectives in the study of religion and sexual diversity in African contexts by Adriaan van Klinken. The second paper was read by Nina Hoel on the need for an embodied and relational approach in the ethnographic study of lived religion that critically and self-reflexively problematizes the insider/outsider dichotomy and notions of detachment and non-involvement, takes the body of the researcher seriously as an 'enfleshed lens', and highlights relational aspects in the study of lived religion (and sexuality). The third contribution was the paper by Damaris Parsitau on the dress of women in the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH) church in Kenya. That church regards the body of women as sinful and teaches them to cover it up completely so as not to tempt men to sexual sin. The fourth contribution to this panel was again by Adriaan van Klinken. He discussed the theoretical and methodological challenges of a new research project he was developing on the relation between religion and queer politics in Africa. It aims to examine how LGTB individuals, activists and communities in Kenya relate to religion.<sup>43</sup> This panel was definitively one of the high points of this conference.

### *Two more panels*

In addition to the methodological panel organised by Adriaan van Klinken, two more panels convened during this conference. One, with four papers, was organized by Kim Kibbbe on 'Transnational Religion and Sexual Life-styling: Global Sexuality and its Local Intersections in Africa and its Diaspora'. One paper was Brenda Bartelink's on how views of sexuality had changed in The Netherlands since the 'sexual revolution of the 1960s and by the emergence of secularity as the dominant ideology of Dutch society. She outlined how these secular, 'liberal' views have deeply determined Dutch development policy in respect of notions of sexuality and health, and Dutch views how they were to be implemented in development - 'aid'- projects abroad.<sup>44</sup> The second paper was by Kim Knibbe. It outlined a research programme at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. It will critically examine how the Dutch tend to impose their secular, 'liberal', 'modern' views of sexuality on the views and values of immigrants from Africa living in The Netherlands. In Dutch perception, they espouse outmoded religious and traditional views of sexuality and health that are in need of an 'update'. The aim of this research programme

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 23

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 24-27

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 28

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

is 'to break with this European singularizing view of sexuality' and to approach liberal/secular and traditional/religious views of sexuality as 'the meeting of different cultural trajectories emerging from both sub-Saharan Africa and Europe'.<sup>45</sup> The third paper in this panel was by Francesca Mininel, from France, on how *akpema*, the rite of passage of girls into womanhood in Ewe-speaking parts of South Togo, is used now in the struggle against HIV/AIDS by intertwining it with Christian notions of purity and with the notions of individual responsibility and choice as promoted by HIV prevention campaigns.<sup>46</sup> The fourth paper was by Modi Ndiogou Faye, from Senegal, on her research into the strategies of young girls in Senegal who need to comply on the one hand with the normative, public view of sex imposed by dominant Sufi Islam as wild lechery and therefore a taboo that is covered up in silence, and their own 'need to live fully [their] sexuality' and to have their bodies 'completely free from censorship'.<sup>47</sup>



Participants in a paper session

The other panel was a double-sized one, of eight papers. It was convened by Benson Ohihon Igboin, of Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria, to critically discuss 'Homosexuality, Religions, African Culture and Western Influence'. They all noted, and strongly agreed, that homosexuality was sinful, for Christians because it is condemned in the Bible, and for all Nigerians because it is contrary, they asserted, to the sexual ethics ruling 'traditional societies'. They all regarded the political and media pressure, internal and external, that gay people be permitted to marry and that

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 29

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 20

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 31

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

LGTB sexual identities be protected by law as a ‘human rights’, as an unlawful and inadmissible infringement of the sovereignty of modern African nations by the West. They rejected this intrusion as neo-colonialism by means of the politics of aid. As Segun Adebileje, of the Redeemed Christian Bible College, said: ‘Western powers colluded to force the hands of the weaker nations around the world, to accept a western interpretation of sexual orientation and identity’. He added: ‘Even in the face of [this] tyranny’, African nations have remained resolute in their ‘defiant denunciation’ and ‘complete rejection’ of Western homosexual ideology.<sup>48</sup>



The same session discussing a paper

There were two partially dissenting voices in this panel, however. One was Babatunde Adedibu, Manager of the Central Office of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, at Cambridge, UK.<sup>49</sup> Though he agreed that there was a need to critically examine ‘the imperialistic tendencies of the West that have branded Pentecostal positions on human sexuality as uncivilised and fundamentalist’, he also said that likewise the ‘reactionary rhetoric’ of some leaders of Pentecostal churches from Africa in the Diaspora, who have resisted the redefinition of human sexuality’ should come in for critique.<sup>50</sup>

The other was Patrick Nwosu (University of Ilorin). Though he asserted that homosexual acts cannot be approved, he also pleaded that homosexuals be accepted. In his view, the teaching on

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 31-38

<sup>49</sup> He is also a Senior Lecturer at Christ the Redeemer College, London, and Visiting Lecturer at the University of Roehampton, London. Cf. <http://www.cccw.cam.ac.uk/pages/centre/cccw-research-associates/revd-babetunde-adedibu.php>

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 33-34

homosexuality needs to be balanced with the belief that God is merciful and loving. Nwosu even added that 'in a pluralistic society homosexuals may make the human community richer'.<sup>51</sup>

*The battlefield*

The two panels convened by Adriaan van Klinken and Kim Knibbe, each of four papers, and the double-sized panel of eight papers convened by Benson Igboin, represent well the two frontlines of the battlefield of sexual diversity, in Africa and its Diaspora as well as worldwide. Each of these two camps has distinct marks.

That of Adriaan and Kim is descriptive, analytical, reflexive, self-critical, and dialogical in as far as it contextualizes its own approaches as time- and place-bound and culturally conditioned academic positions, as well as those of the opposite camp. But it is also pro-active and activist by using, and departing from, feminist, postcolonial, queer, and other engaged perspectives and modern(ist) theories with a young pedigree in humanistic scholarship. These focus on the plight of the 'victims' of 'oppressive' social structures and aim to uncover them as oppressive and unjust in order that their 'oppressive injustices' be alleviated and in the end be removed. A distinct partisanship, and its inevitable limitations in terms of even-handed, hardnosed, cold, distanced scholarship, seems inherent in these approaches. The need for them and for their partisanship, however, seems also beyond dispute once they have exposed the oppression suffered.

In the Igboin camp a much more vocal, ideological and inflexible partisanship seems to rule. It is inspired by the 'incontrovertible' view and 'indisputable fact' that homosexuality is morally impermissible, on Biblical grounds and because it is not permitted by the ethics of African 'traditional societies' as postulated by this camp.<sup>52</sup> No sexual identity other than the hetero-sexual one, and no marriage other than that between a male and a female, must therefore be given legal status and protection. As heteronormativity is the one-and-only perennial rule for every human society in this camp, its adherents often do not shy away from the homophobic violence which this inviolable rule engender when its monopoly is contested, as is the case in many parts of Africa at present.

*The 95 individual papers*

As I cannot review in this report all the other 95 individual papers, whether proposed only or actually delivered at the conference, I present only a rapid survey of them through an attempt to place them either in the Van Klinken/Knibbe camp, or in that of Igboin, or as distinct from both, either by matter or approach.

I briefly mention those unrelated to either camp first. Four papers were clearly not related to the issue of the conference. One was on Wimbun violent land disputes. Another was on Franz

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 38

<sup>52</sup> It is a romanticised, unified, and immobilizing notion and an 'invention of tradition' for pursuing an interest and/or for founding and legitimizing a (newly invented) identity. This a-historical, generalizing view of African cultures, societies, and their ethics ignores the huge diversity and dynamics that have always marked indigenous societies everywhere in Africa (and throughout the globe) in every age, pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial. These societies, and especially those that were preliterate, easily and usually greedily adopted, and adapted, external cultural inputs. The so called 'traditional' societies of Africa were never static, nor archaic, nor uniform, nor homogenous, but dynamic, different, historical and always modernizing. For an example of a history of sexuality in an African indigenous society in the past that presents data on 'traditional' sexual ethics that modify, and perhaps contradict, the views of the Igboin camp, cf. the paper on Yoruba erotic songs, riddles and proverbs by Ibrahim Esan Olaosun (OAU, Ile-Ife) (Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 98-99).

Fanon and Black Consciousness. A third was on Mafi-Ewe environmental ethics. And a fourth contended that there was a need to save Yoruba indigenous religion from extinction.<sup>53</sup>

Four other papers were primarily on the xenophobic violence that immigrants into South Africa from other parts of Africa have experienced in the past decade. Their authors are all four either staff or students of the School of Religion, Philosophy & Classics of the University of KwaZulu/Natal at Pietermaritzburg, but hailed, like those suffering this xenophobia, from other parts of Africa (Rwanda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Ghana). Two proposed that contextual Bible study and feminist postcolonial theory be used as instruments for providing security for these immigrants. A third appealed to the virtue of Christian hospitality. And the fourth added that gay immigrants suffered a 'triple oppression' through being subjected to both xenophobic and homophobic marginalisation.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to these eight (proposed) papers, nine were explicitly on gender and/or sexuality, but could not be unambiguously included in either the Van Klinken/Knibbe camp or that of Igboin. Four were on gender: one outlined the place of female priests in contemporary Akan religion.<sup>55</sup> Another discussed the role of women in Christian missions and in AICs.<sup>56</sup> A third that of African female prophets in Christian communities in Korea.<sup>57</sup> And a fourth that of female healers in the Afro-Brazilian Quilombo de Coqueiroa in Bahia, Brazil.<sup>58</sup>

Of the other five, one investigated the link between the sexual harassment of girls in secondary school and poor academic performance.<sup>59</sup> A second paper found that there are significant differences between the perception of male and female teachers of [the need for teaching] Sex Education in secondary schools in Nigeria.<sup>60</sup> A third discussed the role of religion in the sex trade.<sup>61</sup> A fourth presented a socio-psychological content analysis of the 'exploitation' of female body parts in the Fashion Court column of the Nigerian *Sunday Sun* newspaper.<sup>62</sup> And the fifth compared 'traditional' and Muslim marriage in Yorubaland.<sup>63</sup>

This left me with 78 individual papers to be assigned to either the Van Klinken/Knibbe camp, or to that of Benson Igboin.

### *The van Klinken/Knibbe camp*

Through an analysis of titles and summaries and through chairing two sessions and attending others, 56 papers, i.e. by far the greater number, may be unambiguously assigned to the Van Klinken/Knibbe camp, be it with a question mark for four papers. They discussed, or proposed to discuss, gender notions (48, 61-62);<sup>64</sup> their ritual renegotiation (83-84); (structural) gender (in)equality (56, 65, 66, 68-69, 72-73, 91-92, 96-97, 102-103, 114, 115, 124, 131-132); ingrained no-

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 106-107; 110-111; 112-113; 125

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 40-41; 52-53; 84-85; 62-63. I have assigned the fourth paper also to the Van Klinken/Knibbe camp, because it adds homophobia to xenophobia

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 48-49

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 70-71

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 103-105

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 108-109

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 58-59

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 77-78

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 59-60

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 75. But I wonder whether I ought to add this paper to the Igboin camp, for it qualifies the 'exploitation of female body parts' by the *Sunday Sun* as 'visual terrorism and social violence'.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 72-73

<sup>64</sup> The numbers between brackets refer to pages in the Program and Book of Abstracts.

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

tions of female inferiority by which household tasks are assigned to young girls 'as a matter of course' (87-88); gender discrimination in the workplace (61-62); female ritual agency hidden in 'patriarchal' [i.e. patrilineal] Kasena society (107-108); gender-based violence (39-40, 56) and biblical texts (109-110, 111-112), and HIV/AIDS (42-43, 48, 80-81, 93-95); and *sugar daddies* (122-123); hegemonic harmful masculinities (42-43) and the need to contest them and transform them into non-violent masculinities (99, 100-101); sexual identity/identities (118); non-normative sexualities (43-44); sexual liberation (74-75, 116-117); redeemed sexuality (82-83); inclusive biblical understanding of sexuality (88, 96-97); perverse colonial and racist notions of black sexuality, and of Hagar's (85-87, 126); the views of MHR and ZZC churches on gender-based violence as 'the work of the devil' (81-82, 105-106); the view of the Kenyan MRH Church that females must cover up completely, because their sinful bodies provoke lustful males to sexual sins (30, 100); cultural, Christian, Rastafarian and Anglican/Evangelical homophobia (62-63, 120-121, 129-130); Yoruba erotic songs, riddles and proverbs (98-99); the paradigm shift in gender, sexuality and marriage styles (117-118); same sex relationships (46-47); their dramatic performance in ritual of deliverance from 'spirits of gayism' in Pentecostal churches (43-44); - same sex marriage; reproductive rights and reproductive technologies (69-70, 128); brutal murders of LGTBs in SA (71-72); violence against LGTBs during the 2010-2011 Ivorian crisis (123-124); black queer masculine off-centre Diaspora women attempt to dissolve black heteronormativity (121-122, 127).

Four more papers may perhaps be assigned to the Van Klinken/Knibbe camp, or to that of Igboin. One is by Boakye Owusu Ansah (Doctoral Research Assistant at Texas State University). He graphically describes 'Africa' and its religions as homophobic, yet says 'there is a need to separate religious and cultural morality from sexual orientation'.<sup>65</sup> The second is by Adeola Kehinde Adedayo (Abuja University) who proposes to investigate whether membership of the LGTB community 'constitutes sinfulness or holiness' in order to 'remove misconception of LGTBs', but fails to infer that Christian gays may indeed be 'sanctified'.<sup>66</sup> The third is by Silindiwe Zvingowanisei (University of Zimbabwe). She contends that gender-based violence is surely not perpetrated by men on women only, for 'cases of women perpetrating sexual violence on men are rampant and increase at an alarming rate', causing men to suffer in silence and at times to commit suicide.<sup>67</sup> The fourth was by Donatus Pius Ukpong (University of Uyo). He proposes as an antidote to homophobia that a non-judgemental theology of love be developed that is rooted in the perennial acceptance of maleness and femaleness as determined in creation.<sup>68</sup>

The Van Klinken/Knibbe camp consisted therefore of at least 56, and at most 60, individual papers in addition to the 8 convened in the Van Klinken and Knibbe panels; i.e. 64 to 68 papers in total. The presenters of these papers came from all over Africa (Nigeria: 19, South Africa: 5; Zimbabwe: 4; Ghana: 4; Kenya: 3; Lesotho: 2; Senegal: 1) and from all over the globe (USA: 7; Canada: 3; The Netherlands: 3; Germany: 3; New Zealand: 3; Brazil: 2; Norway: 2; South Korea: 1; France: 1).

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 50-51

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 54-55

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 78-79. I should, perhaps, have included this paper in the Igboin camp.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 136-137

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

### *The Igboin camp*

This is in striking contrast to the Benson Igboin camp, the core of which was constituted by the 8 panellists convened by Igboin in the panel on 'Homosexuality, Religions, African Culture and Western Influence'.<sup>69</sup> I assign 15 individual papers unambiguously to it, and another 5 with a question mark. That camp was therefore at most 28<sup>70</sup> presenters strong. They all hail from Nigeria but for one, perhaps two, from Zimbabwe, and another very doubtful one from USA/Ghana.<sup>71</sup>

The themes addressed in the 15 papers may briefly be summarized as follows. The LGTB human rights debate in Africa is an infringement of the sovereignty of African nations,<sup>72</sup> a secularist Western invasion,<sup>73</sup> and imposes a theological mandate from outside Africa.<sup>74</sup> As a result Yoruba/African society, which attaches great value to virginity, is now in a moral havoc through pre- and extramarital sex and adolescent illicit sexual life, and also because girls manipulate male sexual weaknesses, as did Tamara trapping Judah (Gen. 38: 12-23).<sup>75</sup> Which havoc Pentecostal churches curb by severely disciplining lust and adultery and all illicit sexuality in accordance with 1Cor.5: 1-13.<sup>76</sup> In 'this sex-perverted era, borrowed from the West', there is therefore a dire need that African morals be respected again;<sup>77</sup> that Christians submit to the teachings of scripture on the sinfulness of homosexuality and same-sex marriage;<sup>78</sup> that the lewd lyrics of Saint Janet parodying *gospel juju* be censored;<sup>79</sup> and for Africa to abhor homosexuality and same sex marriage as a biblical and cultural taboo.<sup>80</sup> I have assigned these 14 papers to the Igboin camp also because they are prescriptive. They enjoin that any sexuality other than that of married male/female couples be banned as immoral and unlawful.

Six other papers lack this prescriptive drive but should perhaps still be assigned to the Igboin camp because they agree with it in substantiation, or at least descriptively. Boakye Owusu Ansah, e.g., states that LGTB is not acceptable in Africa because it is 'not aligned with the cultural and moral values of the African society'.<sup>81</sup> Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo pleads that the moral dimension of sexual/religious identity be stressed in order that the current moral decadence be overcome.<sup>82</sup> Mercy Agha Onu stresses that Edda (Igbo) traditional religion needs to be studied because it contains the Edda norms for sexual conduct.<sup>83</sup> Victor T. Odewale suggests that clergy sexual scandals should attract even more coverage by the media than they already do, 'not for entertainment, but to educate people about the side effects' and 'to apply strict legislation against the of-

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 31-38; and above, 26-28

<sup>70</sup> Perhaps 30 if two papers discussed above (cf. footnotes 62 and 67) are added to the Igboin camp.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. above footnote 65

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 44-45

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 49-50

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 136-137

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 53-54, 60-61, 134-135

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 67, 134-135

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 79-80, 90-91

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 95-96, 119-120

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 76-77; cf. also Adebayo Mosobalaye 2015, 'The Erotic as Rhetoric of Subversion in Saint Janet's Juju Music', paper read the Seminar 'Africa Talks' at the Department of African Studies and Anthropology on Wednesday 18 November 2015

(cf. <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/dasa/2015/africatalks-autumn-2015.pdf>)

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 97-98, 137-138

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 50-51

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 78-79

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 92

fenders, regardless of their statuses'.<sup>84</sup> Michael Tokunbo Bankole describes the battle between revisionists and traditionalists in the Anglican communion, with conservative bishops from the global south unequivocally condemning same sex relationships as sinful and satanic.<sup>85</sup> Lastly, David Ajewole Adewale, Oyemi Jumoke Jekayinfa, Olajide Emmanuel Bello & Aminat Ozohu Aburime present an exegetical study Leviticus 18: 22, 20: 13. As that passage prohibits homosexuality and designates it as a capital offence, the claim of modern gay activists that homosexuality is as legitimate a lifestyle as is heterosexuality presents, they say, a formidable challenge to Christian ethics.<sup>86</sup>

### *A polite, peaceful conference*

Curiously, though my analysis so far shows that the two camps of presenters at this conference could hardly be expected to 'dispassionately deliberate' religion and modern sexual diversity in Africa and its Diaspora, the conference itself, at least in my experience as a non-presenting participant, was quite peaceful and a polite academic gathering. In the two sessions of three papers each I was privileged to chair,<sup>87</sup> only one paper was reproached in the Q&A for shifting the blame for sexual assault too easily from male teachers committing it to girl students suffering it. In none of the other sessions I attended, or at the coffees/ teas and meals, did I myself meet with the vocal presence of the Igboin camp. Nor did I learn about clashes between the two camps in them in Q&A. Perhaps only a few of the odd 28 Igboin camp presenters actually made it to conference. Those that did make it to the conference delivered their papers in concurrent sessions I could not attend. I may also have heard no 'battle reports', because my wife and I were lodged during the conference at Prof. Pobee's at quite a distance from the UG campus; and because we could not take part in the day long social interaction of the outing. My informal contact with colleagues was therefore much more minimal than at earlier AASR conferences.

### *Bridging the chasm?*

Even so, if no battle, or only a few minor skirmishes, were fought between the van Klinken/-Knibbe camp, numerically dominant at the conference, and the much smaller but vocal Igboin camp, the chasm between the two is deep in Africa and its Diaspora at present. Precisely because the battle is on also in academia, I wonder whether an approach can be devised and developed that produces a reflective pause, and perhaps even conciliation between the two camps.

I suggest we may try to reach such a 'truce' by an analysis of the historical setting of this battle, be it a very brief one to forestall that I get drawn into a fascinating, but completely new and complex field of research. I know from experience that I will easily get absorbed and drowned in it, and thereby delay the publication of this report and AASR Bulletin 45 even longer. So, I can only present a hint of what such a contextualizing approach is about and how it might be developed.

I felt, even before the conference, and especially after it, that a crucial aspect of the problem of sexual diversity has not been addressed at this conference. It is an analysis of the impact of recent demographic dynamics, humankind's population explosion in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries,

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 129

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 132-133

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 133-134

<sup>87</sup> I remember vividly chairing the papers 'Dying to be Queer' by Zethu Matebeni, and by Damaris Parsitau on the perception of sex and the female body by the MRH church, each graphically portraying lived experiences of gender-based violence, even deadly violence in Matebeni's paper.

on gender relations and sexual diversity. That explosion is synchronic with revolutionary changes in them, and has, I suggest, causal connections with them. These changes began to take off in Europe in the 1960s at the time of the so called 'sexual revolution', 'flower power', the pill, and (effective) family planning. They clearly have taken off now in Africa also.

A cardinal effect of the population explosion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century worldwide<sup>88</sup>, which is now in full swing in Africa,<sup>89</sup> is that it has made us aware that sexuality's first and foremost purpose, procreation through female fertility, is no longer only its blessing, lifeline and pride, but also a huge problem for humankind,<sup>90</sup> economically, environmentally, educationally, in terms of the job market, and of the need for migration to get rid of a demographic surplus, etc, especially for Africa in the decades ahead.<sup>91</sup> The gradually sinking in awareness of the increasingly problematic nature of procreation, and of the restriction of sexuality and sex to procreation only, triggered significant demographic, social, cultural, economic, political, ethical and other changes, but in particular in gender relations and in the diversity of sexual identities gradually becoming public.

First, very briefly, in gender relations. 'The pill', the condom, and other means of family planning allowed married couples from the 1960s on to choose when to 'take' children and to decide how many children to have, usually just two.<sup>92</sup> That caused the average female fertility rate (the number of live births per female) not only to drop dramatically, but also made it acceptable, and soon even respectable, for a single woman, and more rarely for a married couple, to decide not take children, but devote their time and talent to a job or academic career. These changes in fertility ethics therefore also had a huge impact on greater gender equality. Women

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<sup>88</sup> Cf the plenary address I delivered at the AASR Conference at OAU, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 17-21 January 2010, 'Demography as an Apocalypse?', in which I set out the demographic history of *homo sapiens* from 70.000 BP till now, humankind reaching the 1 billion mark in 1804; the 2 billion mark in 1927; the 3 billion mark in 1959; the 4 billion mark in 1974; the 5 billion mark in 1987; and the 6 billion mark in 1999. Mark the increase in speed: it took mankind 125 years to reach the 2 billion mark; but only 32 years to arrive at 3 billion; only 15 years to reach 4 billion; and only 13 years to pass the 5 billion mark. Then the speed began to level of a bit, for it was after 14 years that it reached the 6 billion mark. But it was again after only 13 years, in January 2012, that the 7 billion mark was passed. Cf. <http://plaatinfo.nl/begripen/bevolking.htm>. Even so, the annual growth rate is declining slowly. It stood in 1970 at 2.08 % per year and stands now, in 2017, at 1.11 % per year. Cf. e.g.

<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/#pastfuture>

<sup>89</sup> The population density of the huge African continent (North Africa included) was quite low till 1950, as was the growth of its population. It stood at 107 million in 1800, at 111 million in 1850, at 133 million in 1900, and at 221 million in 1950. By that time better medical care became available. As a result mortality figures began to drop, and the fertility rate to increase. As a result, Africa's population had grown to 872 million in 2000, to 922 million in 2005, and to 1,2 billion in 2016. It is expected to have grown to 1.76 billion in 2050. Cf.

<https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wereldbevolking> ;

<http://worldpopulationreview.com/continents/africa-population/>

<sup>90</sup> As I said at OAU: 'Currently, humanity's major problem seems to be humankind itself because of our immense breeding success in the past and present century'.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. <http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/blog/Is-fertility-stalling-in-sub-saharan-africa>: 'in sub-Saharan Africa women are still bearing over five children on average. This rises to over six or even seven in countries such as Chad, Mali and Niger. This rapid population growth and high fertility threaten the well-being of individuals and communities across sub-Saharan Africa'.

<sup>92</sup> In less than a decade, families shrunk from having any number of children between five and fifteen to two, at most three, in The Netherlands. By the 1970s, the standard nuclear family consisted of husband and wife and two children, in stark contrast to Dutch families before 1960, which grew large due to improved sanitation, better food, housing and healthcare conditions. In the absence of easy and effective means of fertility control, women used to be pregnant as long as they were fertile and restricted to the home for giving birth, nursing and rearing their numerous children. As a result, they became so used to being housewives only, that activity or a job outside the household was not only hardly possible, but also came to be regarded as unbecoming and 'unnatural'.

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

were no longer lifelong housewives only but became active and valuable participants in all fields of outdoors society, often outperforming males,<sup>93</sup> gradually breaking through the 'glass ceiling' into male bulwarks, and slowly but steadily achieving top positions too in academia, civil service, politics, corporations, etc.

I should add that this development towards greater gender equality is not merely pure progress. Like any other major change in socio-structural relations, it also has unwelcome effects, in this case, a stiff increase in the divorce rate. In The Netherlands, one in three marriages is breaking up now. On the other hand, the high divorce rates common e.g. in Akan pre-colonial matrilineal societies, signal that women had a much stronger position in them than women have in patrilineal societies in Africa then and now. Which much stronger position they now gradually have acquired, and increasingly continue to acquire in societies in the West. But modern Western high divorce rates also caused households types to vary. In addition to the fewer but still large numbers of 'classical' lifelong monogamous family of a male/female couple with, or without children, there are now the households of divorced single mothers with children, of couples who remarried with each partner bringing children from an earlier marriage and adding perhaps another of their own union, and an increasing number of singles, who divorced and did not remarry, or who had remained celibate throughout, being absorbed in a profession or an academic career, as well as same sex households, gay as well as lesbian, the latter often with their biologically own children, the former at times with adopted children.

Therefore, secondly and equally brief, what changes did and does modern demography effect in sexual ethics all over the globe, and now also in Africa? When the population explosion exposed the problematic nature of fertility and procreation, it made more room in sexual ethics for sexuality's other purposes, e.g. male/female companionship complementing each other, in a (heterosexual) marriage with or without children, and for the pleasure of sex for its own sake.<sup>94</sup> In addition, it permitted the till then well hidden and thoroughly tabooed human sexual diversity<sup>95</sup> to cautiously emerge into the open - 'from the closet' -, to gradually become more tolerated, and very recently to become even legally permitted and protected, as a 'human right', in a few but increasing number of nations.

Resistance against this emancipation from heteronormativity is, however, quite fierce virtually everywhere, either from small pockets in societies in which sexual diversity has been generally accepted and legally permitted as a human right, or from large sections of societies in which there is as yet little leeway for tolerance of sexuality other than the hetero one of hegemonic masculinity. In the latter resistance is more fierce, when it is felt that heteronormativity's ethical monopoly is under serious threat. When it engenders gender and homophobic violence, it may take 'dying to be queer'.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> As girl students nowadays do in secondary schools and universities in The Netherlands.

<sup>94</sup> Sexual pleasure for its own sake has, of course, always been an integral and essential part and purpose also of monogamous hetero marriages, not only after the woman had entered menarche and could no longer bear children, but also during her fertile years of childbearing.

<sup>95</sup> In addition to LGTBs (lesbians, gays, transgenders, and bi-sexuals), there are also 'a-sexuals', males and females who never engage in sex with another male or female partner (though some of them engage in 'auto-eroticism'). They may comprise 1% of the world's population. Cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asexuality>. Note also that 0,1 to 0,2% (i.e. one or two in a thousand) children are born as neither fully male nor female but as 'intersexual', formerly called hermaphrodite. Intersex is again not a uniform biological condition but consists of several subtypes. Cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersex>

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Zethu Matebeni's paper, Program and Book of Abstracts, pp. 71-72

# AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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Even so, the global movement towards greater gender equality and tolerance of sexual diversity seems a largely autonomous process, precisely because it is a side effect of humanity's continuing population explosion. It seems that engaged feminist and LGTB activism can contribute little to speed it up, and hegemonic masculinity to retard it, let alone stop it. It also seems that either way, religion plays only a very minor part in it, despite this conference and all the papers that were read in it. As Danoye Oguntula Laguda writes: 'religious beliefs do not regulate sexual engagements of Nigerian youths but rather it is the social environment that determines it'.<sup>97</sup> This analysis may therefore constitute a middle ground between the two camps, and perhaps serve as a bridge across the gap between them.

## *In conclusion*

Despite this sobering, perhaps too minimalistic final statement, I trust that my report shows that this was a magnificent, well organized AASR conference in a great setting in which we all felt most welcome. The Conference Organizer, Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, and her Local Organizing Committee, are to be applauded for, and congratulated



Your reporter getting ready for a meal

with this big feat: this conference on the hot issue of gender inequality and lack of protection of sexual diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa and its Diaspora. Hopefully, quite a number of the papers presented will be submitted after careful revision for a strict peer review and be collected in one or more volumes of high academic quality that move research in these important areas forward.

## *Epilogue*

Lastly, I am most sorry it took me so long to complete this review, thereby delaying the publication of AASR Bulletin 45 for two and a half months. My sincere apologies!

Bunnik, 11.02.2017



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<sup>97</sup> Cf. Program and Book of Abstracts, p. 116

AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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Corey Williams

AASR AT THE  
2016 AAR/SBL CONFERENCE  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS,  
19-22 NOVEMBER 2016

Each year the AASR sponsors multiple panels at the joint American Academy of Religion (AAR) and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) conference. This year the conference will be in San Antonio, TX, USA, from 19-22 November 2016. See below for information regarding AASR sponsored panels, as well as information on panels sponsored by the African Religions Group that will also be of interest to AASR members. In addition to the panels, we are also planning a dinner for Saturday, 19 November, at 19:00. The location is to be determined, but we will meet immediately following the AASR panel ('Eschatology and African Religions'), which ends at 18:30.

*Eschatology and African Religions*

Esther Acolatse, Duke University, Presiding

Saturday – 4:00 PM-6:30 PM, Grand Hyatt-Lone Star F (2nd Level)

Throughout the world, prophets of doom have been characterized and caricatured by their signs proclaiming, "The end is nigh!" They are espousing an eschatological vision—they have a sense that the end of the world as we know it could be just around the corner. Yet many scholars have noted that eschatology is largely absent from African traditional religion. African religions tend to focus on the "here and now," safeguarding the stability of community life. Even in the case of ancestor veneration, African religionists are not looking backward as much as securing right relations between the living and the dead to ensure the fertility and security of the community. Nevertheless, in the past century, most of Africa has come in contact with Islam or Christianity—both of which are religions with strong eschatological visions. Papers on this panel offer analyses of ways African traditional religions are responding to eschatological concerns; and how the Christian and Muslim eschatological notions are incorporated to cast new eschatological visions to meet uniquely African interests.

*Papers*

= Loreen Maseno, Maseno University, and Kupakwashe Mtata, University of Bayreuth, 'Eschatological Prophecies: Female Pentecostal-Charismatic Preachers Self-Legitimation in Africa'

= Chamamah J Kaunda, University of South Africa, 'The Bemba Eschatology and Socio-Relational Evolution: Implications for Bemba Christians in Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zambia'

= Tim Carey, Boston College, '"That All May Have Life, and Have It Abundantly": Inter-Religious Perspectives of HIV and AIDS in Eastern Africa within Catholicism and Sunni Islam'

Responding: Elochukwu Eugene Uzukwu, Duquesne University

We will meet for the AASR dinner immediately following the session.

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

### *Debility and Personhood in African Religions*

Lovemore Togarasei, University of Botswana, Presiding

Sunday – 3:00 PM-4:30 PM, Grand Hyatt-Bonham B (3rd Level)

Across the continent of Africa, many associate the condition of debility and/or physical “abnormality” with spiritual and moral concerns. Such conditions might result from a religious transgression, as in the case of neglected ancestors, or they might result from spiritual “foul play” in the case of witchcraft. Some consider physical difference to be a source of power, which has both positive and negative implications. This panel explores the intersections of personhood, debility/physical abnormality, and religion from various perspectives and from several regions in Africa examining how African religions define and diagnose debility and physical abnormality, and how they account for the personhood of disabled people, while paying attention to analysis of both the positive and negative social implications of debility and physical abnormality.

### *Papers:*

= Danoye Oguntola-Laguda, Lagos State University, ‘Omoluabi: A Critical Analysis of Yoruba Concept of Person’

= Abimbola Adelakun, University of Texas, ‘Prosperity Gospel and the Exorcism of Debility’

Responding: Nathanael Homewood, Rice University

### *AASR Business Meeting*

Elias Kifon Bongmba, Rice University, and Corey Williams, Leiden University

### *Co-sponsored session with the African Religions Group: The Good Life and Social Justice in Africa: Ethical and Religious Responses to Exclusion*

Monday – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM, Grand Hyatt-Bonham B (3rd Level)

The papers in this session explore various approaches to the Good, as well as tensions among them, that currently prevail on the African continent. Against the New Atheists’ assumption that religion is the root of all evil, the papers pursue ways in which African ethical and religious systems educate pupils, empower persons, enfranchise citizens, enhance health, expand rights, or fulfill other goals even as they question simplistic understandings of what is best in life. The papers engage these questions in a variety of contexts – from indigenous communities in Cameroon to a Kenyan refugee camp – and from a variety of methodological perspectives. This co-sponsored session is a response to the theme of the AAR 2016 meetings, ‘Revolutionary Love’, and to the AAR’s call for plenary sessions over the next three years on the theme of religion and hatred. (The session will be followed by the business meeting of the African Religions Group.)

### *Papers*

= Ann K Riggs, Loyola University, Chicago. ‘The Good Life in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya’

= David Ngong, Stillman College, ‘Ground Cargo and the Good Life: A Cameroonian Conception of Material Things’

= Ladislav Nsengiyumva, Boston College, ‘African Theology of Disease: Understanding the Theological Meaning of Life from Abundant Life to Physical and Mental Afflictions’

### *African Religions Group Business Meeting*

Adriaan van Klinken, University of Leeds

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

In addition to the AASR sponsored panels, there are also a number of panels sponsored by the African Religions Group that will certainly be of interest.

African Religions Group:

= *Researching Religion in Africa: Methodological Contributions and Challenges to Religious Studies*

Adriaan van Klinken, University of Leeds, Presiding

Saturday – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM, Grand Hyatt-Bowie C (2nd Level)

= *Researching Religion in Africa: Ethnographic, Linguistic, Theological, and Philosophical Approaches and Reflections*

Devaka Premawardhana, Colorado College, Presiding

Sunday – 9:00 AM-11:30 AM, Grand Hyatt-Bowie B (2nd Level)

African Religions Group and Indigenous Religious Traditions Group:

*Roundtable on Robert Baum's West Africa's Women of God: Alinesitoué and the Diola Prophetic Tradition* (Indiana University Press, 2015)

Dianna Bell, Vanderbilt University, Presiding

Monday – 1:00 PM-3:30 PM, Convention Center-212B (2nd Level – West)

African Religions Group and Lesbian-Feminisms and Religion Group:

*African Responses to Violence in the Realms of Gender and Sexuality: Action, Ethics, Popular Art, and Religion*

Tuesday – 8:30 AM-10:00 AM, Grand Hyatt-Bonham B (3rd Level)

## **Annual AAR/SBL Conference**

**San Antonio, TX, USA**

**Sunday, 20 November 2016**

### ***General Meeting Tentative Agenda***

1. Opening and Welcome
2. Report from President
3. Report from General Secretary
4. Report from Webmasters
5. AASR e-Journal
6. Update on the Platvoet Festschrift
7. Various Issues and Proposals:
  - Conference Papers
  - Feedback from Ghana 2016
  - Co-sponsored session with the Quaker Studies Group
  - Steering Committee for AASR panels at annual ASA conference
8. Pre-planning for Yaoundé conference in 2018
9. Closing

AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Muhammed Haron  
(University of Botswana)  
& Barend Prinsloo  
(North-West University, South Africa)

BEYOND A REPORT (ON):  
THE RISE OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM  
(IN AND BEYOND AFRICA)  
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY,  
POTCHEFSTROOM, SOUTH AFRICA,  
10-11 MARCH 2016

*Introduction*

More than four decades ago John Mbiti (1970) observed that Africa was notoriously religious. Mbiti based himself on his insights and experiences with the continent's diverse ethnic and linguistic communities. Mbiti deliberately expressed this idea at a time when secularism had deepened and extended its roots into the heart of Western Europe and the Americas. What this implied was that though the secularization process affected and changed the urban African's outlook towards religion, the rural African reflected a deep religiosity that this process could not dislodge (see Mach *e.a.* 2006) and it was an attitude that had also disappeared from that found among the European/American rural societies. These societies, according to sociological surveys conducted by scholars such as Bryan Wilson (1966), abandoned and sidestepped religion for a preferred secular lifestyle (see Pew Research Center surveys 2007;<sup>98</sup> International Social Survey Program – Religion Survey 2008).<sup>99</sup>

But whilst the secularization process was making its way across the world and invaded the respective continents of Africa and Asia where communities were accommodating and adapting to the idea that God should be a person's private matter and that the public sphere should be freed from God and religion (Cesari 2015; Crabtree 2011; Bruce 1996), African societies by and large remained faithful to their (African) religious traditions; this was even towards the end of the nineteenth century when some theorists such as Nietzsche and Marx ventured boldly to predict the death of religion as a public player (Berger 1967; 2008). These theorists and their followers were however rudely shocked when religion returned to the centre of public life by the end of the 1970s in countries such as Iran and Nicaragua where members of the Muslim and Christian clergy participated in the downfall of dictators such as the Shah Reza Pahlavi (d.1980) and the Samosa government's respectively (see Casanova 1994; Hecllo & McClay 2003).

In the aftermath of these developments and from within religiously oriented communities certain strands of thinking and brands of theologies began to rear their heads; these were of the fundamentalist type that started to rattle and scuttle traditional thinking through their unaccommodating actions; deeds that were as a result of their jaundiced interpretations of their respective

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. <http://www.pewresearch.org/category/publications/2007/>

<sup>99</sup> Cf. <http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/index.jsp?object=http://zacat.gesis.org/obj/fStudy/ZA4950>

sacred texts. And on the back of these groups, there were those who were more radical and more extremist in their behaviour and approach towards their co-religionists. Consequently, the traditional, conservative and moderate voices were silenced by these unwelcome radicals/extremists; groups and organizations that brazenly manipulated their sacred texts in order to achieve their type of understanding of who should be considered in the fold and who should be regarded outside the fold of Islam.

The extremist person who attributes his/her actions to his/her chosen interpretation is someone who is far from moderate and mediocre; he/she is someone who was and remains fearlessly radical and who audaciously too takes on extremist tendencies; characteristics that he/she display and act out in such a manner that they are totally out of sync and against the very divine law that he/she subscribes to. Despite being in the minority, these extremists were and continue to be exceedingly vocal in expressing their particular understanding of their tradition; and as a result of this posture, it forced the traditional leadership to guardedly respond to them for fear of being killed or for being branded as hypocrites for not supporting and abetting their so-called 'righteous' cause. The extremists' global and continental presence has indeed raised the eye-browse of the governments, civil society and the private sector to such an extent that this phenomenon has become concern of the academia, the intelligence academies, security think tanks and a number of other stakeholders.

During the past two years symposia and conferences such as the Dutch funded 'Religion and Radicalization in Africa' Conference (September 2015), UN Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism: The Way Forward (April 2016), the Australian Catholic University's Colloquium on Violence and Religion (July 2016) and Cornell University's forthcoming 'Development, Extremism, Security, and the State in Africa' (October 2016) have been and are being held to explore this topic with the idea of not only comprehending its rise and spread but to more importantly find out ways and means to combat and neutralize it wherever and whenever it rears its head. So far it appears that governments and their security apparatus failed to effectively counter it and more studies are being undertaken to investigate the different dimension.

South Africa's Northwest University (NWU) hosted a workshop in which it had numerous keynote speakers who addressed the theme from a variety of angles. The rationale was partly based upon the understanding that Southern Africa like other regions has porous borders that have been used by illegal smugglers, human traffickers, refugees, and other elements such as extremists and terrorists who are seeking safe havens and protection from the security authorities from whence they came. Many of them travelled thousands of kilometres southwards starting their journeys from the North, the West and the Horn of Africa.

The purpose of this report is to basically summarize some of the salient ideas of all the presenters at this significant workshop and to *en passant* briefly mention some of the responses that came from its interactive audience who hailed from different sectors of South Africa's society; some came from think tanks, others from security clusters and another set from the academia. And it also shows to what extent the theme was dealt with and why the gaps that should have been considered for such a workshop were noticeably absent. Perhaps it might be useful to begin this report with a definition and an explanation of what is understood by 'religious extremism' in general and 'Islamic extremism' in particular.

### *Religious Extremism: Its Definition and Explanation*

When scanning a number of published texts that address this issue one notes that there are varied insights and explanations. This confusion may be attributed to the fact that over the past few de-

cedes since religion has come under the microscope theorists associated with prominent Think Tanks such as the USA based Rand Corporation,<sup>100</sup> these have come up with typologies that labelled religious communities, groups and organizations according to the criteria that they constructed. Though one might not agree with their categorization, it has occasionally assisted in gaining some understanding regarding the reasons why the one group differs from another and what the arguments are for the theological differences that they espouse.

Notwithstanding this, a quick reflection upon selected definitions that have been proffered so that one may get a sense of their meaning and implications shows that they display characteristics of an extremist when applied to a person or a group. Since the concept ‘extremism’ is the first keyword one may refer to Wesley Wildman’s (2011) definition. The latter stated that it is a concept that reflects a set of “ideological beliefs and behaviours (that are) well beyond the boundaries of the ‘normal’ in a political, cultural, religious, or moral context”. Alar Klip (2011) also latched onto this idea when he addressed it as well. He observed that it was “defined as the opposite of that which functions as the normative truth of society”. And before that, he remarked that it is the “opposite of what is considered to be ordinary, common and prevalent” (his emphasis).

With these explanations, one may now turn to the term ‘religious extremism’ that has been cogently captured by Charles Liebman (1983) who made reference to the Jewish tradition. He stated in his abstract that the term may be defined as “(t)he desire to expand the scope, detail, and strictness of the religious law; social isolation and the rejection of the surrounding culture”. He went further and added: “Religious extremism is an impulse or an orientation which, when objectified in persons and institutions, is invariably moderated”.

Being a kind of impulse or an orientation as mentioned by Liebman, one noted that Johnson (2007) described an Islamic extremist as someone who belongs to a group of “Individuals (who are) committed to restructuring political society in accordance with their vision of Islamic law and willing to use violence to achieve their goals; (and here one finds) three types irredentist, national and transnational”. The first he defined as a person who “seeks to regain land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation.” The second is the one who devoted his/her energies “to combating Muslim governments considered impious or apostate”. And the third is an individual who casts his/her sights beyond the nation-state’s borders and thus “transcends national boundaries; also called global terrorists or global jihadists”.

From Johnson’s typology, one may conclude that ‘Islamic extremism’ – a rather problematic and contentious term - makes reference to the behaviour of a Muslim that deliberately veered away from the moderate and middle-of-the-road position when it comes to dealing with various aspects of human life. He/she purposely adopted an ‘Islamic extremist’ posture towards society – whether the members of that society belong to a predominantly Muslim one or for part of a non-Muslim society as a religious minority. He/she did and do so in order to impose his/her ideals or rather his/her brand of interpretation of Islam’s fundamental sacred texts (i.e. the Qur’an – God’s sacred words that were revealed to Prophet Muhammad and the Hadith that consists of the latter’s statements and deeds).

What this essentially implied was that Muslim extremists – a term, though an oxymoron, that is preferred by one of the authors of this report - calculatingly chose to expediently underline their extremist approach. This they backed up by, on the one hand, publicly stressing their fundamentalist insights and, on the other, by opportunely pursuing their radical stance in a highly committed fashion in order to demonstrate their fanatical religiosity. Put differently, they crave to ar-

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. <http://www.rand.org/>

rogantly display and visibly show that they are more faithful and devoted than their mildly mannered conservative co-religionists when it comes to adhering to the mentioned sacred texts. In fact their blind attachment to these texts is based upon their literal understanding of their contents and as a consequence they also apply this understanding on a day-to-day basis without questioning the rationale for adhering to this way of life whether they reside in a majority Muslim society (such as Egypt and Indonesia) or whether they live in a Muslim minority community (such as India and South Africa).

Now alongside their literalist interpretation and application, they like their co-religionists yearn to strictly – and also blindly – conform to Islam’s legal system - known in Muslim circles as the shari’a – with the passionate longing that their dutiful deeds would eventually grant them a home in paradise; a place that God solemnly promised to give them when they die. So in order to achieve that goal whilst in this temporary abode they zealously advocate a fundamentalist stance that goes far beyond what the traditional Muslim community wish. For them, the ultimate objective is to set up and establish an ‘Islamic state’ wherein all their ideals in this life would be met. Though this might be considered ‘a pipe dream’ by many who oppose their model and ideal, they firmly believe that it’s a doable project: one that they and everyone else should strive for even if they not able to witness its formation in their lifetime.

They opine with solid conviction that even if it does not happen during their lifetime, then it will certainly happen during the lifetime of the generations to come. However, they expressed the view that in order for them to reach that goal they should undertake exacting *jihad* even if it means getting killed (i.e. become a *shahid* [a martyr]) in the process of doing so. In other words and in their myopic view, it is a righteous act that would help them to achieve that particular noble aspiration (i.e. the formation of an Islamic state) and, of course, God’s eternal blessings. As far as they are concerned, they should make continuous efforts to accomplish that goal and even if that does not happen then the belief is that God will definitely reward them in the Hereafter. So from this one may gather that eschatological beliefs and understanding play a critical role in their world-view. It is indeed a theological ingredient that scholars/researchers should factor in when evaluating their ideas and behaviour.

Scholars who have been studying recent manifestations of Muslim extremism such as Syria/Iraq’s Islamic State (IS), Nigeria’s Boko Haram (BH) and Somalia’s Al-Shabaab (AS) proved that each of these extremist groups have been and continue to be a major security threat not only in the nation-states where they began their lives but far beyond the borders within which they traditionally operate. In other word, they showed that their terroristic tentacles have reached out to states across continents and this places international peace and human security in constant jeopardy. Since this is the case, the organizers of this workshop stated that “The primary aim of the conference is to investigate the contemporary impact and evolving nature of Islamic extremism, especially on Africa and South Africa”. But for them to achieve their aims they decidedly created an opportunity that would lend itself to extensive discussions and debates with international and national experts who addressed the broad theme of ‘Islamic extremism’. Some of them have revealed these in their studies and highlighted them in their circulated online reports and published articles.

### *The Workshop’s Rationale*

The main objective of comprehending Islamic extremism as a phenomenon was ‘to investigate and understand the phenomenon in its complexity’. For the workshop to do so the organizers indicated that as a consequence of Islamic extremism’s rapid rise and impact, its presenters have

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

been invited to undertake an analysis by, among others, undertaking ‘an ontological approach’. This is a procedure that would reflect upon Islamic extremism’s ‘origins, aims, regional spread, and capacities’.

Along with this approach, the presenters analyzed it from two dimensions; one from a religious viewpoint, and the other from a political perspective. While some of the presenters investigated ‘its inner-workings and operational approach’, others made an effort to comprehend the extent to which it is a threat to state security, on the one hand, and to what degree it rattled and undermined international peace, on the other. With this in mind, the organizers identified critical themes that the workshop set out to explore; these would, in turn, be in the form of facilitated discussions that would follow each keynote address.

The keynote themes that were identified and addressed were:

- Religious Eschatology and Islamic History Islamic history;
- Islamic Extremism in South Africa;
- Islamic Extremism around the Globe; and
- The Islamic State.

### *Its Presenters and Their Topics*

The workshop was officially opened by Prof Dr. Rantoa Letšosa NWU’s Vice-Rector Teaching-Learning (Potchefstroom Campus) before Dr. Barend Prinsloo, the present NWU’s Head of Security Studies and Management and the main organizer of the workshop, appropriately presented his Thematic Address in which he provocatively posed the question by asking rhetorically whether ‘Islamic Extremism: (is) A Misunderstood Term?’. Dr. Prinsloo’s presentation was indeed pivotal because it set the tone for the rest of the workshop. He started out by making a pertinent point and that is that ‘dealing with Islamic Extremism without considering the meaning and context of the term itself leads to a narrow understanding of the phenomenon and its implications’.

Dr. Prinsloo’s opening address thus argued quite correctly that ‘describing Islamic extremism in (related) terms such as ‘terrorism’ and ‘Islamic radicalisation’ ... require (some) reactive interventions [such as counter-terrorism and military measures] by governments to combat this form of extremism’. Dr. Prinsloo noted that it was not only governments which were guilty of misunderstanding and misrepresenting terminology but that it was also misused and abused to great effect by extremist groups. For example he explained that in June 2014, the leader of Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared the areas of northern Iraq and eastern Syria to be a single Islamic state (or “caliphate”), with himself as caliph, or supreme political and religious leader. Upon declaring the caliphate, ISIS changed its name simply to the Islamic State (IS), claiming that all other Muslim communities should pay homage to IS as the one true Islamic State. By using the word “caliph”, Al-Baghdadi claimed authority over all Muslims worldwide. Notably, the proclamation of the IS as a caliphate is perhaps their most profound manner in which it claimed legitimacy and asserted itself as the vanguard of Islam. Dr. Prinsloo pointed out that for Muslims in general and for IS members in particular, a caliphate is more than just a political entity; it is a vehicle for (eternal) salvation. By selling an alternative political, religious and even economic system to young Muslim people, IS then became an attractive destination for a sizeable number of dysfunctional and dissatisfied young Muslims.

For the workshop, Dr. Prinsloo analyzed this phenomenon’s context with the sole objective of providing additional insight that would assist in identifying possible solutions that would tackle and combat religious extremism in general and Islamic Extremism in particular. In Dr.

Prinsloo's opinion this may – and quite rightly so – prompt measures to be considered and taken by governments in order to not only secure sustainable approaches in combating it but to possibly nail it in the bud so that there this phenomenon does not recur nationally, regionally or continentally.

Dr. Prinsloo's intellectual engagement with this concept and particularly his rhetorical question that was his papers' title caused the audience to raise more questions. One of them is how do the Muslim extremists comprehend Islamic eschatology or rather how does this type of theology drive them to act, at times, extremely badly even though their actions are ethically circumscribed by Islamic law - a legal system that demands that an individual should always behave morally and ethically no matter what his/her status is or in what circumstances he/she finds him/herself. It is indeed this issue that drew the attention of the audience.

*Keynote Theme One: Religious Eschatology and Islamic History*

The first speaker to address 'Islamic Eschatology' as a crucial topic at this workshop was Ohio State's, Dr. Timothy R. Furnish.<sup>101</sup> Furnish is a conservative Christian scholar who specializes in Islamic history and is the author of *Sects, Lies and the Caliphate: 10 Years of Observations on Islam* that complements his *Ten Years Captivation with the Mahdi's Camps*. Dr. Furnish mentioned that when one considers the rationale behind religiopolitical violence in the Muslim world then one should reflect back on Islam's eschatological movements that resemble Christian ones. He is indeed right when he underscored the importance of this topic in relation to the Muslim extremist mind-set. No researcher can ignore the fact that eschatological subjects are central to these extremist groups and since this is the case the scholar should study these ideas and link them to the activities of these movements.

Simplistically put, these movements emerged over time and were bent on establishing an environment that is to be ruled according to *shari'a*. At the 'end of time,' Jesus along with the Mahdi will appear to battle Dajjal, a representative of Satan, until the final end. Dr. Furnish argued that ISIS is one such contemporary group that sought and still seeks ways to bring this eschatological set-up about; and the movement does so through enacting various (deviant) acts; acts that are not at all sanctioned by Islam's legal system as such but that have undoubtedly caused mayhem in the Middle East. Dr. Furnish not only made reference to ISIS but also to Sudan's Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad bin Abd Allah (1844-1885) who led an earlier African Muslim movement that, like similar other groups, cleverly 'hotwire(d) the apocalypse' scenario and that used that scenario to warn their co-religionists and others about what awaits them in the Hereafter if one continued to fight in God's path against evil and its representations. Dr. Furnish, being intimately familiar with the house of Islam and its history, drew a variety of examples to make the connection between their extremist mindsets and their 'theologies of hate' as embedded in their thinking; ideas that are not necessarily shared by the majority of traditionally minded Muslims.

The second presenter in the first section was NWU's Dr. Timothy van Aarde who has been trained in missionary work. He reflected upon *The Relationship between State and Religion in Christianity, Islam and Judaism and Its Influence on Politics*. Despite the broad title Dr. van Aarde concentrated his focus on an examination of the relationship, on the one hand, of Islam and History, and, on the other, compared its connection with Christianity and Western history. The reason for this approach was to demonstrate to what degree ISIS was a spin-off of either the

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. <http://mahdiwatch.org/id1.html>

process of modernism or that of postmodernity and as a consequence of certain historical outcomes such as the clashes of worldviews. Though there might be some truth in this, the interconnection between these two religious traditions has over the centuries been complex and problematic; and the reason for this may be attributed to numerous factors that were at play over this period.

Notwithstanding this, whilst van Aarde addressed an important topic, the coverage was too broad and it was thus difficult for the presenter to adequately deal with the relationship between religion (as represented by the three Semitic traditions) and the state. Nonetheless, he discussed a catalogue of issues such as the close connection between Christianity and Islam in this global world, political identity, and religious reform, and the authority of Islam before he looked at Saudi Arabia to highlight the nexus between religion and the state. As a case study Saudi Arabia is a nation-state where the power lies and continues to reside in the monarchy's broad Bedouin hands. Though Dr. van Aarde employed it as a useful example of religion-state relations in the Muslim heartlands, one cannot consider this as an appropriate model in such a debate, because the basic argument is premised on the fact that the Saudi state served the sole interest of its monarchical government rather than its people.

In this Muslim state, which cannot claim to be an 'Islamic state' (and is not to be confused with ISIS) in the traditional understanding of the term, its citizens have generally little or no say; and being a Wahhabite oriented state as compared to other Muslim states in the region, its religious policies regarding various aspects have come under close scrutiny and the general conclusion has been that it is a state that has been partly responsible for abetting and supporting extremist thinking and practices that blatantly disregard divergent theological schools and that destroy, among others, significant historical heritage sites.

Professor Naas Ferreira, who spoke about Religious radicalism ... Blame it on the father ... and who is a NWU staff member, was the third speaker for this session. Prof. Ferreira posed a theologically problematic question when he asked 'Which of the three monotheistic Abrahamic religions..., represented the true spiritual legacy of the historic Abraham...? He expressed confidently that 'all three ... were [and still are] in some way involved in the radicalized religious turmoil the world has experienced ... in the present.' Prof. Ferreira, whose interest was to demystify the confused reality, placed the blame for this persistent old-age religious conflict at Abraham's door. The latter's mistake/sin came to the fore through the aspirations of his assorted offspring (i.e. the adherents of the three different traditions). So the key issue at hand, he argued, was to identify the root cause and determine which of these three traditions represents the actual spiritual Abrahamic legacy. Well, Prof. Ferreira's presentation undoubtedly raised questions as regards its connection with the workshop's specific focus and with regards to the future of religious extremism as such. In spite of its objective, the paper could still have fitted in had it redirected itself with the workshop's aims in mind.

### *Keynote Theme Two: Islamic Extremism in South Africa*

The theme for the second session shifted the focus to South Africa where this phenomenon reared its heads in different forms on varied occasions. One of the earliest organizations that displayed characteristics of extremism was Qibla Mass Movement. It was an organization that was spearheaded since its inception by Imam Achmat Cassiem who was also a member of the Pan Africanist Congress. It was subsequently followed by a related but dissimilar organization, namely People against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD). Nonetheless, during the current period, South Africa was accused of having become a possible 'safe haven' for members of

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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extremists groups based in and beyond the Middle East and as a consequence, the USA Embassy usually used its channels to sent out alerts to African governments about possible attacks that would occur. One such example was prior to the month of fasting that started sometime after this workshop took place. Interestingly, in response to this alert, the South African intelligence agents countered by publicizing that the alert was a false alarm. They stated that they would have known if such an activity was to happen. Well since South Africa was considered a vulnerable state it was an issue that was of concern and that had to be tackled.

The first to address the audience was Al Jama-ah Political Party's, Mr. Ganief Hendricks. Hendricks was a Cape Town based politician and a community activist who phrased his question with intent when he asked: Why isolate Islamic extremism? Mr. Hendricks expectedly followed this up by frankly stating that he had a major problem with the term's use. He thus zoomed in on the concept extremism. He skilfully argued that it was coined in order to describe the behaviour of those who undertook suicide missions such as (a) the well-known Japanese kamikaze missions during Pearl Harbour and (b) individuals who brazenly don suicide vests with explosives with the sole purpose of setting it off in a public space in order to kill as many people as possible. In these instances, the one who is on this mission is of the belief that he/she is doing for 'a good cause.'

He noted that these, in addition to the hijacking of planes, buses and trains and the barbaric beheadings by ISIS members, further describe the nature of extremism. He added that "requiring women to wear the *niqab* (i.e. the veil) and men to have beards are not (reflections of) extremism." And he added that "the pieties of Shi'ism, Sunnism, strains of Sunnism like Salafism is not the Islamic extremism that has earned the wrath of those inclined to oppose Islam." As far as Mr. Hendricks was concerned the term was indeed an oxymoron and since this is the case it is a contradiction in terms that does not make any sense at all. Bearing these points in mind, Mr. Hendricks argued that if the conference's theme referred to the mentioned activities (e.g. suicide missions, hijackings, and beheadings) then there is no shred of evidence that these have taken or are taking place on South African soil. He continued by remarking that anyone attempting to go beyond that and searching for any such behaviour "is farfetched and goes beyond reason."

He emphasized that when a person attempts to seek out Friday sermons, to capture video lectures, and to identify clandestine *madrassas* (i.e. Muslim schools) that indirectly call for an individual to take up arms and when he/she formally demands that these be severely dealt with, then that individual is out of place in making such a request. The reason for this view, he averred, is based upon the fact that everyone who resides in South Africa is constitutionally protected and guaranteed freedom of association and freedom of speech. Mr. Hendricks strongly opined "that there is no threat to State Security in South Africa". And he added, "that Muslims will not exhibit extreme behaviour because of the religion that they practice." He claimed that "Muslims have not exhibited such behaviour in over 300 years and to discuss the rise of such behaviour in South Africa in 2016 is a blot against Muslims who continue to position themselves as the most peace loving in the country."

Whilst one might be tempted to partially agree with Mr. Hendricks' claim, it is an issue that should not be taken lightly and it is an act that should be brought to the attention and be investigated by the relevant authorities. The argument is that since all live in a globalized world any possible activity that displays abnormal or uncanny behaviour needs to be addressed for the safety of everyone. It is indeed agreed that each person is guaranteed freedom of speech but he/she should not take advantage of the legal instruments when the intent is to cause harm or to perform acts that are totally against the norm. Though Mr. Hendricks' submission was somewhat

understandable, one cannot fully agree with his reading and interpretation of South African Muslim history since there were incidences that reflected violent behaviour by Muslim individuals/groups. Be that as it may, he was questioned about some of his controversial remarks during the question and answers session.

Before moving on to the next speaker's presentation one should quickly mention that Mr. Hendricks, like Dr. Ferreira who invoked the name of Christ at the end of his presentation as if it was a sort of a sermon, boldly declared that "Islam is a perfect religion and when God completed the perfect religion He named it 'Islam'." He went on to assert that "Islam in Arabic means submission (and/or), peace and the middle way (and [it implies that one should] surrender to God's will in peace)." With this, as part of Mr. Hendrick's submission, he added that God's will is the Law that governs existence.

The second speaker in this section was the University of Botswana's Prof Muhammed Haron.<sup>102</sup> He focused on South Africa's Muslim Extremism. He like other presenters also raised the question as to whether this phenomenon is A Myth or a Reality? He first defined and placed 'Muslim extremism' within a global context, and thereafter he reflected on the literatures that have appeared over the past few years and on one that unpacked this phenomenon in some detail. In the penultimate section, he responded to the question whether 'the rise of Muslim extremism' is a reality or just a myth within the South African environment. He appropriated 'critical theory' as a conceptual frame within which to understand these developments and outcomes.

Afro-Middle East Centre's Mr. Na'eem Jeenah<sup>103</sup> was asked to respond to 'Why does Islamic extremism flourish, and why it is useful?' Mr. Jeenah, as usual, demonstrated his ability to skilfully reply to these questions. Nevertheless, Mr. Jeenah took the controversial stance that during times such as Apartheid, the taking up of arms was justified by some Muslims. He pointed out that forms of radical Islamic extremism do exist in present-day South Africa even though they do not pose a threat to the general society and the state. He, however, underscored the negative impact of radical ideas within the Muslim community. He agreed with Dr. Prinsloo that it was the state which determined what extremism was. And it is this dynamic within the Muslim world which allowed certain factors to flourish and grow into 'Islamic extremism'. Mr. Jeenah, who regarded himself as a Muslim radical, continued by reflecting upon the connection between Muslim extremists' thought and violent acts in order to contextualize Islamic extremism. Mr. Jeenah listed a few factors that gave rise to it. Among the inventory that he identified were the crisis of identity, the lack of legitimate rules, reducing the space for religion, fate of Middle East uprisings and globalization. Alongside these, he also mentioned structural adjustment and the flow of global capital since the 1980s, a period during which there was religious suppression and when nation-states were far from democratic.

Groups/organizations, Mr. Jeenah pointed out, had justifiable grievances against some of these nation-states and as such, they latched onto ideological systems that pushed and drove their politico-religious agendas. This was also at the time when the USA and its allies, for example, turned a blind eye to groups such as Afghanistan's Taliban that were later found guilty of violent acts and extremist behaviour. The USA and the Allies expediently disregarded their acts because they had the USSR as a common enemy and it was of paramount importance to defeat this enemy first before giving attention to grievances and any other related issue. What one would like Jeenah to have focused on was, at least, one case study to have demonstrated its resilience and to

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. <https://ub-bw.academia.edu/MuhammedHaron> ; <https://haronm.wordpress.com/biodata-qualifications/>

<sup>103</sup> Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Na%27eem\\_Jeenah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Na%27eem_Jeenah)

have analyzed the reasons for its persistent presence by considering a few religio-theological factors.

### *Keynote Theme Three: Islamic Extremism around the globe*

Dr. Volodymyr Riabtsev, who is attached to Ukraine's Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry, was the first of three speakers that concentrated on a few case studies. For this workshop, Dr. Riabtsev probed Assessing the Threats of Islamic Extremism in Ukraine. He pointed out that in the 2000s Ukraine did not perceive Islamic radicalism to be a threat to the national security of the Ukraine. He explained that a 2010 study which was undertaken by experts, who were associated with the Design Basis Threat for Nuclear Installations project, concluded that the possible threat of extremists was absent. In fact, during 2009 the Ministry of Interior devised a legal instrument to ban extremist organizations. But this instrument could not be finalized because those, who were involved in constructing it, clashed over their terminologies and their meanings. So by the end of 2015, the instrument was not yet approved. This coincided with the time the Ukraine's Ministry of Defence to also adopt a similar stance. The latter argued that since 'radical Islamists' were not a threat to the nuclear installations or any other soft target, the need to implement a legal instrument to ban them was not necessary. He further explained that with the recent annexation of Crimea by Russian forces, many Muslims moved out of Crimea to Ukraine and also declared 'war' against the Russians. Many extremist groups, such as IS are recruiting individuals from this Muslim community. Ironically, even though the Muslim community was apprehensive against Russia, the Ukrainian government also outlawed Muslim extremism and as a result Muslims now find themselves, as Ukrainians, to be a target of Muslim extremist groups. Apart from sharing his insights, Dr. Riabtsev's presentation contained an invaluable advice for the South African government and that is: if the government decided to specifically outlaw Muslim extremists, it may find itself becoming a target with some 'new enemies' in sight.

Though Dr. Riabtsev did not express his disappointment at the findings and the position of the Ministry of Defence, he maintained that the Muslim communities in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (located within the Ukraine governmental system) who number more than a quarter million do have groups within their midst that reflected extremist tendencies; and in Dr. Riabtsev's opinion they are the ones along with ISIS, the Turkish Grey Wolves and Tatar extremists that the state authorities should be wary of. Since Dr. Riabtsev admitted to these outcomes, the question that one wished to have asked the presenter was: if key Ministries reached definitive conclusions that the threat is basically non-existent in the Ukraine, why then did he give his attention to what might be described as a non-issue? One's guess is that Dr. Riabtsev seemed to have been quite convinced that it was and remains an issue that needs all the attention that it deserves during this volatile period in and beyond the Middle East.

Dr. Riabtsev's speculative study was followed by a similar one that was presented by Mr. Rene Kanayama – a Japanese national who is also a member of the International Academy of Social Technologies at Russia's St. Petersburg.<sup>104</sup> Mr. Kanayama critically reflected on the Rise of Islamic Radicalism in Asia: Its Impact on Japan. Mr. Kanayama acknowledged that Japan, which has not been immune from its home-grown extremist groups, has a small population of just over 10,000 Muslims who form part of the low-income migrating workforce. Their numbers have not grown in any dramatic manner as a result of Japan's stringent laws regarding assimila-

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. [http://www.acsis.org/NF/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=164](http://www.acsis.org/NF/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=164)

tion and conversion. Over the years Japan has, however, had good bilateral relationship with predominantly Muslim states. He argued that even though Japan is a polytheistic society, they have not been unaffected by the Islamic Extremism, mainly through the abduction of their nationals around the world. He ascribed these actions against Japan as a result of the increased involvement of Japan in international conflict. Through the provision of aid and funding to countries fighting against Islamic extremists, Japan is perceived as a strong US ally, and also because of the continued overlap of Japan's overseas interests and perceived interference with Islamic radicalism.

From Mr. Kanayama's overall presentation it appears that the threat from Muslim extremists is not imminent. He, moreover, communicated his concerns for what might happen in the years ahead. Here he had the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in mind. Mr. Kanayama noted that Japan's foreign policy had inherent weaknesses that needed to be tackled; if not then this might be used as a convenient loop-hole for potential extremists. He, furthermore, stated that Japanese nationals have not been immune from attacks when on trips to the Muslim heartlands. Whilst one tries to appreciate Mr. Kanayama's pro-active stance in wanting to prevent possible attacks from potential extremists who reside in South Asia and Southeast Asia where they (possibly) exist in sizeable numbers, he has no convincing data to support his arguments and this is rather problematic when addressing this significant topic.

Dr. Becky Omwenga expressed her feelings regarding Islam and Al-Shabaab of Kenya (by giving her attention to) The Pitfalls of Muslim Scholars, Clerics, and (Islam's) Adherents. Dr. Omwenga underlined that though many of Kenya's Muslim theologians and scholars reject this phenomenon she lamented that no concerted effort was done by them collectively to out-right reject and lambast the unacceptable havoc the Al-Shabaab has been wreaking among Kenya's communities. She correctly pointed out that many Kenyans (and this applies to other nationalities too) do not really know that 'Islam is a way of peace'. In their eyes, Islam as a religious tradition has been and is associated with extremism and as a result of this skewed understanding naturally conclude that 'all Muslim are terrorists'. Dr. Omwenga basically pleaded that Muslims should take drastic measures to prevent individuals from joining extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab and more importantly that they should come out en masse to be lead by the Muslim theologians to openly condemn Al-Shabaab's deadly dastardly deeds. If not, the journalists will continue to report questionable facts about Kenya's Muslims and their association with Al-Shabaab and other extremist groups.

Although she provided an accurate and factual description of attacks by Al-Shabaab in Kenya, she did not relate them to the reasons for the attacks or how the Kenyan government should have responded as a result. She argued that Muslims did not understand their faith fully and that Muslim theologians have a duty to explain to adherents that Islamic extremism is not a correct interpretation of Islam. On the whole, one cannot find anything to quibble about Dr. Omwenga's passionate plea. The problem that one encountered with this presentation was that it did not provide detailed information to give an idea about what Muslim theologians and scholars have said, or what is being said, about Muslim extremism. One is certain that Kenya's Muslim leadership have sent a strong message to their co-religionists who have adopted extremist measures and particularly to those whose deeds are contrary to the teaching of Islam.

### *Keynote Theme Four: The Islamic State*

Professor Marco Lombardi,<sup>105</sup> who is based at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Italy, gave one of the most enlightening presentations on this subject. Since Lombardi has been doing extensive studies on extremist groups such as ISIS, he chose to share his thoughts on Daesh's Penetration into Africa: The Lessons Learned during the Past Two Years. Prof. Lombardi's rich and insightful discourse revealed that Daesh's leadership and its support structures have been quite sophisticated in their use of the various media platforms. Their competent communication skills and their ability to capably coordinate various activities go a long way to achieve their goal which is the founding of a 'State' within a particular geographical territory.

He set the scene by explaining that the situation in Syria was new in the history of the world - something he described as "a hybrid war" which essentially constitutes an interconnected mix of conventional capabilities, terrorism, irregular warfare and criminality among actors. Due to the fact that this was so unique, the world, he argued, did not have as yet an answer to the problem. He put forward the idea that terrorist actors have thus far used the same supply lines as criminal actors, especially in Northern Africa (to Europe) and Western Africa (through Mexico into the US). He stated that IS was following a three-point strategy (based on communications): (a) the first objective was to assist the process of State-building; (b) the second was to promote a form of double-radicalization and this is on two levels (i) to recruit new followers and fighters and (ii) to promote a violent reaction in 'Western' audience; and (c) the third was to distinguish between and compare Sunnis and Shiites, by establishing itself as "the first"

In Prof. Lombardi's opinion terrorism in Africa has so far undermined state institutions and it impeded economic development. He argued that the continent remained extremely vulnerable to these extremist elements because it was a phenomenon that was not limited to attacks but that also included, among others, the use of African territories for training, radicalisation and mobilisation of resources through both 'legitimate' and criminal channels. He mentioned that fighters left South Africa to join IS and he claimed that the AU counter-terrorism policy was and is still not working. All of this tangibly demonstrated Daesh's ability to organize and manage its affairs as a highly organized extremist organization. This may partly be attributed to the fact that its ideas are embedded in a set political theory and unlike similar groups it pursued a clear strategy to network with others and advance its specific cause. He listed at least seven groups that are located in West, North and East Africa that have allied with it. Among them are Nigeria's BH and Mali's Al-Murabitoun.

Though one is taken in by what Prof. Lombardi had to offer a few questions immediately pop up: if Daesh's penetration into the heart of Africa is on the increase what counter-strategies should be considered to stem this tide? What tangible evidence exists - other than what had been presented - to prove Daesh's real presence on the continent? And if Lombardi's allegations are well founded then what role does AFRICOM play in dealing with these extremist elements? One would like to have had an intense discussion with Lombardi on this topic since he presented a very stimulating power point lecture.

Mr. Andrew Liepman, who is a Senior Policy Analyst at the USA-based Rand Corporation, authored several significant reports. Among them are *Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Assessing the Campaign against Al-Shabaab* (2016) and *The Costs of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict* (2015). He was concerned with *Confronting the Islamic State: (and by assessing its) Progress to Date and (and jotting down the) Challenges Ahead*. Mr. Liepman narrated that

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. <https://unicatt.academia.edu/MarcoLombardi>

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

the USA coalition has for the past two years (circa 2014-2016) been at war with ISIS and since this was the case he aimed to basically assess what had been achieved by this coalition and how should one be able to measure the progress that has been made until now. Liepman underscored the point that ISIS is “more than just a proto-state”. He declared that “it is a movement that has seeped into conflicts across the region”. And Mr. Liepman accentuated that since it is a highly ambitious movement, it desires to destabilize cities and areas through generating irregular attacks in different parts of the world. And for this “different strategies must be applied to defeat IS...”.

He commented that the US was petrified of Islamic extremism due to a misunderstanding of the term while certain local political groupings keep on ‘stoking the fire’. IS was, according to him, further misunderstood as it is neither a terrorist grouping, nor ‘a state’ but instead it is a movement which is not restricted to a physical territory, with strong militia and an army, and with cultish undertones. The key issue, he maintained, was to understand the IS for what it is. It can be described by means of three concentric circles: (a) the first circle includes Syria and Iraq; (b) the second is its ‘provinces’ which include territories held by Al-Shabaab and BH, and (c) the third is its global penetration especially through social media. It should be militarily defeated in the first two concentric spheres. But a different approach should be devised for the last.

He emphasized that IS was essentially Iraqi (its leadership is Iraqi, warriors, and religious leaders) who bonded following the US invasion of Iraq. He stated that the IS was at present 1/3 and 1/4 smaller since the time the bombing started and during this period it is much more difficult for them to recruit. Their resource base, he mentioned, was also under attack and was adversely affected. He added that IS was worse off now than ever before. This was since Ramadi was taken back which was considered a huge victory by the Iraqi. He also opined that if the Iraqis were able to retake Mosul IS might be placed on its back foot and this may lead to its eventual defeat.

Even though one found Mr. Liepman’s lecture informative being based upon the facts that he furnished, one is still somewhat skeptical whether ISIS or any related organization is able to hold the world ransom by spawning attacks across the globe. If the coalition possesses all the state-of-the-art early warning systems and has intelligence networks that eavesdrop on various fronts without being detected, how come ISIS and its ilk are able to literally get away with murder? Does the coalition not have the power to stop the transfer of arms to Daesh/ISIS members and where do these arms come from? It is rather puzzling, to say the least, that Daesh/ISIS has been ‘permitted’ by the coalition – in spite of the ongoing war in the Muslim heartlands where it is embedded – to wreak havoc and undermine nation-states in that region.

After Mr. Liepman’s lecture, the focus shifted to Professor Hussein Solomon who is a senior Professor in the Political Studies and Governance Department at South Africa’s University of Free State.<sup>106</sup> Solomon, who is known for having been a caustic critic of Muslim extremism in South Africa, wrote, among others, *Jihad: A South African Perspective* (2013) in which he evaluated this phenomenon. At this workshop, Prof Solomon turned his attention to the Islamic State and the Looming Global Conflagration. He examined ISIS’ origins, rise, and future trajectory and emphasized that ISIS is not just ‘a proto-state’ – as already stated by Mr. Liepman – but that it is ‘a terrorist group’ and ‘an ideology’, two characteristics that have interestingly not been mentioned by previous presenters. Solomon highlighted the fact that it continued to be ‘a potent force’ even though it had suffered substantial losses financially and territorially. Prof. Solomon further reminded the audience that the IS was deeply linked to the Saudi Wahhabi doctrine of *takfiri*. Of importance is that it is extremely difficult for intelligence services to disrupt their

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. <http://www.ufs.ac.za/research/unlisted-pages/our-leaders-in-research/prof-hussein-solomon-104>

operations as all the planning and organization is done at the individual level on the ground. IS' *modus operandi* across North Africa is quite clear, according to Prof Solomon. They exploited existing grievances in a particular area (e.g. Tuaregs and Tebu in southern Libya) and they utilized returning IS fighters serve as a force multiplier for existing local militias who have pledged allegiance to the group. So in order to ensure command and control from IS' central command, it sends one of the senior IS commanders as the leader of the local franchise.

He continued arguing that local groups like BH which is now part of the IS West African *Wilayat* also benefit from IS. Abubaker Shekau's oath of allegiance to Baghdadi occurred after Feb 2015 when a major military offensive against BH positions took place and they were ejected from 25 towns. BH is now receiving training in tactics as well as material support from IS. IS leadership also unified BH by making contact with *Ansaru* to rejoin BH. There is also the possibility of the West African *Wilayat* merging with North African *Wilayat* centred on Libya. This has serious implications for regional security and negative implications for state-centric security.

He estimated that about 300 South African (Muslims) have been recruited to join IS ranks. The group seemed to emanate from Johannesburg's Mayfair and Fordsburg areas due to the presence of radical Salafi Takfiri groups that operate in those areas. In conclusion, he stated that despite the fall of IS strongholds like Kobane and Ramadi, IS strengthened itself elsewhere in countries such as Indonesia, regions such as the Caucasus, and on continents such as Africa.

Prof Solomon rightly observed that ISIS has become a competitive power as a consequence of the questionable interests of Muslim states such as Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Each of them has a stake in the region's affairs and each has so far played disputed roles with the aim of serving their respective interests. And though Syria is not a regional player like the ones just mentioned, its nature has been treacherous and deceitful. Prof Solomon averred that ISIS gained much of its authority and strength because the international security architecture has not been geared to take on its global threat.

For the authors of this report, this is a debatable statement. It is based upon the fact that since the West (i.e. USA and Western Europe) possesses all the required resources and essential equipment to effectively counter and successfully combat these reckless extremist groups - despite their adroit ability to use the media and weapons as mentioned by Prof Lombardi -, why has the coalition failed to stop ISIS' onslaught in that region? And why has it given it a long lease of life? Does the coalition have another unwritten agenda for the region? And why should these Middle Eastern communities suffer so much at the hands of such extremist groups - ones that have flagrantly flouted the very fundamental principles of the religious tradition that they so devoutly but hypocritically espouse?

### *Towards a Round-Up*

Before concluding this report, it should be mentioned that the organizers structured the workshop in such a manner that after each speaker there was a discussion facilitator. The latter's task was to critically comment on the presentations and to generate further discussions. The individuals who acted as facilitators over the two days were: Wits University's Prof Anthoni Van Nieuwerkerk, NWU's Dr. Luni Vermeulen, NWU's Dr. Barend Prinsloo and NWU's Prof. Andre Duvenhage. Each of them made incisive comments and each of them raised a number of hard and probing questions such as how does one categorize ISIS and how does the Middle East conflict impact upon Africa.

They directly and indirectly also made ample reference to aspects that the presenters did not cover or did not satisfactorily deal within their presentations. Whilst a few questions and some

comments were made in this report about issues that the authors of this report could not fully agree with, a consensus has been reached by all attendees that the presenters generally - except in one or two instances - addressed the themes and that the responses were on the whole fairly positive. Perhaps the conference organizers should have identified a former extremist to have provided an insider's view regarding the operations and more importantly the thinking processes that take place in these radical/extremist circles. An insider's understanding and insights usually shed a fascinating light into the radical/extremist's mind. Which is something that is, at times, difficult to fathom when standing on the outside looking in. One would also have liked to have heard the government's voice on this matter since it has to put in place structures that, on the one hand, help to maintain peace and, on the other, create a safe environment in which its citizens and others feel secure from any extremist elements.

That aside, after each speaker, the floor was invited to pose further questions and this ended in a fairly healthy interaction and robust debate. The workshop, one may confidently state, was a fairly edifying gathering. It was one where vigorous discussions took place between the speakers and the audience, on the one hand, and among all participants, on the other. One would like to have experienced a longer period for debates and discussions. At times one was restricted because of the limited time-frame and this resulted in the debate coming to either an abrupt end or a participant having an inconclusive idea of the logical flow of an argument that a presenter or a questioner made. It should, however, be argued that the conference clearly highlighted that academic institutions need to work hand in hand with practitioners in the field. On the topic of 'Islamic Extremism', it was observed that better collaboration in the future is needed between academics and state institutions.

Since academic workshops and conferences such as this do visualize certain outcomes, it may be declared that these fora are occasionally guilty of presenting hypothetical ideas, innovative theories and the fresh research's results. And it may be said that practitioners are usually attracted to these gatherings anticipating fresh viewpoints and additional information that are still somewhat unknown to them and others in their fields. In other words, many practitioners expect some sort of analysis and insights that may assist them in thinking and planning as to what may happen next, or as to what the future may hold. Though some academics do present results of research that has been conducted longitudinally and offer insightful conclusions that are of interest to the practitioners, the data and information are, at times, not in the form of an analytical product that aims to guide decision-making processes that are based on certain future scenarios for instance. It is expected that this may lead to a certain amount of disappointment among practitioners when listening to academic presentations.

Taking these points into account, it should be stated that the most useful presentations that practitioners take along with them from these fora are those that show tangible research outcomes. In the end and in a sense, to close the loop, the state as a key stakeholder will indeed benefit from greater and intense interaction with academics by supporting and funding appropriate and applicable research themes.

In conclusion, one is of the opinion that the organizers succeeded to achieve the workshop's goals. It managed to investigate the impact and nature of Muslim extremism in and beyond (South) Africa. In fact, the discussions mentioned earlier assisted in this regard. If, however, future workshops are planned then it might be a good idea to invite - as already mentioned - a former religious extremist to share his/her story so that the audience can get an authentic sense of what causes individuals to adopt and pursue extremist tendencies in open societies where individuals are permitted to express their ideas freely without being censured or sidelined. Perhaps

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

that planned workshop should set aside a special platform within which the attendees can explore in more detail issues that bug them when it comes to dealing with religious extremist group. And the workshop should perhaps have a discussion that considers religious extremism across the religious divide instead of solely focusing on one religious community. After all, this phenomenon is experienced in all religious traditions and communities nationally, continentally and globally.

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## ACLS AHP AWARDS 2016

The ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) African Humanities Program (AHP) awarded 11 dissertation fellowships and 27 postdoctoral fellowships to applicants from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Selections were made from a pool of 345 applicants in a rigorous peer review process by 74 scholars at African universities. A generous Carnegie Corporation of New York grant to ACLS for AHP provided more than \$600,000 in one-year stipends to the selected Fellows. In addition to research and writing, fellowships make possible residential stays at six institutes for advanced study in sub-Saharan Africa. The residencies offer time and space for completing projects in a stimulating intellectual atmosphere.

I have selected the awards relevant to the study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora, and those to Gender Studies. These 2016 awards demonstrate (1) the multidisciplinary nature of the academic study of the religions of Africa; and (2) that no competitor from Departments of Religious Studies in Anglophone African universities was successful.

Application materials for the upcoming competition (2016-17) are available on the program's page: [www.acls.org/programs/ahp/](http://www.acls.org/programs/ahp/). The program is open to humanities scholars in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. The deadline for the 2016-17 competition is November 2, 2016.

### African Humanities Program Dissertation Fellows

**Olubunmi Funmi Adegbola**, PhD Candidate, English Department, University of Ibadan:  
*Linguistic Representations of Public Reactions and Points of view in the Discourses of Homosexuality in the Nigerian Print Media*

[The discourse of homosexuality gained more prominence in the Nigerian print media following the legalisation of same-sex marriage in the U.S. This study, therefore, explores the linguistic representations of people's opinions about the discourse of homosexuality in the Nigerian print media. This is because the language use of an individual reveals the ideologies of the individual. Studies on homosexuality in the Nigerian context have focused on Nollywood movies and the topic has been seen from the sociological, philosophical and the religious perspectives, neglecting the linguistic perspective in the Nigerian print media, which is the focus of this study. The study seeks to identify the prevalent themes/issues in these discourses, explore how homosexuality/homosexuals are linguistically represented in the Nigerian print media, discuss the discursive strategies that have ideological imprints and explore the attitude of Nigerians about the subject, using linguistic tools. For the purpose of the study, five popular Nigerian newspapers (Vanguard, Punch, Guardian, Tribune and the Sun) will be critically examined and subjected to both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Homosexuality issue covered in the Nigerian print media for a period of three years (2013-2014) will be analyzed and presented in this study. Data will be purposively selected from Editorials, news reports, open letters and comments based on homosexuality and same sex marriage which is the focus of this study. Data analysis will be done using Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics.]

**Ada Agada**, Assistant Lecturer, Benue State University: *The Problem of God's Existence in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*

[Immanuel Kant comprehensively criticized and rejected the classical ontological, cosmological, and teleological proofs of God's existence on the grounds of their probabilistic status. He turned to the moral field for justification of the belief in God. His analysis of the *summum bonum*, or the highest good, yielded the notions of virtue and happiness. Since it is logical for virtue to be rewarded with happiness and since nature itself cannot bring this about, there must exist an omnipotent Being outside the world who harmonizes virtue with happiness. Kant identified this Being as God. This work critically examines Kant's dismissal of the classical metaphysical arguments and rejects the basis of his dismissal. This work asserts that empirical scientific evidence from Big Bang cosmology lends to these proofs a level of probability and plausibility high enough to restore their pre-Kantian integrity.]

**Ashura Jackson**, Assistant Lecturer, History Department, Mkwawa University College of Education, Tanzania: *Socio-economic and Political Dynamics on the Development of African Independent Churches in Mbeya Region, 1920s-1985*

[This research is a historical analysis of how socio-economic and political dynamics influenced the development of African Independent Churches in Mbeya Region, Tanzania, 1920s-1985. The goal is to assess how the changing socio-economic and political dynamics influenced the emergence, development and persistence of African Independent Churches in Mbeya from the 1920s to 1985. The study relies on evidences drawn from written archives documents and in-depth interviews. From a scrutiny of these data, the study establishes that specific economical, social and political contexts facilitated the emergence and development of AICs. Therefore, there was a relationship between, on one hand, the human beings' socio-economic and political undertakings and the emergence of AICs. The significance of this study lies in uncovering the material basis of AICs in Tanzania by documenting the interplay between AICs and socio-economic and political changes. The study also highlights the importance of AICs in opening up and expanding the opportunities for freedom of worship in Tanzania starting from the 1920s.]

**Hauwa Sani Mohammed**, Assistant Lecturer, Department: Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University: *A Linguistic Stylistic Analysis of Gender Variations in Selected Television News Reportage*

[The project will examine 58 news reports in the three selected television channels of British Broadcasting Corporation(BBC), Nigerian Television Authority(NTA) and Channels Television Lagos. Content analysis would be used to determine whether or not there were linguistic gender differences in the themes and rhemes of the reporters and in the type of stories they reported. A survey in the form of personal and structured interviews would be conducted to find out the implications of the linguistic gender variations on the target audience. Halliday's (2004) textual analysis of themes and rhemes would serve as both theoretical and analytical model for the study.]

**Gideon Yohanna Tambiyi**, International School of Prophecy and Biblical Studies: *Recovering Matthean Text of the Holy Family in Africa: A Greek and Coptic Reconstruction in African Biblical Scholarship*

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

[This research focuses on an unpublished discovered Sahidic Coptic bi-folio 4th century parchment of Matthew 2:11-16 which preserves the early account of Jesus and his parents coming to Africa. Dated c. AD 300-350 and discovered in Egypt, it is owned by a private collector in California with number P.Aslan.112. It has two leaves of the middle of the quire and contains 11 lines with approximately 10 letters per line. This thesis will embrace transcription, descriptive-analytical method laid down by Bentley Layton, collation, palaeography and historical method for analysis. New Testament textual scholarship will be enhanced through the analysis of this Coptic parchment supplemented by 70 and the result will be made available to the academic world as a means to contribute and restore the original text of Matthew 2:11-16 in the Sahidica and the Greek New Testament. It will be the first ground-breaking textual research in Sub-Saharan Africa.]

### African Humanities Program Postdoctoral Fellowships 2016

**Elinaza Mjema**, Lecturer, Department of Archaeology and Heritage, University of Dar es Salaam: *Archaeological Investigation of Early Swahili Burial Practices at Pangani Bay on the Northern Tanzania Coast*

[The study seeks to examine burial practices and thus infer beliefs and social structure of the early Swahili communities at Pangani Bay from 8th to 15th centuries AD. Archaeologists working on the East African coast have often reported the accidental encounter of human remains during excavation, however, specific information concerning social identity of the buried individuals has not been published yet. In the context of the proposed study an excavation at burial site at Kimu, situated on the southern bank of Pangani River shall be conducted in order to investigate the social structure of early Swahili communities. The study will focus on issues such as age, gender, social status and identity of the buried. It will employ approaches from mortuary archaeology during excavation and analysis of archaeological and osteological materials. The study will be to the benefit of historical understanding and identity of the local community at Pangani.]

**Henrietta Mambo Nyamnjoh**, Department: African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, South Africa: *Religious Transnationalism and the Quest for Physical and Spiritual Healing: The Case of Cameroonian Migrants in Cape Town*

[Drawing on qualitative research amongst Cameroonian migrants living in Cape Town, South Africa, this study explores the trans-local and (trans)national interconnections migrants are forging with various religious denominations to seek healing and deliverance in their daily lives and emotional challenges in the host country of South Africa. It focuses on how (trans)national and trans-local religious activities find fertile ground for salvationist Pentecostalism among migrants desperately seeking physical/emotional wellbeing in a challenging host context, and their leaning towards 'prosperity gospels' that combined spiritual and socio-economic success. This study examines the under-documented (trans)national religious activities of Cameroonian migrants who are in search of answers to existential problems – illness, sorcery/spiritual attack, challenges of obtaining legal status, prosperity and joblessness, family feuds and marital issues. It questions to what extent are Pentecostal churches in Cape Town relevant to migrants' everyday lives and how do migrants navigate and negotiate the different religious spheres?]

= **Ngozi Ugo Emeka-Nwobia**, Senior Lecturer Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Ebonyi State University: *Ideology and Identity Construction in the Discourse of Nigerian Pentecostal Pastors*

[The study is a critical evaluation of how linguistic resources are utilized by Christian Pentecostal preachers to construct individual and collective ideologies and identities, legitimize their actions, and persuade listeners, through their sermons. The study shall be carried out within the framework of Norman Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (2001)'s model of Critical Discourse Analysis. This is to enable us establish the relationship between language, ideology, gender institution and power in a social system. The Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory shall also be utilized to contextualize the discourses within a socio-cultural framework thereby reinforcing the interrelationship between language and the social system. The corpus draws from interviews and observations of church services of three Pentecostal churches, namely; Living Faith Church, Mountain on Fire Ministry and Christ Embassy churches. It seeks to demonstrate how religious groups persuade or coerce others to accept their ideologies.]

= **Iwebunor Okwechime**, Lecturer I, Department of International Relations, Obofemi Awolowo University: *Spirituality and Youth Militancy in the Niger Delta, Nigeria*

[This study examines the role of spirituality in the struggle of Ijaw youth militias against the Nigerian state and the multinational oil companies operating in the region. Essentially, it seeks to demonstrate why youth militias which proliferated in all parts of pre-amnesty Niger Delta drew inspiration from the history of resistance to internal and external oppressors through the invocation of the Ijaw war god, Egbesu. In doing so, it lays bare the contradiction inherent in the projection by youth militias of Egbesu as a god of discipline, justice and liberation and the barefaced criminality and lawlessness perpetrated by youth militias across the region in the name of Egbesu. Among the ethnic minorities of the Delta region, the Ijaw represent a classic example of oil-producing communities that have had to fall back on the spiritual resources of their people in the course of their resistance against the Nigerian state and the oil companies. By examining the role of spirituality in the struggle against perceived oppression, the study highlights the place of spirituality in youth militancy in the Nigeria's Niger Delta region]

## CALL FOR PAPERS

## INSTITUTIONS:

## CREATIVITY AND RESILIENCE IN AFRICA

60TH ANNUAL ASA MEETING,  
CHICAGO, 16-18 NOVEMBER 2017

The 2017 annual meeting of the **African Studies Association** marks the 60th anniversary of the ASA. The association is responsible, in part, for institutionalizing the study of Africa in the United States, advocating for informed policy, and building dialogue and exchange with Africa-based scholars and institutions. The 60th anniversary offers a moment for critical reflection on what and who we are as an **institution**.

Call for Proposals: <http://africanstudies.org/annual-meetings/call-for-proposals>

Deadline: March 15, 2017

# IAHR XXII WORLD CONGRESS 2020 DUNEDIN, AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

Afe Adogame  
IAHR Secretary General  
(On behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee)

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure, on behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee (EC), to inform you that the IAHR/EC at its last meeting on June 26-27, 2016 in Helsinki, Finland, unanimously accepted, with gratitude and great expectations, the bid and proposal by the New Zealand Association for the Study of Religions (NZASR) to host the IAHR XXII World Congress 2020 in Dunedin, Aotearoa, New Zealand. The IAHR Quinquennial World Congresses constitute important milestones in the history of the IAHR and the international study of religion. Against this backdrop, it is always a delight to have a national or regional member association and societies take up this major responsibility to host the World Congress.

On behalf of the IAHR/EC, we express our thanks to all the institutions, organizations, and people (e.g. Dunedin City Council, University of Otago, Tourism New Zealand, Enterprise Dunedin, the other Study of Religions programs in the country, and the Australian Association for the Study of Religions) for the support, collaboration and cooperation they have already promised to offer with regard to the planning and execution of the 2020 IAHR World Congress.

The IAHR/EC looks forward, with great optimism, to providing all necessary support and assistance as the 2020 Congress Local Organizing Committee and the NZASR work towards issuing the Congress Call, working on the conference program and timeline, budgeting and the general planning of the 2020 World Congress. You will receive periodic emails, from the coming months, with information about progress made in this regard. Please also look out for updates regarding the 2020 World Congress from both the IAHR website and the website of the NZASR in due course.

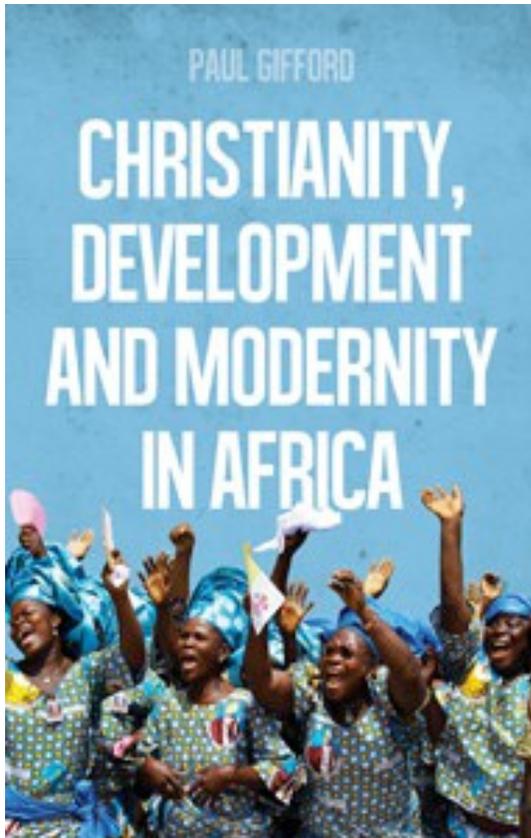
Please also look out for other activities of the IAHR and IAHR national and regional member associations and societies in the IAHR website. We encourage those who are yet to take the advantage of advertising their wide-ranging activities, events and programs in the IAHR website to do so. Please send us information about your current and forthcoming programs that you wish to share with our global academic community.

Once again, allow me to thank the NZASR for their immense sacrifice and magnanimous offer to host us in 2020.

Sincerely,  
Afe Adogame  
IAHR Secretary General

Adriaan van Klinken

Paul Gifford 2015, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*. London: Hurst & Company, 2015. viii + 187 pp. £18.99 (paperback). ISBN 9781849044776.



This book offers a comparative account of two forms of Christianity in Africa, Pentecostalism and Catholicism, and their respective ‘public effects’. Gifford feels that the diversity between both ‘is unacknowledged in the usual studies of African Christianity, ... [while] these differences have significant bearing on questions of development and modernity’ (6).

Chapter 1 – ‘The Issues’ – briefly introduces the major themes. It also attends to the methodological approach, which as Gifford points out is built on ‘personal experience’ (7), having researched various branches of African Christianity for three decades and building a personal archive over that period.

In the following eight chapters, the comparison of the two Christianities unfolds. Chapter 2, ‘Enchanted Christianity’, argues that Africa is characterized by an enchanted religious imagination and that Pentecostalism continues the enchanted worldview of traditional religions: it is concerned with explaining, predicting and controlling events in the world and in people’s lives, believed to be caused by spiritual forces. Gifford discusses two examples illustrating this argument. The first is Mountain of Fire and Miracle

Ministries (MFM), founded by Daniel Olukoya in Lagos in 1989 – a church deeply concerned with spiritual warfare, using prayer as ‘the principal means of thwarting the evil forced arrayed against us and reclaiming our true destiny’ (27-28). Chapter 3, ‘Victory’, presents the second case study: Living Faith Church Worldwide, also known as Winners’ Chapel, founded by David Oyedepo in Lagos in 1983. This church has a strong emphasis on material prosperity.

Drawing on these two examples, Chapter 4 – ‘Pentecostalism and Modernity’ – presents a more general account. Gifford identifies six ‘registers of victorious living’, distinguishing the different ways in which Christianity is linked to success and wealth: 1) Motivation 2) Entrepreneurship 3) Practical skills 4) the Faith Gospel 5) the ‘anointing’ of the pastor 6) defeating the spirits blocking one’s advance. Several scholars have highlighted the contribution that Pentecostalism makes to development, often explaining this with reference to Weber’s thesis of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Gifford is much more skeptical and argues that such

<sup>107</sup> <https://adriaanvanklinken.wordpress.com/blog/>

a positive assessment only takes into account the first three registers, while the latter three have become much more prominent in African Pentecostal circles. Discussing the socio-economic effects of Pentecostal beliefs in spiritual warfare and prosperity, he argues that they undermine social capital, diminish personal agency, and discount scientific rationality. In Gifford's assessment this form of Christianity does not advance modernity or contribute to development; it is simply 'dysfunctional' (67).

In Chapter 5 ('Global Catholicism'), Gifford introduces Catholicism as another global form of Christianity. The chapter briefly outlines developments in Catholicism in the West, such as disenchantment – the shift away from a spirit-pervaded cosmos – and internal secularization – with the Catholic Church becoming 'a super-NGO, the supreme example of global civil society' (80). Focusing on Africa, Chapter 6 ('Catholicism and Development') highlights the major contribution of the Catholic Church in many African countries to education and health care. With funding coming increasingly from secular bodies such as the EU, the UN, USAIDS, Gifford suggests that there is a shifting balance in African Catholic activities from evangelisation to development and relief, and he concludes that this form of Christianity 'brings not so much redemption as development' (103). In Chapter 7 – 'Enchanted Catholicism' – Gifford acknowledges that many African Catholics live in an enchanted world and find ways of coping with that within their religion; however, he says that these expressions of enchanted Catholicism are banned or circumscribed by the church hierarchy. Chapter 8 then argues that like the bishops, also African Catholic theologians 'entirely ignore the religious imagination' of Africans, and is characterized by an 'internal secularisation' (144).

Drawing all of this to a conclusion, in Chapter 9 Gifford concludes that there are two distinct religious visions on the continent: one is 'the enchanted religious imagination of so many Africans', catered for by Pentecostalism, and the other is the 'increasingly internally secularised Christianity of the Catholic professionals' (151). He continues by opposing the relevance of the notion of 'multiple modernities' to understand African realities and by arguing that the enchanted imagination of Pentecostalism is incompatible with the functional rationality that he considers the essence of modernity.

Based on decades of experience, observation and reflection, Gifford's book offers a general, but therefore also generalizing, account of two broad forms of Christianity in Africa, and presents an original assessment of their socio-public effects. However original, this assessment is not entirely rigorous. Due to the conflation of modernity and modernization, and the essentialist notion of modernity, the argument lacks the nuance and sophistication found in broader debates on both Pentecostalism and modernity in Africa. Furthermore, the selected evidence is interpreted within, and used to support, a simple binary scheme of 'enchantment' versus 'development', while many Pentecostal churches today are actually involved in development activities such as education and health care, and many Catholics (both lay people and officials) may attend the Catholic Church not just to get access to developmental resources but to meet their spiritual needs as well. Gifford draws attention to an important aspect of contemporary African Christianities, but the relation between enchantment, modernity and development might be more complex and ambiguous than this book does acknowledge.



A BOOK ON NON-RELIGION  
CO-EDITED BY JIM COX

Cox, James. L., & Adam Possamai (eds.), 2016, *Religion and Non-Religion among Australian Aboriginal Peoples*. Abingdon: Routledge, 210 pp., ISBN 9781472443830 (hbk), £95

This volume, in the series *Vitality of Indigenous Religions*, edited by Graham Harvey, Afeosemimo Adogame & Ines Talamantez,<sup>108</sup> offers a significant contribution to the new field of non-religion and secularity studies,<sup>109</sup> a field that has been developed strongly for secularising Europe and North America since a decade,<sup>110</sup> but hardly yet for other parts of the globe. *Religion and Non-Religion among Australian Aboriginal Peoples* is, therefore, a pioneering study. It draws on Australian 2011 Census statistics to ask whether the indigenous Australian population, like the wider Australian society, is becoming increasingly secularised or whether there are other explanations for the surprisingly high percentage of Aboriginal people in Australia who state that they have 'no religion'.

Contributors from a range of disciplines consider three central questions:

- How do Aboriginal Australians understand or interpret what Westerners have called 'religion'?
- Do Aboriginal Australians distinguish being 'religious' from being 'non-religious'?
- How have modernity and Christianity affected indigenous understandings of 'religion'?

These questions re-focus Western-dominated concerns with the decline or revival of religion, by incorporating how Indigenous Australians have responded to modernity, how modernity has affected indigenous peoples' religious behaviours and perceptions, and how variations of response can be found in rural and urban contexts.<sup>111</sup>

As the study of non-religion and secularity is as yet a virgin field in the study of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora, this volume on the rise of non-religion and secularity among the indigenous peoples of Australia may inspire students of the religions of Africa and its Diaspora to scout for similar developments in Africa and its Diaspora.

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<sup>108</sup> <https://www.routledge.com/Vitality-of-Indigenous-Religions/book-series/AINDIREL> with volumes on the religion of Karamojong pastoralists in North-East Uganda by Ben Knighton (2005); Karanga religion in Zimbabwe by Tabona Shoko (2007); *From Primitive to Indigenous: The Academic Study of Indigenous Religions* by Jim Cox (2007); *African Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa; Emerging Trends, Indigenous Spirituality and the Interface with other World Religions*, edited by Ezra Chitando, Afe Adogame & Bolaji Bateye (2012); *African Traditions in the Study of Religion, Diaspora and Gendered Societies*, edited Afe Adogame, Ezra Chitando & Bolaji Bateye (2013); and *Critical Reflections on Indigenous Religions*, by Jim Cox (2013).

<sup>109</sup> The first ever endowed chair for the study of atheism, humanism and secular ethics will be established at the University of Miami, Florida, USA. Cf. [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/21/us/university-of-miami-establishes-chair-for-study-of-atheism.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/21/us/university-of-miami-establishes-chair-for-study-of-atheism.html?_r=0)

<sup>110</sup> Cf. the Non-Religion and Secularity Studies website at <https://nsrn.net/>; and the peer reviewed journal *Secularism & Non-Religion* (E-ISSN: 2053-6712; <http://www.secularismandnonreligion.org/issue/archive/>). You may also join the Announcement Forum for the Non-religion and Secularity Research Network, at [NSRN-ANNOUNCE@JISMAIL.AC.UK](mailto:NSRN-ANNOUNCE@JISMAIL.AC.UK)

<sup>111</sup> For a review of this volume by Liam Sutherland, cf. <https://nsrn.net/2017/02/09/book-review-religion-and-non-religion-among-australian-aboriginal-peoples-edited-by-james-cox-and-adam-rossamai/>

## PERSONS & POSTS



**Melissa Browning**, AASR Assistant General Secretary and AASR Webmaster 2010-2015, has been appointed Assistant Professor of Contextual Ministry at the McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia. For further details, Cf.

<http://www.a-asr.org/congratulations-to-melissa-browning/>

<https://theology.mercer.edu/faculty-staff/melissa-browning.cfm>



*This Present Darkness: A History of Nigerian Organised Crime* by Stephen Ellis,<sup>112</sup> published after his death on 29 July 2015, is being discussed widely in academic circles, e.g. here at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, in a seminar that was attended by his widow, Prof. Dr. Gerrie ter Haar.<sup>113</sup>

ASCL (African Studies Centre at Leiden University) has instituted an annual public lecture in commemoration of Stephen Ellis. The first in this series has been delivered on 17 November 2016 by Prof. Muna Ndulo (Cornell Law School, Ithaca, USA) on Ethnicity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Constitution Making in Africa. He identified key issues that must be addressed in the constitution making process. Unless African states manage diversity and build institutions that are inclusive, promote economic development, stability, and enfranchisement and consolidate political harmony, the threat of disintegration will persist and the state will remain challenged by those who feel marginalized and who desire to manage their own affairs.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *AASR Bulletin* 44 (May 2016): 14 (at: <http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AASR-Bulletin-44.pdf>)

<sup>113</sup> Cf. also "Nigeria Launch of Stephen Ellis' last book on the history of Nigerian organised crime", at: <http://www.ascleiden.nl/news/nigeria-launch-stephen-ellis-last-book-history-nigerian-organised-crime> with more pictures about the Stephen Ellis Colloquium at the University of Lagos on Friday 28 October 2016, and plans for partnership between the universities of Lagos and Leiden.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. <http://www.ascleiden.nl/news/stephen-ellis-annual-lecture-prof-muna-ndulo-ethnicity-diversity-inclusivity-and-constitution>

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

**Cephas Narth Omenyo**, Provost of the College of Education of the University of Ghana, delivered his inaugural address as a full Professor in the Department for the Study of Religions of the University of Ghana on 9 March 2016 on “Growth, Education and Transformation: Resilience of African Christianity?”.<sup>115</sup>



One may also note that, Prof. Omenyo was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana for the next five years on August 24, 2016.<sup>116</sup>

**Jacob Olupona and Afe Adogame** presented a lecture at Leiden University in a workshop on Religions in Africa, organized by LUCIS (Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society), on 15 December 2016. Jacob Olupona (Harvard University) lectured on ‘Muslim-Christian Relations and Citizenship in Nigeria’. Afe Adogame (Princeton University) discussed ‘Indigenous Ways of Knowing: Negotiating Authenticity and Knowledges in Indigenous African Epistemologies’.<sup>117</sup>



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<sup>115</sup> For Omenyo’s inaugural address, cf. <http://www.ug.edu.gh/news/prof-cephas-narth-omenyo-delivers-inaugural-lecture-contemporary-african-christianity>. For his publications, cf. <http://www.ug.edu.gh/religions/staff/cephas-narth-omenyo>

<sup>116</sup> <https://solidfmgh.com/professor-rev-cephas-omenyo-elected-new-moderator-p-c-g/>  
<http://www.abidnews.com/prof-cephas-omenyo-new-moderator-presby-church-ghana/>

<sup>117</sup> For further details, visit <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/events/2016/12/religions-in-africa-jacob-olupona-and-afe-adogame>

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS



Aarde, Timothy van, 2016, 'Black Theology in South Africa: A Theology of Human Dignity and Black Identity, in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 1: 9 pp.; PDF at:

<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3176>

[Black theology in South Africa is still relevant 20 years after the apartheid regime ended. It is a theology that gave to Black South Africans human dignity and a black identity. Black theology in South Africa confronted the imbalances of power and abusive power structures through an affirmation of human dignity and the uniqueness of the identity of black people. The biblical narrative of the Exodus is a definitive narrative in American black theology and liberation theology in overcoming oppression understood as political victimisation. Black theology in South Africa is not primarily about power and economics but also about the rediscovery of human dignity and black identity and to a lesser extent about victimisation. A third generation of black theology in South Africa will gain impetus through a rediscovery of human dignity and identity as its core values instead of a Black American liberation theology of victimisation or a Marxist liberation theology of the eradication of all power or economic imbalance.]

Abbas, Lateef Oluwole, & Moshood Olaniyi Busari 2016, 'Universalising the Concept of Identity with Islamic Theological Perspective', in *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 6, 1: 59-76; PDF at:

<http://unilorin.edu.ng/ejournals/index.php/ijourel/article/view/1876/1186>

[This paper discusses the universality of the concept of identity from the perspective of Islam. This perspective of Islam was deemed necessary as a gap to be filled at ensuring that identity completes its course of universality as a concept. Therefore, the study subjected identity in its types to a Qur'ānic critique with a view to identifying those that are in tandem with the tenets of Islam and those that are at variance with them. The contributions of Islam were critically discussed from four major schools of identity around the Muslim world. These schools with different formational motives and objectives were identified as the traditionalist, the reactionary, the non-conformist and the modernist. The paper argued that the four schools of identity, in spite of their differences, were formed with the aim of achieving the same goal of the preservation of the sanctity of Islam but using different theological mechanisms. With the perspective of Islam, identity as a concept was adjudged to have completed its cycle of universality. Conclusively, it was advanced that the primary basis in the formation of the four schools of identity is the Qur'ān. As such, the same basis should be used as the yardstick for rejecting any of the views expressed by these schools or their likes which may come on board to further contribute to the concept of identity from Islamic viewpoints.]

Abdi, Cawo M., 2016, *Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 304 pp., ISBN: 978-0-8166-9739-7, \$27.00 (pbk); ISBN: 978-0-8166-9738-0 (hbk), \$94.50

[This book describes the very different experiences of Somali migrants in the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and the United States, each an elusive *jannah* ('paradise'). Somalis in the UAE, a relatively closed Muslim nation, are a minority within a large South Asian population of labor migrants. In South Africa, they are part of a highly racialized and segregated postapartheid society. In the United States they find themselves in a welfare state with its own racial, socioeconomic, and political tensions. A comparison of Somali settlements in these three locations clearly reveals the importance of immigration policies in the migrant experience.]

Adelakun, Adewale J., 2016, 'Civil Disobedience and Democratic Sustainability in Nigeria: A Study of Acts 5: 17-42', in *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 6, 1: 17-30; PDF at:

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<sup>118</sup> To forestall that this issue gets oversized, N-Z has been transferred to *AASR Bulletin* 46..

<http://unilorin.edu.ng/ejournals/index.php/ijourel/article/view/1873/1183>

[Civil disobedience was made famous in the 1950s' protests against racial discrimination in the United States of America. Arising from this are different views on whether it is right or wrong for good citizens to disobey civil authorities. From biblical perspective, civil disobedience is neither condemned nor commended directly but there are cases of individuals and groups of people who refused to obey civil orders in the Bible. In the recent time, the importance of civil disobedience to sustainability of democracy in Nigeria has not been given rapt attention by scholars. Hence, this article examines an act of civil disobedience in Acts 5: 17-42 and its implications for democracy in Nigeria. Using contextual hermeneutical approach, it is argued that civil disobedience is more advantageous than disadvantageous in democratic societies. It is concluded that while Christians are asked to obey all authorities, the New Testament allows non-violent civil disobedience.]

Adetona, Lateef Mobolaji, & Mubin Olatoye Raji 2016, 'A Study of the Misuse of *Sūratu Yāsīn* among Yoruba Muslims', in *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 6. 1: 1-15; PDF at:

<http://unilorin.edu.ng/ejournals/index.php/ijourel/article/view/1872/1182>

[The Glorious Qur'ān apart from serving the purpose of guidance also serves many other purposes to the Muslims, two of which are supplication and healing. Evidences of this assertion abound in both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Muslim scholars across the world have explored the Qur'ān with the aim of proffering solutions to all problems ranging from spiritual, physical and psychological. They have always believed that the Qur'ānic passages are quite potent and efficacious. One of such passages of the Qur'an is *Sūratu Yāsīn*. This study therefore takes a look at the hidden spiritual properties of the *sūrah* namely its merits, benefits and virtues. The various ways by which contemporary Yoruba Muslims put it to use are equally examined. The study reveals out that while righteous Muslims have always employed it for good ends, the fickle and vicious ones employ it for diabolical ends.]

Adogame, Afe, 2016, 'Editor's Note', in *AASR e-Journal: Journal for the Study of the Religions of Africa and its Diaspora* 2, 1 (October 2016): 1-3; PDF at:

<http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/AASR-2.1.pdf>

Agbibo, Daniel Egiegba, 2013, 'No Retreat, No Surrender: Understanding the Religious Terrorism of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria', in *African Study Monographs* 34, 2: 65-84; PDF at:

[http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/179136/1/ASM\\_34\\_65.pdf](http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/179136/1/ASM_34_65.pdf)

[*Boko Haram*, a radical Islamist group from northeastern Nigeria, has caused severe destruction in Nigeria since 2009. The threat posed by the extremist group has been described by the present Nigerian President as worse than that of Nigeria's civil war in the 1960s. A major drawback in the *Boko Haram* literature to date is that much effort has been spent to remedy the problem in lieu of understanding it. This paper attempts to bridge this important gap in existing literature by exploring the role of religion as a force of mobilisation as well as an identity marker in Nigeria, and showing how the practice and perception of religion are implicated in the ongoing terrorism of *Boko Haram*. In addition, the paper draws on the relative deprivation theory to understand why *Boko Haram* rebels and to argue that religion is not always a sufficient reason for explaining the onset of religious terrorism.]

Aghedo, Iro, & Oarhe Osumah 2014, 'Bread, not Bullets: *Boko Haram* and Insecurity Management in Northern Nigeria', in *African Study Monographs* 35, 3/4: 205-229; PDF at:

[http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/193251/1/ASM\\_35\\_205.pdf](http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/193251/1/ASM_35_205.pdf)

[Nigeria has experienced pervasive violence since it returned to civilian rule in 1999 after more than 15 years of military dictatorship. Despite the brutal strategy followed by the state in response to public disorder, efforts to establish peace in Africa's most populous and largest oil-producing nation have failed. Indeed, state repression has increased rather than reduced violence in many areas. This empirical study investigated the effect of the military strategy to manage the ongoing *Boko Haram* insurgency in northern Nigeria. Despite the emphasis on economic empowerment as a viable mechanism for conflict mitigation, which has permeated mainstream discourse since the end of the Cold War, the application of this approach in much of sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria, remains at the level of rhetoric or political spin. Our data also reveal the ineffectiveness of military brutality in managing an-

ti-state uprisings. Thus, this study contributes evidence to the debate regarding economic empowerment as tool to manage security. In the context of the prevailing socioeconomic problems and inequities in northern Nigeria, including rampant poverty and mass illiteracy, this study suggests that economic empowerment (bread) is a more effective strategy than is brutal force (bullets) for insecurity management in the region.]

Ajibade, Mobolaji Oyebisi, 2016, 'A Christian Construction of Domestic Violence in Electronic Media: A Case Study of *Ìdààmú Ilémoşú* by Kolade Segun-Okeowo', in *AASR e-Journal: Journal for the Study of the Religions of Africa and its Diaspora* 2, 1 (October 2016): 34-42; PDF at:

<http://www.a-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/AASR-2.1.pdf>

[Domestic violence is often literally used as a metaphor for power relationships and expressed in different forms and contexts. Scholarships on domestic violence focus more on medical and social aspects to the neglect of its representation in electronic media. An analysis of home video films, which forms part of the electronic media, is worthwhile in expounding the prevalence, causes and effect of this social ill in the Nigerian society. This paper explores the representation of domestic violence in *Ìdààmú Ilémoşú*, a popular video film produced by Kolade Segun-Okeowo, a Nigerian Christian producer of Christian home video films. The analysis of data benefits from the sociology of religion.]

Akhtar, Iqbal, 2015, *The Khōjā of Tanzania: Discontinuities of a Postcolonial Religious Identity*. Leiden: Brill, 212 pp., ISBN 9789004274747 (hbk), \$128

[This volume attempts to reconstruct the development of Khōjā religious identity from their arrival to the Swahili coast in the late 18th century until the turn of the 21st century. This multidisciplinary study incorporates Gujarati, Kacchī, Swahili, and Arabic sources to examine the formation of an Afro-Asian Islamic identity (*jamatī*) from their initial Indic caste identity (*jñāti*) towards an emergent Near Eastern imaged Islamic nation (*ummatī*) through four disciplinary approaches: historiography, politics, linguistics, and ethnology. Over the past two centuries, rapid transitions and discontinuities have produced the profound tensions which have resulted from the wilful amnesia of their pre-Islamic Indic civilizational past for an ideological and politicized 'Islamic' present. This study aims to document, theorize, and engage this theological transformation of modern Khōjā religious identities as expressed through dimensions of power, language, space, and the body.]

Alexander, Liz, & Melanie C. Jones 2015, 'When Caged Bodies Testify: African and African-descended Women's Memoirs as Sacred Texts', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 51-68

Alston, B.T., 2012, 'Mormon Impressions: Locating Mormon Footprints on the South African Religious Landscape', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 25, 1: 51-80

[Since 1853, when the first three official missionaries arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, Mormons have been treading along the South African religious landscape, leaving in their wake a multitude of paths and trails filled with traceable footprints. These footprints have played a critical role in the formulation of impressions about Mormons throughout this church's history in South Africa. This article's main objective is to present a history of Mormons and Mormonism in South Africa which consequently relegates it spatially and structurally to the margins of both Mormon and South African religious studies. To further this marginalization the essay purposefully limits its investigation to exploring the external features of the South African religious landscape, subsequently providing the reader with an introductory, surface history concerned with locating the sources of knowledge about Mormons and Mormonism in South Africa.]

Amenga-Etego, Rose Mary, 2015, '*Akokɔbere nso Nim Adekyee*: Women's Interpretation of Indigenous Oral Texts', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 3-20

Ammah, Rabiātu, 2015, '"You Don't Have the Right to Keep Us Silent, We Have Reference in Matters of Religion and Law": Voices of Ghanaian Muslim Women in *Dawah*', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 69-87

Ayanga, Hazel O., 2016, 'Voice of the Voiceless: The Legacy of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 6 pp.; PDF at:

<http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1580/pdf>

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

[The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle) formally came into existence in 1989 in Accra, Ghana. Under the charismatic leadership of Mercy Amba Oduyoye, the Circle sought to be the voice of African Christian women at the grass roots level. To this end research and publication was and still is one of the major pillars and activities of the Circle. The main objective of the Circle is 'to write and publish theological literature written by African women from their own experience of religion and culture on this continent'. In this regard the Circle has been and continues to be the voice for and on behalf of the African woman in religion, culture and theology. However, 25 years down the line there is need for an evaluation of the legacy of the Circle. How has the Circle been a voice for the voiceless, a mentoring instrument for women venturing into the academia? This article seeks to do this evaluation by examining the activities of the Circle including research publication.]

Badran, Margot, (ed.) 2011, *Gender and Islam in Africa: Rights, Sexuality and Law*. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press with Stanford University Press, 336 pp., ISBN 9780804774819 (hbk), \$60

[*Gender and Islam in Africa* examines ways in which women in Africa are interpreting traditional Islamic concepts in order to empower themselves and their societies. African women, it argues, have promoted the ideals and practices of equality, human rights, and democracy within the framework of Islamic thought, challenging conventional conceptualizations of the religion as gender-constricted and patriarchal. The contributors come from the fields of history, anthropology, linguistics, gender studies, religious studies, and law. Their depictions of African women's interpreting and reinterpreting of Islam go back into the nineteenth century and up to today, including analyses of how cultural media such as popular song and film can communicate new gender roles in terms of sexuality and direct examinations of religious and religiously based family law and efforts to reform them.]

Baloyi, Elijah, 2016, 'Unpacking the Downside of *Sustentatie* on African Theology and Theologians: A Need for Contextual Black Theology as a Liberative Ingredient for the Black Reformed Churches', in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 1: 8 pp; PDF at:

<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3161>

[The practice of the black church being a follower of the leading white church is a continuous process in the *Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika* (or Reformed Churches in South Africa in English). This makes it difficult to contextualise Reformed Theology to address African challenges and problems. There are many reasons for the subordination of the black theologians, but for the sake of this article, I identified the issue of *sustentatie* ('the white wealthier church financially subsidising the black poor church') as one of the causes. The lack of financial independence implies that the black church cannot determine their destiny by revising, transforming and even Africanising their theology to fit into their context and challenges, since that would mean they are biting the hand that feeds them. This article will argue that it is time that Africans stop being a theological duplication of the Western theologies and that they take responsibility to ensure that their theology addresses the immediate situation of the Black Reformed people (contextualised) with or without the support from the white church.]

Bank, Leslie J., & Benedict Carton 2016, 'Forgetting Apartheid: History, Culture and the Body of a Nun', in *Africa* 86, 3: 472-503

[In 1952, the African National Congress (ANC) initiated its Defiance Campaign, opposing apartheid laws through organized civil disobedience and African nationalism. On Sunday 9 November, the city of East London became a site of political mobilization when 1,500 Xhosa-speaking ANC sympathizers peacefully protested in Bantu Square, the hub of a township named Duncan Village. Police arrived and fired on the crowd, igniting 'spontaneous riots'. An Afrikaner salesman and an Irish nun were killed in the ensuing unrest. Rumours circulated that a mob ate the white woman; troop reinforcements then fanned into the township to wage a retaliatory war, shooting and bayoneting their victims. Upwards of 200 Africans may have died but only nine fatalities were recorded. If the revised toll is credible, the bloodshed exceeds that of Sharpeville, the worst one-day massacre in apartheid South Africa. Oral sources explain why the slaughter in Duncan Village is not widely known. Township res-

idents secretly carted the dead to rural graves, fearing to report their losses as people mourned the tragic slaying of the nun named Sister Aidan. Today, ANC rulers of East London seem content to silence the memory of a mass killing reputedly spawned by chaos and cannibalism. At the centre of this incident is Sr Aidan's mutilation for the purpose of making *muthi*, a shocking incident that dominates the story of violence on Black Sunday. Using archival documents and oral histories, and incorporating the methodologies of Jennifer Cole, Donald Donham and Veena Das, this article reconstructs a narrative of 'critical events' surrounding the nun's *muthi* murder. The scrutinized witness testimonies relay how township residents framed their fierce encounters with a symbolic (white person) and ubiquitous (militarized police) enemy. Oral sources reject the notion that an aimless 'riot' occurred on 9 November. Instead, they reflect on cultural enactments of purposeful violence through scripted assaults and *muthi* ritual. Ultimately, they view the fatal attack on Sr Aidan as an evolving customary act of defensive retribution and symbolic warning, submerging truths in apartheid and hindering reconciliations in democracy.]

Baynes-Rock, Marcus, 2016, 'The Ontogeny of Hyena Representations among the Harari People of Ethiopia', in *Africa* 86, 2: 288-304

[Employing a theoretical framework developed by ecologist Paul Shepard, I explore here the ways in which Harari people's representations of spotted hyenas develop in tandem with their ontogenesis. The Harari word for hyena, *waraba*, takes on different meanings depending on the socialization of Harari individuals and the particular life stages of these persons. In early childhood, *waraba* is a terrifying beast of the imagination. As children mature, their initial conceptions are overturned as they learn that local hyenas are in fact peaceful; it is the hyenas from beyond Harar's borders whom they learn to fear. Throughout and beyond middle childhood, representations of hyenas are employed in folktales, songs, chants and idioms to represent other humans while at the same time reflecting an engagement with the local hyenas. The representations culminate in the conception of *Derma Sheikh*: the reliable, protective, religious hyena who shares the same interest in peace and security as the Hararis. In Harar, representations of hyenas reflect an attention to what hyenas do 'out there' in the streets and in the surrounding farmland. They speak of a level of engagement with hyenas as persons: one that is atypical of an 'urbanized, industrialized' society.]

Béchéacq, Dimitri, 2013, 'Distance, intimité et pouvoir: Dans les coulisses d'une ethnographie multisituée du vodou haïtien. (Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves, Paris, Brooklyn)', in Santiago & Rougeon 2013: 213-24; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN\\_X\\_Possessions\\_Plurielles\\_Exp%C3%A9rience\\_Ethnographique\\_%C3%A0\\_Bahia\\_Br%C3%A9sil\\_1992-2012](https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN_X_Possessions_Plurielles_Exp%C3%A9rience_Ethnographique_%C3%A0_Bahia_Br%C3%A9sil_1992-2012)

[Ce texte entend restituer les temporalités et les circonstances d'une enquête ethnographique menée au sein de temples du vodou haïtien dans le cadre de recherches en maîtrise puis en thèse doctorale réalisées de 2000 à 2008 à Paris, à Port-au-Prince, aux Gonaïves et à Brooklyn. Ces recherches ont été réalisées au prix d'un équilibre précaire et d'une porosité latente entre étrangeté et intimité, entre proche et lointain, entre implication et distanciation.]

Benecke, G. von, 2013, 'From "Threads" to Threats: Religion, the Public Sphere, and Why Scholars Need to Keep an Eye on Online "Posts"', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 26, 1: 9-22

[What is the definition of religion; according to whom; and why does it matter? For the student of religion, this is the first and most complex set of questions confronting the scholar when embarking on his or her academic training. This article is the result of two occurrences related to the set of questions above: a casual conversation with a friend about the portrayal of religion in the media, and an online news article that appeared on a South African news website with the headline, "Religion Forces Science Teacher to Quit". These occurrences led to a rephrasing of the original set of questions. Far away from the quiet corridors of academic libraries and the pews of religious institutions, how is the term religion understood and used in contemporary society? Where can I start looking? And why does it matter? The first part of this article is a theoretical exploration of the use and understanding of the term religion; the notion of the public sphere according to Jürgen Habermas; the media as public

sphere; and finally, religion in the media as public sphere. By way of using, but also contesting, Habermas's and other theories of media and the public sphere, the second part of the article will attempt a brief analysis of the online news article and reader comments.]

Benedicty-Kokken, Alessandra, 2015, *Spirit Possession in French, Haitian, and Vodou Thought: An Intellectual History*. Lanham, etc.: Lexington Books, 419 pp., ISBN 978-0-7391-8465-3 (hbk), \$110

[This book recuperates the important history that Haitian thought around Vodou possession has had in French critical theory. It offers the reader unfamiliar with Haiti a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of twentieth and early twenty-first century Haitian thought, including a detailed timeline of important moments in the intellectual history that connects Haiti to France and the United States. The first part of the book is about global dispossessions in the first decades of the twentieth century; the second part points to how the narratives of 'Haiti' are intimately linked to a Franco-U.S.-American discursive space, constructed over the course of the twentieth century, a discursive order that has conflated the representation of 'Haiti' with an understanding of Vodou primarily as an occult religion, and not as a philosophical system. The third and fourth parts of the book examine how the novels of René Depespre, Jean-Claude Fignolé, and Kettly Mars have revisited the notion of possession since the fall of the Duvalier dictatorships.]

Beutter, Anne, 2015, 'Church Discipline Chronicled: A New Source for Basel Mission Historiography', in *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* 42: 109-138

[This article uses a hitherto overlooked category of historical source, an outstation chronicle covering the period 1911–1920. It shows how juridical practice within the Protestant mission church of Nkoranza (then in the Ashanti region of what is now central Ghana) created and sharpened a Christian group identity in a predominantly non-Christian context. It is argued that the interdependence of the in-group and out-group at the local level helped to shape the church's juridical forms.]

Beyers, Jaco, 2015, 'Self-secularisation as Challenge to the Church', in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 71, 3: 10 pp; PDF at: <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3178>

[After discussing the origin of the concept of self-secularisation and its interpretations, the author tries to identify instances of self-secularisation within especially the Afrikaans-speaking churches, although not limited to them, in South Africa. The theological jargon comes under scrutiny, civil religion, the pluralistic society within which the church exists, the effect of emotionalism, the commercialisation of the church, the role of mass media and the phenomenon of infotainment, rationalisation and a lack of ethics are some of the elements identified and discussed. Finally the author attempts a correction by indicating what the church ought to do in order to counter the effects of self-secularisation.]

Beyers, Jaco, 2015, 'Religion as Political Instrument: The Case of Japan and South Africa', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 1: 142-164

[This paper wants to investigate the reasons why religion is such an effective instrument within politics. The investigation is as much a historical investigation as it is descriptive. After careful analysis of contexts, a deduction is made to reach an understanding of the reasons for the political use of religion. The author identified through investigating two examples (i.e. politics in South Africa and Japan) several elements to consider when discussing religion within politics: (a.) no separation between spheres of existence, (b.) culture of religious participation in politics, (c.) politics and religion touch emotional and sentimental chords, (d.) religion contributes to national identity, (e.) religion can provide a claim to divine approval of political decisions, (f.) religious communities are effective partners in implementing government policies. The author consciously decided not to investigate the relationship between Islam and politics as different elements play a role in such considerations.]

Beyers, Jaco, 2016, 'Beyond Denial and Exclusion: The History of Relations between Christians and Muslims in the Cape Colony during the 17th–18th Centuries with Lessons for a Post-colonial Theology of Religions', in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72, 1: 10 pp.; PDF at:

<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3117>

[This article follows a historical line from colonialism, through apartheid to post-colonialism in order to illustrate inter-religious relations in South-Africa and how each context determines these relations. Social cohesion is enhanced by a post-colonial theology of religions based on the current context. By describing the relationship between Christians and Muslims during the 17th–18th centuries in the Cape Colony, lessons can be deduced to guide inter-religious relations in a post-colonial era in South Africa. One of the most prominent Muslim leaders during the 17th century in the Cape Colony was Sheik Yusuf al-Makassari. His influence determined the future face of Islam in the Cape Colony and here, during the 18th century, ethics started playing a crucial role in determining the relationship between Christians and Muslims. The ethical guidance of the Imams formed the Muslim communities whilst ethical decline was apparent amongst the Christian colonists during the same period. The place of ethics as determinative of future inter-religious dialogue is emphasised. Denial and exclusion characterised relationships between Christians and Muslims. According to a post-colonial understanding of inter-religious contact the equality and dignity of non-Christian religions are to be acknowledged. In the postcolonial and postapartheid struggle for equality, also of religions, prof Graham Duncan, to whom this article is dedicated, contributed to the process of acknowledging the plurality of the religious reality in South Africa.]

Beyers, Jaco, 2016, 'Insights from Hans Achterhuis Applied to the Violence on LGBT Communities in Uganda', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 29, 1: 150-156

[Hans Achterhuis, a Dutch philosopher, utilises philosophy and fictional literature to illustrate the causes and effects of violence. In his book *Met alle Geweld* (2010) (Full Force of Violence), Achterhuis identifies six perspectives on violence: goal-orientated violence; struggle for recognition; polarity of us vs. them; mimetic desire; tension between morality and politics and the barbaric human nature. In the discourse on violence philosophers have the task to identify the possible localities where lightning might strike next and to warn, prevent and if not that at least suggest precautionary measures – 'installing lightning rods'. That is the purpose of the book by Achterhuis. Lightning has recently struck in Uganda. The author here looks at the occurrence of religiously inspired violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexuals and transgender communities (LGBT) in Uganda. The perspectives presented by Achterhuis are utilised in order to try and make sense of violence. The author suggests that discussion forums can serve as lightning rods preventing similar violent outbursts in communities in Southern Africa.]

Boës, Eric, Gérard Chouin & Patrice Georges-Zimmermann 2016, 'Découverte Ghana: Un ensemble funéraire inédit du XVIIe siècle', in *Archéologia magazine* no. 546 (Septembre 2016): 32-37; PDF at: [https://www.academia.edu/28582840/2016\\_Un\\_ensemble\\_fun%C3%A9raire\\_in%C3%A9dit\\_du\\_XVIIe\\_si%C3%A8cle\\_Ghana\\_.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/28582840/2016_Un_ensemble_fun%C3%A9raire_in%C3%A9dit_du_XVIIe_si%C3%A8cle_Ghana_.pdf)

[Au Ghana, près du petit village de Nsadwer, le bois sacré de Bosomtwi fait, depuis 2002, l'objet d'une mission archéologique: il abritait au XVIIe un habitat, et, à sa lisière, un ensemble funéraire dont les fouilles ont mis en évidence un environnement épidémiologique particulier, renvoyant à l'histoire des premiers contacts avec les Européens. Archéologia en livre les résultats inédits.]

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, (ed.) 2015, *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*. New York: Routledge, 578 pp, ISBN 9780415705028 (hbk), £150

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, 2015, 'Introduction', in Bongmba 2015: 1-21

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, 2015, 'Christianity in North Africa', in Bongmba 2015: 25-44

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, 2015, 'From Medical Missions to Church Health Services', in Bongmba 2015: 502-523

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, 2015, 'Studying African Christianity: Future Trajectories', in Bongmba 2015: 555-563

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, 2016, 'Global Religions', in Bongmba 2015: in Jeffrey K. Kripal (ed.) 2015, *Religion: Sources, Perspectives, and Methodologies*. Farmington Hills: MacMillan Reference USA, 289-304

Bongmba, Elias Kifon, & Akintunde Akinade 2015, 'Dislodgings and Reformation: Expanding Christianity in Africa and in the Diaspora', in Peter Phan & Elaine Padilla (eds.) 2015, *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan Press, 2015: 55-70

Bridgeman, Valerie, 2015, "'Now You Have Struck a Rock": *Rizpah*, Black Mama Trauma, and the Power of Shaming in the Face of the Powers', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 107-119

Brindle, Jonathan, Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu & Obádélé Kambon 2015, 'Kiliji: An Unrecorded Spirit Language of Eastern Ghana', in *Journal of West African Languages* 48, 1: 65-88; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/16016721/Kiliji\\_an\\_unrecorded\\_spiritual\\_language\\_of\\_eastern\\_Ghana](https://www.academia.edu/16016721/Kiliji_an_unrecorded_spiritual_language_of_eastern_Ghana)

[In this paper we discuss a language called Kiliji by its speakers, which has not previously (to the best of our knowledge) been noted in the literature, at least in Ghana. It is the ritual language of a women's spiritual group known popularly as *Okule* or more correctly as *Okó Alija*. The spiritual system is practiced among women in several communities in Guang and Ghana-Togo Mountain areas of the Ghana-Togo border area, including in several Nawuri-speaking villages as well as farther east in Adelle and Achode. It is presumably practiced in Togo as well but we have no information on that. As we will show, the language and the spiritual practices it is connected with are clearly of Yorùbá origin, and therefore most likely arrived in the area from the Ifè (Togo) Yorùbá speaking communities. Kiliji is argued to be the westernmost recorded instantiation in Africa of a Yorùbá variety used in performing rituals related to the deity Chankpana.]

Brivio, Alessandra, 2013, 'Notes sur le *Culte des Orisa et Vodun*: Pierre Fatumbi Verger and the Study of "African Traditional Religion"', in *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* 40: 275-294

This article examines Pierre Verger's *Notes sur le culte des Orisa et Vodun à Bahia, la Baie de tous les Saints, au Brésil et à l'ancienne côte des esclaves en Afrique* and aims to investigate his position in relation to the study of religion, Vodun in particular, in the African context, and his contribution to the construction of an "African traditional religion" paradigm. In *Notes sur le culte des Orisa et Vodun*, Verger intended to make a comparative analysis of "African sources" and "Brazilian remnants" in order to ascertain what had survived the middle passage. This article seeks to highlight the innovative perspectives Verger introduced to the study of religions in Africa, perspectives that included a wide use of historical sources and a deep involvement in field research, and to point up his different methodological position on the two sides of the Atlantic. In Africa he sought pure tradition, while in Brazil he emphasized the modernity of the African religions that proved able to survive the Atlantic passage and resist the hegemonic powers of the New World.]

Bruinhorst, Gerard C. van de, 2015, "'I didn't want to write this'": The Social Embeddedness of Translating Moonsighting Verses of the Qur'an into Swahili', in *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 17, 3: 38-74; PDF at: <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/41316/ASC-075287668-3773-01.pdf?sequence=2>

[As a result of increasing globalisation the public sphere has expanded over the recent decades. Consequently Qur'an translations exhibit a highly pluralised concept of religious authority, demonstrating an eclectic use of sources as authors respond simultaneously to local and global discourses. This paper shows how the commentary in a popularising Swahili *tafsir* by the preacher Said Moosa al-Kindy on two particular Qur'an verses, Q. 2:185 and Q. 2:189, cannot be understood as the outcome of theological and linguistic considerations only, but rather as a multi-epistemic, socially embedded product. Q. 2:185 and Q. 2:189 are often used to endorse particular viewpoints in East African moon sighting debates. This discourse revolves about the question of whether to accept a crescent sighting report from anywhere in the world to determine the beginning of the lunar month or to wait for a visible moon from a more restricted locality. This paper situates al-Kindy's translation within the wider field of Swahili Qur'an commentaries, and compares his treatment of these verses to that in two scholarly products from outside the established genre of *tafsir*. One is the polemical discourse on this subject by an Ibadi intellectual writing in Swahili and the second is the lunar calendar and website produced by a Tanzanian book trader. In all three of these works Qur'anic authority is paramount, but if we want to understand the diverse mediations of the Qur'anic message in a specific milieu we

should not only look at the influence of exegetical traditions but also focus on social actors and their very personal, localised experiences.]

Burchardt, Marian, 2011, 'Missionaries and Social Workers: Visions of Sexuality in Religious Discourse' [in South Africa], in Titus Hjelm (ed.) 2011, *Religion and Social Problems*. London/New York: Routledge, 142-157; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/27652502/Missionaries\\_and\\_Social\\_Workers\\_Visions\\_of\\_Sexuality\\_in\\_Religious\\_Discourse?auto=view&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/27652502/Missionaries_and_Social_Workers_Visions_of_Sexuality_in_Religious_Discourse?auto=view&campaign=weekly_digest)

Canals, Roger, 2013, 'Le froid divin: Âme, corps et sens dans le culte à María Lionza (Venezuela)', in Santiago & Rougeon 2013: 111-142 ; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN\\_X\\_Possessions\\_Plurielles\\_Exp%C3%A9rience\\_Ethnographique\\_%C3%A0\\_Bahia\\_Br%C3%A9sil\\_1992-2012](https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN_X_Possessions_Plurielles_Exp%C3%A9rience_Ethnographique_%C3%A0_Bahia_Br%C3%A9sil_1992-2012)

[This article 'ouvre un bon nombre de questions pour une anthropologie intéressée à la dimension sensitive de l'expérience humaine: d'abord, quel est le rapport concret s'effectuant dans ce culte entre le domaine corporel et le domaine sacré? Cette différence, a-t-elle un sens ici ou n'est-elle que la transposition d'une distinction, disons, occidentale? Ensuite, quelles techniques de recherche ethnographique peuvent être utilisées pour comprendre la signification culturelle et les fonctions sociales des sens dans ce culte comme dans d'autres cultes afro-américains ? Et, enfin, une fois la recherche achevée, comment peut-on rendre compte, par le discours anthropologique, de la richesse d'éléments et de sensations qui sont en place au cours des cérémonies et qui constituent le plus profond de l'expérience du religieux? Avant d'initier la réflexion sur ces questions, il me semble nécessaire d'introduire brièvement l'origine et la pratique contemporaine du culte afro-américain à María Lionza très répandu dans tout le pays de Venezuela'.]

Carney, J.J., 2016, *Rwanda before the Genocide: Catholic Politics and Ethnic Discourse in the Late Colonial Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 360 pp., ISBN 9780190612375 (pbk), \$35.00

[Between 1920 and 1994, the Catholic Church was Rwanda's most dominant social and religious institution. In recent years, the church has been critiqued for its perceived complicity in the ethnic discourse and political corruption that culminated with the 1994 genocide. In analyzing the contested legacy of Catholicism in Rwanda, the author focuses on a critical decade, from 1952 to 1962, when Hutu and Tutsi identities became politicized, essentialized, and associated with political violence. This study examines the reactions of Catholic leaders such as the Swiss White Father André Perraudin and Aloys Bigirumwami, Rwanda's first indigenous bishop. It evaluates Catholic leaders' controversial responses to ethnic violence during the revolutionary changes of 1959-1962 and after Rwanda's ethnic massacres in 1963-64, 1973, and the early 1990s. In seeking to provide deeper insight into the many-threaded roots of the Rwandan genocide, this book offers constructive lessons for Christian ecclesiology and social ethics in Africa and beyond.]

Chavane, Midas H., 2014, 'The Rastafarian Movement in South Africa: A Religion or Way of Life?', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 214-237

[Rastafarians object to the classification of their movement as a religion. Their objection is based on the belief that the movement is more of a way of life than a religion. This is in spite of the fact that the movement is grounded on religious principles which makes non-Rastafarians to view it as a religion. In order to understand the nature of the movement, it is important to define the concept religion in general and as understood by Rastafarians themselves. By looking at some religious movements, and how the Rastafarian movement is both similar and different to them, this paper argues that it is its religious character that makes the movement sustainable. Thus, this article looks at the principles underlying other religious movements such as Judaism, Christianity, African Traditional Religion, Black/African, and Liberation Theologies against those of the Rastafarian movement.]

Chetty, Irving G., 2014, 'The New Apostolic Reformation and Christian Zionism', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 271-285 (print) / 297-312 (digital)

[Christian Zionism grounds itself on the interpretation that God has an on-going special relationship with the Jewish people apart from the Church. Jews have a divine right to possess the land of Pales-

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

tine. According to Christian Zionists, however, this divine right extends beyond the promise to Abraham and becomes a command to every Christian believer to unreservedly support the modern nation-state of Israel. A pilot study was conducted in 2012 to explore, inter alia, NAR (New Apostolic Reformation) views on the Kairos Palestine document. This study attempts to build on that research. A qualitative methodology was chosen with the use of a focus group of key leaders of a NAR formation. While this study did not receive a decisive response from these NAR adherents, they had begun to study the Bible on this issue, in earnest. This, in itself, is a promising starting point. As one of its stated NAR mandates, is to influence the governmental/political mountain, perhaps the NAR of the South may yet make a more biblical grounded response to Christian Zionism.]

Chitakure, John, 2016, *The Pursuit of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religious Studies*. Eugene [OR]: Wipf & Stock, 226 pp., ISBN 9781498235600 (pbk), \$21.60 (web price), \$27 (retail price); ISBN 9781498235600 (e-book) \$21.60 (web price), \$27 (retail price)

[Globalization has taken the world by storm and has facilitated the unprecedented migrations of the peoples of this world. Whether we like it or not, we will meet foreigners in our communities, schools, universities, buses, and other public places. But, when people migrate they take their religions with them. If people of different religious traditions are to live side by side amicably, interfaith dialogue becomes imperative. But, for people to be able to speak about their own religions with enlightenment and listen to other people's religious beliefs with respect, they must have some basic knowledge of how faiths and believers operate because for some people, religion is inseparably intertwined with their economics, politics, and everyday lives. This book clearly and concisely introduces religious studies to the reader. It makes a strong case for the quest and study of world religions and explores the challenges, controversies, and methodological issues in the study of religions. It also explores other pertinent religious issues such as beliefs, rituals, myths, sacredness, morality, the problem of evil, and interreligious dialogue. Although written from a classroom perspective, this book can be useful to any reader who would like to acquire knowledge of religious issues.]

Chitando, Ezra, Tapiwa P. Mapuranga & Nisbeth T. Taringa 2014, 'On Top of which Mountain does One Stand to Judge Religion?: Debates from a Zimbabwean Context', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 115-136

[One of the most prominent characteristics of the phenomenology of religion is that the scholar of religion must desist from judging the phenomena under study. The scholar of religion is encouraged to refrain from passing judgement on the truth or ethical status of the phenomena under investigation. Instead, the scholar must concern her/himself with accurate descriptions. While for phenomenology of religion such a stance represents victory against reductionism of various types, it has come under fierce criticism. Critics charge that there are some situations that clearly call for judging religious phenomena. In response, phenomenologists of religion raise the fundamental question: on top of which mountain does one stand to judge religion? This article interacts with this fundamental question in a Zimbabwean context. In the first section, it outlines the phenomenological preoccupation with descriptive accuracy and adopting a non-judgemental approach to the study of religion. In the second section it highlights criticisms that have been levelled against such a stance. In the third section it describes contentious religious phenomena in the African Apostolic Church of Johane Marange in Zimbabwe. In the fourth section it identifies and critiques the different 'mountains' that scholars may climb as they seek to judge controversial religious phenomena in Zimbabwe. The article breaks new ground by testing the possibility of going beyond phenomenology with reference to contentious religious practices in Zimbabwe.]

Comolli, Virginia, 2015, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency*. London: C. Hurst and Co., viii + 239 pp., ISBN 978 1 84904 491 2, £20.00 (hbk)

[This book presents a critical and comprehensive analysis of Boko Haram (official name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad*, or Group of the People of *Sunnah* for Preaching and Jihad). Comolli analyses the transformation of Islamist movements, and the origins and emergence of Boko Haram, founded by Mohammed Yusuf and growing rapidly after his death in 2009. In terms of contents

and theme, Comolli's book takes a comprehensive approach that includes the broader historical background, and analyses the changing dynamics and ideological differences between Islamist movements in Nigeria, while focusing on Boko Haram in particular. She draws on field research in 2012–14, conducted with both official and civilian authorities. Her study draws attention to the complexity and difficulty of counter-terrorism initiatives in Nigeria.]

Covington-Ward, Yolanda, 2015, *Gesture and Power: Religion, Nationalism, and Everyday Performance in Congo*. Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 304 pp., ISBN 9780822360360 (pbk), \$29.95

[This volume examines the everyday embodied practices and performances of the BisiKongo people of the Lower Congo to show how their gestures, dances, and spirituality are critical in mobilizing social and political action. Conceiving of the body as the center of analysis, a catalyst for social action, and as a conduit for the social construction of reality, Covington-Ward focuses on specific flash points in the last ninety years of Congo's troubled history, when embodied performance was used to stake political claims, foster dissent, and enforce power. In the 1920s Simon Kimbangu started a Christian prophetic movement based on spirit-induced trembling, which swept through the Lower Congo, subverting Belgian colonial authority. Following independence, dictator Mobutu Sese Seko required citizens to dance and sing nationalist songs daily as a means of maintaining political control. More recently, embodied performance has again stoked reform, as nationalist groups such as Bundu dia Kongo advocate for a return to precolonial religious practices and non-Western gestures such as traditional greetings. In exploring these embodied expressions of Congolese agency, Covington-Ward provides a framework for understanding how embodied practices transmit social values, identities, and cultural history throughout Africa and the diaspora.]

Cunningham, Tom, 2016, "'These Our Games': Sport and the Church of Scotland Mission to Kenya, c. 1907–1937', in *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* 43: 259-288

[In this article I use oral and documentary evidence gathered during recent fieldwork and archival research in the UK and Kenya to explore the ways in which the Church of Scotland Mission to Kenya attempted to use sport to "civilize" and "discipline" the people of Central Kenya. I make a case for the important contributions the topic of sport can make to the study of African and colonial history, and offer a comprehensive critique of the only book-length work which explores the history of sport in colonial Kenya, John Bale and Joe Sang's *Kenyan Running* (1996).]

Demart, Sarah, & Joseph Tonda 2016, 'Mboka Mundele: Africanity, Religious Pluralism and the Militarization of Prophets in Brazzaville and Kinshasa', in *Africa* 86, 2: 195-214

[In recent decades, Kinshasa and Brazzaville have given rise to movements of prophecy, messianic fervour and revival (Pentecostalist in nature) in the field of religion. The patterns of liberation and deliverance that can be discerned here reflect forms of identity politics in which Africanity, in the ethnic and national sense, is not only a major issue, but a component that is increasingly associated with armed conflict. These processes express a radical paradigm shift that we place within the context of the relationship between Africanity and religious pluralism that has become evident in these two religious areas in recent years. The term *Mboka Mundele* (the village or country of the Whites) points to an experience of 'colonial modernity', and allows us to describe in objective terms the current urban context in which these 'businessmen of God' emerge. Fernando Kutino, Ntoumi, Yaucat Guendi and Ne Muanda Nsemi are four major politico-religious figures who embody an ideology of Africanity related to complex types of 'magic' and processes of pluralization.]

Demovic, Angela R., 2016, 'Where are the Women When the Tourists Arrive?: Bodies, Space, and Islamic Femininity in Rural Zanzibar', in *Journal of Africana Religions* 4, 1: 1-27

[Since the 1980s, tourism has risen to become the most important source of foreign income for the islands of Zanzibar. This case study of a previously subsistence village that now hosts transnational tourists reveals how intersecting ideas about gender and ethnicity influence work choices made by individual women. Labor choices are a balance between production and identity, and most women's work choices maintain spatial boundaries between local people and tourists. Women's work thus serves as a site of resistance against cultural imperialism by mainland Tanzanian elites and the West. Wo-

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

men's bodies are sites of contestation between local and outsider identities. The discursive role of women's bodies in response to potential cultural domination results in significant limits on women's economic participation in tourism.]

Dokman, Frans, 2016, 'Europe and the World: World Christianity and the Transformation of Christianity in the Netherlands', in Jonathan Y. Tan & Anh Tran (eds.) 2016, *World Christianity. Perspectives and Insights*. New York: Orbis Books, ??-??.

Dokman, Frans, (ed.) 2016, *Aid in the Age of Markets: Social Enterprises and Catholic Social Thought*. Nijmegen: Nijmegen Institute of Mission Studies, €7,50 (= NIM Occasional Papers, 26)  
[With contributions by Albino Barrera, Christoph Hübenthal, and Eelke de Jong]

Dombo, Sylvester, 2014, 'Refusing to be Co-opted?: Church Organizations and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe with Special Reference to the Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe 2005-2013', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 137-171

[Zimbabwe, throughout its history, has had a culture of violence and impunity which has resulted in massive displacements of people, murder, physical and traumatic memories of the past. In all the epochs of violence, it is worth noting that some church organizations were vocal and castigated the politicians whilst others were either indifferent or had been 'co-opted' by the political parties. By 2008, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) had lost its hegemony to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and in 2009 a government of national unity was formed at the instigation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) after witnessing unprecedented violence against the people during the 2008 elections. When the unity government was formed in 2009, an Organ of National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration was also formed to try and bring Zimbabweans together for healing and reconciliation. This study investigates why some church organizations have criticized political violence and participated in national healing and reconciliation while others are either co-opted by the political parties or have remained neutral. This paper will focus on the role played by the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA) in the national healing program prior to and after the formation of the unity government. The ZCA has been lobbying politicians to campaign peacefully, while at the same time housing and counseling the victims of political violence among other activities. The ZCA's role will be contrasted to that of Reverend Obadiah Musindo's Destiny for Africa Network (DFAN) which is pro-ZANU-PF and campaigns for Mugabe, whom the church likens to the biblical Moses. It also attacks those churches that criticize ZANU-PF's violence. The research was premised on primary data to obtain a voice from the churches concerned and the politicians on what role they see the church playing in politics and reconciliation in the country.]

Driscoll, Christopher, & Monica R. Miller 2016, 'Niggas in Paris?: Traveling between the "Who" and "What" of Diaspora in the Study of African American Religion', in *Journal of Africana Religions* 4, 1: 28-53

[Designators of diasporic travel used within African American religion are seldom interrogated for the manner in which they rely on and reify sacred/profane thinking. These designators also attempt to recuperate a past identity through reliance on self-evident claims like "home," "memory," "experience," and so on. We turn to author James Baldwin and rapper Kanye West to emphasize the manner in which such travel and movement is multiplicative, never an endeavor limited to either sacred or profane. In an effort to take stock of the "both/and" of diasporic travel, we offer the theoretical instrument of aporetic flow, understood as the creative transmutation of impossibility into opportunity, where nonpassages enable movement. We seek to demonstrate how the analytic might contribute to theory and method in the study of African American religion specifically, and add to nascent critical discussions across the study of religion more generally that are beginning to situate "religion" as identity.]

Dube, Musa W., 2016, 'The Subaltern Can Speak: Reading the *Mmutle* (Hare) Way', in *Journal of Africana Religions* 4, 1: 54-75

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

[African oratures consist of a significant corpus of trickster stories. This article investigates indigenous frameworks of reading texts by exploring the philosophical stance of *Mmutle*, the trickster of Southern Africa, by analyzing eight stories. The analysis of the *Mmutle* trickster discourse highlights four postures of reading for liberation. First, the vulnerable and oppressed should keep a permanent vigil toward the powerful and always watch out for their interests without fail. Second, the vulnerable and oppressed should be willing to be in solidarity with other vulnerable and oppressed members of the society and to use teamwork. Third, sharp and transgressive thinking skills are vital weapons of resistance, survival, and liberation. Fourth, the *Mmutle* trickster philosophical framework demands skills of rewriting and redirecting a story toward new and unexpected ends in the service of resistance, survival, and liberation.]

Dube, Zorodzai, 2016, 'Strengthening the Ubuntu Social Canopy after the Afrophobic Attacks', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 1: 4 pp.; PDF at:

[http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1461/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1461/pdf_1)

[In view of the aftermath of the Afrophobic attacks in South Africa, this study regards Paul's emphasis concerning common humanity and morality as a possible lacuna towards strengthening Ubuntu. Paul taught that both the Jews and the Gentiles have their common ancestor – Adam, and that good morality is a better identity marker than ethnicity. In view of the aftermath of the Afrophobic attacks in South Africa, this study suggests that similar arguments can be used to amend the Ubuntu social canopy.]

Dube, Zorodzai, 2016, 'The African Women Theologians' Contribution towards the Discussion about Alternative Masculinities', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 6 pp.; PDF at:

[http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1577/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1577/pdf_1)

[The study uses theories from cultural studies, critical theory, and contextual and gender studies to locate the voices of African women theologians in their discussion of Alternative masculinity. By using contextual Christologies based on the African woman's experience, the study adds to knowledge concerning the discussion of gender and alternative masculinities, in the process, highlighting the voices of African women theologians to the discussion. In a celebratory mood because of the unparalleled, heroine works of the Circle of Concerned African Female Theologians, I assess their use of critical tools such as alternative masculinities. Largely, the CIRCLE writers engaged with the concept of alternative masculinity from the perspective of Christology, associating Jesus with 'motherlike' virtues of caring and loving, which also became the basis to critique African hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy. While success has been achieved from a cultural perspective, in this study I suggest that emphasis should be diverted towards exploring strategies that empower women economically.]

Elischer, Sebastian, 2015, 'Autocratic Legacies and State Management of Islamic Activism in Niger', in *African Affairs* 114 (no. 457): 577-579

[In contrast to similar organizations in its neighbouring countries, Niger's domestic Salafi associations have remained peaceful and apolitical. Drawing on historical institutionalist scholarship and on recent conceptualizations of the state as a religious actor, this article examines how the Nigerien state has tried to regulate religious practices since Seyni Kountché's military coup in 1974. It argues that the institutional regulation of religious practices is one important variable that accounts for Niger's deviant trajectory. During Niger's autocratic period (1974–91), the government established the *Association islamique du Niger* (AIN) as the sole legal authority regulating access to Niger's Friday prayer mosques. Committed to peaceful and apolitical interpretations of the Koran, the AIN confined access to Niger's religious sphere to local clerics and Sufi brotherhoods. After the breakdown of autocratic rule in 1991, the AIN served as a religious advisory body. Salafi associations could assemble freely but had to abide by certain criteria. Confronted with the prospect of Islamic violence in 2000, the Nigerien state intervened in Niger's religious sphere in several ways. Among other initiatives, the government began to resurrect a more rigorous system of religious supervision in order to monitor religious practices on an ongoing basis.]

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Ephirim-Donkor, Anthony, 2015, *African Personality and Spirituality: The Role of Abosom and Human Essence*. Lanham [MD]: Lexington Books, 201 pp., ISBN 9781498521222 (hbk), \$80

[There is a divine pronouncement among the Akan that all human beings are children of God (*Nana Nyame*), none a child of the earth (mother); meaning that human beings are spiritual in origin, descending directly from God via the *abosom* (gods and goddesses). Every person then has a deity as father (*Āgyabosom*), recognition of which existentially enables a person to fulfil one's career or professional blueprint (*nkrabea*). Intrinsically, therefore, human beings embody the very essence of the *abosom*, which manifests itself behaviorally and psychologically in a manner identical to those of the gods and goddesses. The book therefore addresses ultimate existential concerns of the Akan, revealing the essence of the primeval gods and goddesses and how they transform themselves into human beings, as well as the psychology of personality characteristic attributes, the phenomenon of spirit alignment, and other manifestations of the gods and goddesses, and the imperative of ethical existence and generativity (*Obra bo*) as basis of eternal life.]

Esala, Nathan, 2016, 'Towards Contextualizing "Contextual Bible Study" among the Bikɔm Peoples in Ghana', in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* no. 154 (March 2016) 106-124; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/28743652/Towards\\_Contextualizing\\_Contextual\\_Bible\\_Study\\_among\\_the\\_Bik%C9%94%C9%94m\\_Peoples\\_in\\_Ghana?auto=bookmark&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/28743652/Towards_Contextualizing_Contextual_Bible_Study_among_the_Bik%C9%94%C9%94m_Peoples_in_Ghana?auto=bookmark&campaign=weekly_digest)

[How can Contextual Bible Study, which was developed in South Africa and which seeks to affirm expressions of local liberation through a process of community Bible interpretation, be re-contextualized in a different postcolonial context without operating in neocolonial modes? In Ghana the "public transcript" between the Bikɔm people and outside entities entails local groups affirming what the outside entity is proposing while looking for ways to glean from the interaction. This paper recounts an attempt to circumvent the typical scenario by attempting to create safe spaces through Contextual Bible Study which resulted in reading Job 2-3 with people living with disabilities in Gbintiri, Ghana. It also critiques the formation, implementation, exegetical insight, and praxis stemming from the study and includes assessment of the Contextual Bible Study methodology itself.]

Espirito Santo, Diana, 2016, 'Possession Consciousness, Religious Individualism, and Subjectivity in Brazilian Umbanda', in *Religion* 46, 4: ??-??, PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/26899783/Possession\\_consciousness\\_religious\\_individualism\\_and\\_subjectivity\\_in\\_Brazilian\\_Umbanda?auto=view&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/26899783/Possession_consciousness_religious_individualism_and_subjectivity_in_Brazilian_Umbanda?auto=view&campaign=weekly_digest)

[This article explores perceived changes in patterns of consciousness in relation to possession phenomena among a sector of urban practitioners of the Brazilian religion of Umbanda, and argues that these perceptions have been accompanied by the emergence of a more individualist approach to religious selfhood which aims to lay claim to a particular vision of Umbanda. These Umbandists understand their spirit universe in ontologically plastic terms, relativizing spirit identities much like Umbanda's founders. The increasing emphasis given to conscious forms of possession tallies with a relatively new attention to the self and its awareness of tradition, thought to be lacking in previous generations. This article also defends that we can produce an anthropological understanding of possession as having cosmogonic rather than just expressive effects.]

Ferguson, R., 2014, 'Pushing the Conceptual Boundaries in Researching Religion in Education in Diversity: A Critical Appraisal of Cornelia Roux's Work', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 1: 23-51

[This article emanates from a global analysis of the many articles, book chapters and research reports written by Cornelia Roux from 1988 to 2013. The article is a critical appraisal of Roux's contribution to the fields of religion and human rights in education in South Africa as 'scholar-activist'. An analysis of Roux's published work indicates that she was conscious of changes in political and social paradigms especially where religion in education is concerned, and consequently the need for 'paradigm shifts' before effective learning and teaching religion in diverse religious and cultural educational contexts could occur. Given the influences of her Reformed Christian upbringing, growing up and being educated in apartheid South Africa, Roux was ever conscious of the need to challenge patriarchy, bigotry, religious intolerance and cultural particularism. Consequently, key themes are evident in her

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

work that would contribute significantly to the debates on religion in education in South Africa and abroad. The article covers the following themes in Roux's work: the significance of values in education and in collaborative research, the need for paradigm shifts for effective learning and teaching religion and values; the teacher as facilitator/ mediator of learning; creative and appropriate pedagogies for diversity and learning to understand 'the other'; classroom praxis and research as praxis; religion and belief as a human right in a diverse society; and finally a critical discussion of Roux's research projects as collaborative and consciousness raising endeavours.]

Finnström, Sverker, 2012, 'KONY 2012: Military Humanitarianism, and the Magic of Occult Economies', in *Africa Spectrum* 47, 2-3: 127-135; PDF at:

<http://journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/view/554/552>

[The global success of the film *KONY 2012* by Invisible Children, Inc., manifests far greater magical powers than those of Joseph Kony and his ruthless Lord's Resistance Army, which it portrays. The most prominent feature of the Invisible Children lobby is the making and constant remaking of a master narrative that depoliticizes and dehistoricizes a murky reality of globalized war into an essentialized black-and-white story. The magic of such a digestible storyline, with Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony as a global poster boy for evil personified, not only plays into the hands of the oppressive Ugandan government but has also become handy for the US armed forces as they seek to increase their presence on the African continent. As the US-led war on terror is renewed and expanded, Invisible Children's humanitarian slogan, "Stop at nothing", has proven to be exceptionally selective, manifesting the occult economy of global activism that calls for military interventions.]

Frahm-Arap, Maria, 2015, 'The Political Rhetoric in Sermons and Select Social Media in Three Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical Churches leading up to the 2014 South African Election', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 1: 115-141

[Over the last three decades Pentecostal Charismatic Evangelical (PCE) style churches have used cutting-edge media technologies in their ministry. They have also become increasingly politically engaged. This paper shows how three PCE churches in Gauteng used select social media sites, particularly YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp as well as sermons to explain what they believed a Christian's role was in the 2014 elections. By analysing the messages of these churches on some social media sites and in pastor's sermons the ideal of civic society and political engagement of these churches is brought to the fore. All three churches believed that Christians should be politically active, pray for the country's leaders, vote in the elections and obey the rules of government. The churches had different political reasons for supporting democracy which ranged from seeing political engagement as a way to access government and municipal grants, to seeing themselves as the 'chaplains' to those in the highest offices of government and thus able to influence the way in which the country was governed.]

Frescura, Franco, 2014, 'A Case of Hopeless Failure: The Role of Missionaries in the Transformation of Southern Africa's Indigenous Architecture', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 2: 64-86

[Missionary efforts in Southern Africa during the 19th and early 20th centuries focused primarily upon its indigenous people, seeking to bring changes to their patterns of living. Faced with such issues as polygamy, initiation, child price (*lobola*), ancestral worship, beer drinking, and teenage sexual morality, most did not attempt to understand the nature of these social institutions, and chose to confront them in what they believed to be an uncompromising and moral Christian manner. Linked to this was an attempt to bring about changes to the indigenous built environment. This paper seeks to show that although a number of changes to local architecture are indeed present, these are largely cosmetic and the result of a pragmatic transfer of technology, leaving the cosmological core of indigenous settlement largely untouched.]

Garrabé, Laure, 2013, 'Pratique et conduites esthétiques entre *maracatu-de-baque-solto* et *umbanda-que-é-jurema*', in Santiago & Rougeon 2013: 169-192; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN\\_X\\_Possessions\\_Plurielles\\_Exp%C3%A9rience\\_Ethnographique\\_%C3%A0\\_Bahia\\_Br%C3%A9sil\\_1992-2012](https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN_X_Possessions_Plurielles_Exp%C3%A9rience_Ethnographique_%C3%A0_Bahia_Br%C3%A9sil_1992-2012)

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Gearon, L., 2014, 'The Paradigms of Contemporary Religious Education', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 1: 52-81

[The word 'paradigm' appears in a number of Cornelia Roux's published works (Roux 1998; 1998a; 2003; 2008; 2009; 2011). This article re-examines her use of 'paradigm' in the light of Thomas Kuhn's (1996) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Drawing on recently published work on religion and education (Gearon 2013; 2014), I elaborate why researchers and educators alike require a more rigorous theoretical conceptualisation of the underlying paradigms of contemporary religious education. Outlining how a satisfactory understanding of the paradigms in religious education require an understanding of the epistemological grounds of each, the article presents, by way of demonstration, a critical outline of six such paradigms: the scriptural-theological; the phenomenological; the spiritual-experiential; the philosophical-conceptual; the socio-cultural; and the historical-political.]

Getman, & S. Nadar 2013, 'Nativity and Motherism: Embodiment within Praxis of Spiritual Leadership', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 26, 2: 59-73

[In this article we explore — through Grace Jantzen's (1998) notion of nativity, and the contested framing of "motherism" — the significance of giving birth and mothering to spiritual and religious leadership. We suggest that the experience of giving birth and the praxis of mothering provide not only a conceptual framework to harness new thinking about spiritual leadership and traditional theological doctrines, but also a practical means to transform patriarchal religious spaces. Drawing on feminist theology (which begins with personal experience — our own and shared) we show that there is a reciprocal relationship between mothering and priesthood, which transcends essentialist notions of mothering by embracing embodiment in a holistic praxis of spiritual leadership.]

Golomski, Casey, 2016, 'Religion and Migration: Cases for a Global Material Ethics', in *African Studies* 2016: 1-14; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/25998205/Religion\\_and\\_Migration\\_Cases\\_for\\_a\\_Global\\_Material\\_Ethics?auto=view&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/25998205/Religion_and_Migration_Cases_for_a_Global_Material_Ethics?auto=view&campaign=weekly_digest)

[This review article describes three ethnographies, two on peculiar churches in Africa and their relationships to the global, and one on the biographies of Africans who migrate globally in search of a better life. It elucidates several interlocking themes: perception and materiality; ethical life; existential mobility, which suggestively point to concept of global material ethics that may innovate studies of religion, migration, and contemporary cultural life in Africa.]

Gifford, Paul, 2015, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*. London: C. Hurst & Company, 187 pp.. ISBN978 1 84904 477 6 (pbk), £18.99

{This book is structured around the argument that there is a major difference between an African 'enchanted imaginary' expressed in African Pentecostalism and a development-oriented Christianity exemplified by the Catholic Church in Africa. The first form of Christianity is deeply embedded in African religious world views, such as a belief in spiritual beings and witchcraft. The second form of Christianity is characterized by a strong focus on development and internal secularization. The argument of the book is that two dysfunctional forces – namely the enchanted religious imagination and a neo-patrimonial political culture – hinder Africa from joining that world and that Catholic Christianity fails to address this by focusing merely on development and inculturation.]

Gifford, Paul, 2016, 'Religion in Contemporary Senegal', in *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 31, 6: 255-267

[Senegal is usually classified as 90% Muslim and 5% Christian. But Senegal's dominant religious imagination is far different from anything suggested by classical labels like 'Muslim' or even 'Sufi Brotherhoods'. The pervasive religious imagination sees spiritual forces at play everywhere and understands causality primarily in spiritual terms. These spiritual forces can be manipulated by individuals gifted with such powers (marabouts), positively for one's advancement or negatively to counter or even bring down competitors or opponents. This enchanted religious imagination, often given an Islamic character, is obtrusive in Senegal's major sports: *lutte avec frappe* and football. It is inescapable in politics, as politicians admit their recourse to marabouts and even more often accuse opponents of

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

it. For women maraboutage is particularly employed for domestic realities: a husband, children, domestic security. The courts regularly feature cases arising from this imagination. The phenomenon merits research, not just to clarify the nature of Senegal's religion itself, but also for its effects on the country's socio-political development generally.]

Gilbert, Juliet, 2015, 'The Heart as a Compass: Preaching Self-worth and Success to Single Young Women in a Nigerian Pentecostal Church', in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 45, 3-4: 307 – 333; full text at: <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15700666-12340048>

[The quiet city of Calabar in southeastern Nigeria is famed for its burgeoning church scene offering various spiritual services. In this religious marketplace, The Brook Church stands out due to its beautiful building, well-dressed congregation, clever branding, and its 'unique' preaching. Focusing on young women's engagement with The Brook Church, this article builds on recent analyses seeking to understand the attraction of Pentecostalism for this often marginalised and disenfranchised social group. Examining The Brook Church's life-affirming doctrine of Zoe, in which individual aspirations are realised through careful and timely management of the religious self, the article explores how religious action and rhetoric mould new subjectivities aimed for success. Illustrating how Pentecostal practice gives young women a newfound sense of self-worth and confidence, the article's emphasis on the individual project suggests we should broaden debates that solely equate young women's engagement with Pentecostalism with sexuality and marriage opportunities.]

Gómez-Becerra, José Juan, 20??, 'ESU: The Circle as a Proscenium for Yoruba Ritual Performance'; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/25066564/ESU\\_The\\_Circle\\_as\\_a\\_Proscenium\\_for\\_Yoruba\\_Ritual\\_Performance?auto=view&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/25066564/ESU_The_Circle_as_a_Proscenium_for_Yoruba_Ritual_Performance?auto=view&campaign=weekly_digest)

[This essay relates the recurrent presence of the circular setup of Yoruba's Orisas mounting ritual to the circle's potential to create a focal point, which serves as a ritual's proscenium and a point of contact between Aye and Orun. The merging of performance theory and Yoruba thought and cosmology provide groundwork to secularly analyze the ritual without alienating it from its religious organic purpose. The symbolic dimensions of the circle are innumerable since a sign's signification is arbitrary; however, in this essay the circle is understood as a constant and multiple reduplication of itself. The circle symbolizes the duality of beginning and end, exclusion and inclusion, and it is also Esu. The center of the circle is the crossroad where the roads meet and diverge, as it is Esu. The conventional theatrical proscenium serves as the invisible space between audience and the fourth wall of the stage reinforcing the distance between audience and performers. Contrary, the circular proscenium displaces the conventional idea of the stage, which brings the audience to intimacy with the performers. The performing space is defined by the audience's focal point, where all of them come together. In Yoruba's ritual, this coming together of the community is signified in the elegun Orisas. The point of contact, Esu, is where Aye and Orun meet; everything exists simultaneously in the central point. The many dimension of the circle gives it a preferential status within the Yoruba ritual, as a space for community bonding and ritualistic performance.]

Goosen, Daniel, 2014, 'Response to Prof. Morny Joy's "Method and Theory in Religious Studies"', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 314-319 (print) / 341-346 (digital)

Grijspaarde, Huib van de, Maarten Voors, Erwin Bulte & Paul Richards 2013, 'Who Believes in Witches?: Institutional Flux in Sierra Leone', in *African Affairs* 112 (no. 446): 22-47

[Witchcraft belief has been documented across the globe, as is the widespread occurrence of such beliefs in modern Africa affects politics, economic development, and poverty alleviation. Anthropologists have analysed the semiotics of African witchcraft beliefs, but there is less information on distributional issues. An important question is which communities are most affected, and why? Using data from a survey of 182 villages and 2,443 household heads in the Gola Forest region of eastern Sierra Leone, we examine three manifestations of witchcraft concerns, witchcraft conflicts, and witch detection. We find that where patrimonial relations of agrarian production remain strong, and in settings where market forces are now well established, witchcraft is less of a concern. By contrast, witchcraft

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

manifestations are higher in communities experiencing the competing pull of patrimonial and market norms. Witchcraft belief, we conclude, is a product of normative ambiguity.]

Grillo, Laura S., 2013, 'Catachresis in Côte d'Ivoire: Female Genital Power in Religious Ritual and Political Resistance', in *Religion and Gender* 3, 2: 188-206; PDF at

<https://www.religionandgender.org/articles/abstract/10.18352/rg.8329/>

[Ivoirian women vehemently protest the violence and calamity of civil war by deploying an embodied rhetoric of ritual, appealing to the traditional religious concept of 'Female Genital Power'. I propose that their imagistic resistance to the postcolonial state represents a catachresis, with a few interesting twists. Most salient is that what women reinscribe onto the political scene is not as a feature of the imperial culture but the concept-metaphors of indigenous religion, and especially the image of Woman as the source of moral and spiritual power from which proceeds all political, religious, and juridical authority. Whereas the logocentrism of the academy, and postcolonial theory in particular, leads to aporia, ritual remands scholars into the situation of the actual world, where women are actively engaged in self-representation that both defies projected depictions of them and rejects their absence from state conceptions of power.]

Guedj, Pauline, 2013, "'Blanche mais africaine": Retour sur une ethnographie du mouvement "akan" états-unien', in Santiago & Rougeon 2013: 29-54; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN\\_X\\_Possessions\\_Plurielles\\_Exp%C3%A9rience\\_Ethnographique\\_%C3%A0\\_Bahia\\_Br%C3%A9sil\\_1992-2012](https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN_X_Possessions_Plurielles_Exp%C3%A9rience_Ethnographique_%C3%A0_Bahia_Br%C3%A9sil_1992-2012)

[L'objectif de cet article sera de présenter les spécificités de mon enquête de terrain réalisée entre 2000 et 2008 auprès des pratiquants de la religion "akan". Après avoir analysé l'histoire du mouvement et sa situation actuelle, je décrirai mon parcours dans le mouvement ainsi que les particularités de la maison de culte qui m'accueille lors de mes recherches. De la marge à ses épicentres, nous verrons alors comment cette enquête de terrain menée par une anthropologue blanche dans un des milieux contemporains du nationalisme noir fut avant tout affaire de négociation et de redéfinition de l'identité.]

Hadebe, Nontando M., 2016, "'Moving in Circles": A *Sankofa*-Kairos Theology of Inclusivity and Accountability Rooted in Trinitarian Theology as a Resource for Restoring the Liberating Legacy of The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 6 pp.; PDF at: [http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1573/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1573/pdf_1)

[This article proposes *Sankofa*-Kairos methodology based on the dual legacies of The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and The Kairos Document as the starting point for developing accountable and inclusive liberation theologies rooted in Social Models of the Trinity that could respond to the multiple challenges emerging from the African context.]

Hale, Frederick, 2015, 'Nils Astrup and indigenous African Cultures: A Study in Evolving Missionary Attitudes', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 2: 42-63

[It has often been alleged that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries European missionaries in Africa evinced little respect for the indigenous peoples whom they evangelised and otherwise sought to influence through Christian ministry. Considerably less frequently, however, have such assertions been substantiated with detailed case studies to demonstrate possible attitudinal shifts over time as the missionaries in question became better acquainted with African cultures and folkways. The present article, a response to M.M. Sepota's 'The Destruction of African Culture by Christianity', which was published in the *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*, examines the attitudes of one key individual, Hans Astrup, who headed the Church of Norway Schreuder Mission from his arrival in Natal in 1883 until he felt confident about expanding his agency's field into what are now Mozambique and Swaziland.]

Haron, Muhammed, 2014, 'Ahmad Deedat: The Making of a Transnational Religious Figure', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 66-93

[Ahmad Deedat is one of South Africa's well known Muslim missionaries whose contributions towards Christian-Muslim relations have been duly acknowledged by friend and foe alike. Even though

Deedat's method was not approved by many Muslims, his labours in doing mission in and outside South Africa cannot be ignored. Deedat might not be regarded as a champion of Christian-Muslim dialogue in South Africa [but] he obliquely pushed Christian and Muslims in that direction. Though this essay is somewhat of a review of Goolam Vahed's *Ahmad Deedat: The Man and His Mission* (Durban: IPCI, 2013), it employs it as a platform to throw more light on Deedat as a transnational figure. Apart from providing a synoptic overview of the Vahed's text's rich contents and pointing out its merits/demerits, it veers off into looking closely at those events and individuals/organizations that played a part in influencing Deedat; in addition it evaluates the exclusivist approach that he determinedly adopted to counter Christian mission between the 1940s and the 1990s. In the process of doing this the essay attempts to assess Deedat's legacy.]

Harris, Colette, 2012, 'Masculinities and Religion in Kaduna, Nigeria: A Struggle for Continuity at a Time of Change', in *Religion and Gender* 2, 2: 207–230; PDF at: <https://www.religionandgender.org/articles/abstract/10.18352/rg.7204/>

[This paper addresses coping strategies used by men in Kaduna to ward off chaos resulting from economic instability, situating them within the global context and national policies on gender and religion. They include upholding a set of gender norms in which adult masculinity's most crucial traits are control over women and children, and breadwinning. These norms were introduced into Nigeria under colonialism and through Islam and Christianity, yet today they are considered to represent local traditions. Religion is also important for coping strategies, especially the newer Pentecostal churches and reformist mosques, characterized by emphasis on literalist interpretations of the scriptures and notions of male superiority. Poor men have particularly welcomed the levels of certainty, moral and material support they provide as well as the legitimization of their gender power positions, especially those struggling to perform appropriate masculinity, while at the same time these establishments have facilitated sectarian violence.]

Hart, Amy, 2014, 'Peace in the Land of Upright People: Religion and Violence in Burkina Faso', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 179-194

[Despite its desperate poverty and geographical position in a region wrought with religious and political violence, Burkina Faso has avoided displays of religious intolerance. Instead, it has upheld a reputation as an extremely open, welcoming and tolerant society, which has been maintained despite a lack of religious homogeneity in the country. This article attempts to explain how Burkina Faso has remained regionally unique in its approach towards religion by studying the country's social, cultural-/ethnic, and religious climate, as well as the present socio-religious interrelations within the family and community setting. After looking at several hypotheses, some unique factors seem determinant, including the geographical diversity of ethnic and religious groups across Burkina Faso, leading to a high contact setting between groups of various beliefs and ethnicities. This diversity, combined with the interdependent lifestyle lived by the majority of Burkina Faso's citizens, has led to a peace-fostering emphasis on community harmony over doctrinal certainty.]

Hart, William David, 2013, "'One Percenters': Black Atheists, Secular Humanists, and Naturalists', in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, 4: 675-696; doi:10.1215/00382876-2345234

[This essay explores an emergent black atheist, secular humanist, and naturalistic imagination. Based on a 2007 survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life that measured the percentage of African Americans holding such views, I refer to this group as 'one percenters'. Broadly speaking, one percenters view human nature and destiny (necessity and historical contingency) through an anthropological rather than a theological lens. As three perspectives on the same phenomenon, they are the dialectical other of theism and conventional forms of religion. In all three cases, negating theism does 'positive' productive and creative work, energizing a different kind of affirmation. Nuances in rhetoric, emotional color, and practical engagement with religious cultures and institutions create distinctions among atheists, secular humanists, and naturalists that are more than merely artful and stylized. These nuances reveal different understandings of what nonbelief entails in matters of conduct and

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

whether the negative and epistemic category of ‘nonbelief’ properly describes their difference from theists.]

Harvey, Marcus, 2016, ‘“Hard Skies” and Bottomless Questions: Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Epistemological “Opacity” in Black Religious Experience’, in *Journal of Africana Religions* 4, 2: 186-214

[Approaching Zora Neale Hurston as both a *littérateur* and cultural theorist who challenges conventional methodological and discursive boundaries, this article investigates her famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Drawing on Charles Long's category of “opacity” as a crucial factor in the dynamics of Black religious experience, I contend that the value of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* extends beyond the domain of literary theory into the domain of religious theory. More specifically, a close reading of certain passages in the novel signals disruptive wonderment and sacred silence as two motifs underscoring the integral status of epistemological opacity in Black religious experience. Further, the way the novel encodes these two motifs suggests the phenomenological receptivity of Black religious experience to spiritually based African and African-derived epistemological repertoires originating outside the Judeo-Christian tradition that construct reality independently.]

Hawthorne, S.M., & Adriaan S. van Klinken 2013, ‘Catachresis: Religion, Gender, and Postcoloniality’, in *Religion and Gender* 3, 2: 159–167; PDF at:

<https://www.religionandgender.org/articles/abstract/10.18352/rg.9170/>

Hoel, Nina, 2013, ‘Sexualising the Sacred, Sacralising Sexuality: An Analysis of Public Responses to Muslim Women’s Religious Leadership in the Context of a Cape Town Mosque’, in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 26, 2: 25-41

[This paper analyses the discourses of sexuality that can be gleaned from debates on Muslim women’s religious leadership in Islam. In order to present a focused discussion on this topic, I pay particular attention to the public responses and commentaries that emerged in the wake of Amina Wadud’s delivery of the Friday *khutbah* (sermon) in a Cape Town mosque in 1994. Although this event took place twenty years ago, the discourses on sexuality that unfolded in these public debates continue to inform contemporary public engagements on this topic. This paper is not concerned with the vexed question of prohibition or permission of women’s religious leadership in Islamic legal traditions and/or Muslim history, but rather with the kinds of assumptions regarding women’s sexuality that inform the politics of religious inclusion/exclusion. In conclusion, the paper offers a discussion on women’s religious leadership through the lens of Islamic feminism in order to foreground some of the distinct voices that shift the focus of public debates—from an emphasis on women’s sexuality to questions of women’s spirituality and humanity.]

Jackson, R., 2014, ‘Religion Education, Intercultural Education and Human Rights: A Contribution for Cornelia Roux’, in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 1: 7-22

[In this article, I draw on my own experience as a researcher, writer on theory and pedagogy of religion education<sup>1</sup> and contributor to European policy documents. This provides a basis to discuss some issues pertinent to Cornelia Roux’s personal and professional journey as a researcher in religion education and related fields, including intercultural education, human rights education and citizenship education. I refer to our meetings over the years, both in and beyond South Africa, especially in the context of the International Network for Interreligious and Intercultural Education, and to the development of Professor Roux’s ideas on Religion in Education (RiE), Religion and Education (RaE). An attempt is then made to articulate a view on the question of liberalism in relation to human rights, which connects to a stance on intercultural education and to religion education and values education more widely. The position developed is consistent with the approach to empirical research developed by Professor Roux and her team. The article concludes by relating Cornelia Roux’s personal journey to some of the themes considered above.]

Jarvis, J., 2014, ‘Reflections on Gender Identity in a Safe Space for Transforming Classroom Praxis’, in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 1: 169-191

[This article focuses on the findings of a recent empirical study which explored the lived experiences of patriarchy of selected female teachers situated in four provinces in South Africa. The findings show that the participating teachers' gender identity is shaped by their religious and cultural discourses. Working within a feminist paradigm, narrative inquiry was employed as the research methodology. Creating a safe space, the opportunity was provided to hear the teachers' voices in response to the master narrative of patriarchy. Sharing their self-narrative both with an internal audience (in their 'society-of-mind') and with an external audience allowed them to reclaim themselves as they discovered the extent to which it is possible to become disentangled from their 'other' (men). This process initiated self-empowerment of the teachers and contributed to building 'identity capital' as they reflected on their gender identity, adopting a 'counter-position' to patriarchy. Increased extent and strength of 'gender identity capital', enabling the articulation of gender identity transformation in every domain of their lives, personal, social and professional, holds the possibility of developing teachers' classroom practice into classroom praxis. Effective teaching-learning about gender equality has the potential of informing the development of female and male learners and to be transformative for South African society.]

Jethro, Duane, 2016, 'Imagining Tradition: Heritage, Culture and Religion in Contemporary Ghanaian Cinema Culture', in *Religion*

[This article is a response to Birgit Meyer's chapter 'Mediating Traditional Culture' from her book *Sensational Movies: Video, Vision, and Christianity in Ghana*. It reflects on her argument about heritage as a dominant discourse in debates about religion and culture in the Ghanaian video film industry, raises questions about the dynamics of this politics of representation, and outlines the significance of her approach for theorising heritage. It draws on a series of observations about sites of culture and heritage in contemporary Ghana to frame a discussion about dominant themes that emerge in Meyer's chapter, namely, chiefs and chiefly authority, the genre of the 'epic', and audience perceptions of mediations of tradition and culture. It concludes by pointing out the usefulness and value that a focus on imaginaries, media, and mediation brings to the study of heritage.]

Johnson, Paul Christopher, 2016, 'Scholars Possessed!: On Writing Africana Religions with the Left Hand', in *Journal of Africana Religions* 4, 2: 154-185

[Consequential categories like "Africana religions" emerge from a calibration of religious practices with ethnographic writing practices. Attending to the processes of writing Africana religions warrants close attention because it is mostly through such second-order representations that "Africana religions" enter the broader comparative field of the study of religion. These representations exert force as durable indexes of religion and race. For example, descriptions of Africana religions have long emphasized the centrality of "spirit possession," at least in part as a contraposition to European individualism and rationalism. This essay gives close attention to writing on the practices of spirit possession and the ways the category of "Africana religions" is thereby constituted. Scholars' narratives of their own possessions, or what I call the technique of "writing with the left hand," present a relatively recent strategy for writing Africana religions. I focus on the work of the French ethnographer Michel Leiris in Africa to address the affordances and risks of this mode of report.]

Joy, Morny, 2014, 'Method and Theory in Religious Studies: Retrospect and Future Prospects', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 286-313 (print) / 313-340 (digital)

[There is a distinct possibility that, in the twenty-first century, Religious Studies as a discipline could come into its own. Its multidisciplinary orientation, if handled with due critical awareness as to its own former grandiose ambitions and present entanglements, could provide insight into the various problems that beset contemporary existence. Religious Studies has been involved in a number of internal debates that have sapped its energies and prevented it from advancing theoretically in ways that would help it address these problems. In this article I survey some of the developments that have taken place in other disciplines that could be of benefit in helping Religious Studies take its place as a discipline that is relevant for the twenty-first century.]

Joy, Morny, 2014, 'Further Response', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 320321 (print) / 347-348 (digital)

Kambon, Obádélé, 2016, 'Akan Ananse Stories, Yorùbá Ìjápá Tales, and the Dikènga Theory: Worldview and Structure', in *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* (ISSN: 2343-6530) 4, 2: 1-39; PDF at: [https://www.academia.edu/29575350/AKAN\\_ANANSE\\_STORIES\\_YOR%C3%99B%C3%81\\_%C3%8CJ%C3%80P%C3%81\\_TALES\\_AND\\_THE\\_DIK%C3%88NGA\\_THEORY\\_WORLDVIEW\\_AND\\_STRUCTURE?auto=bookmark&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/29575350/AKAN_ANANSE_STORIES_YOR%C3%99B%C3%81_%C3%8CJ%C3%80P%C3%81_TALES_AND_THE_DIK%C3%88NGA_THEORY_WORLDVIEW_AND_STRUCTURE?auto=bookmark&campaign=weekly_digest)

[Is it possible to use endogenous African cosmological, philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks to analyze indigenous African phenomena? Why should one even try? In this article, it is argued that such analyses are not only possible and plausible, but they are imperative. It is further argued that just such frameworks can add insight to our understanding of the structure of Akan Ananse and Yorùbá Ìjápá stories and the shared African worldview from which they arise. According to Fu-Kiau, 'nothing exists that does not follow the steps of the cyclical Kongo cosmogram' (Fu-Kiau 1994: 26). This bold hypothesis is tested in this study by applying Dikènga, the cosmogram of the Bakòngo, to an oral (and/or written) literary analysis of the structure of Akan and Yorùbá stories. This application is what we term the "Dikènga theory of literary analysis." We find that this theoretical framework can help us shift away from concepts of "storylines" and "timelines" to reveal the patterned and cyclical nature of material and immaterial phenomena and to deepen our understanding of these stories as manifestations of a shared African worldview.]

Kamp, Linda van der, 2012, 'Love Therapy: A Brazilian Pentecostal (Dis)Connection in Maputo', in Mirjam de Bruijn & Rijk van Dijk (eds.) 2012, *The Social Life of Connectivity in Africa*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 203-226

[Every Saturday evening, the Brazilian Pentecostal Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Universal Church) organizes *terapia do amor* (Therapy of Love) in several of its branches in Maputo, Mozambique's capital. This is a public form of counselling that resembles a church service but is directed at producing new discourses and realities of love, sexuality and marriage. The Brazilian pastors force participants to be open about sensitive issues such as jealous partners, the role of women in sex, and witchcraft practices. The majority of the participants are upwardly mobile women who are frequenting the therapy as a result of broken and unsuccessful relationships. They want to find a faithful partner and learn about new ideas in relating. To analyze the impact of the therapy on these women's lives, this contribution explores the *terapia do amor* as a set of 'connecting techniques'. By describing Brazilian Pentecostal techniques on connecting to new forms of love and marriage, this chapter demonstrates the central role of the body in making connections and effectuating forms of social change, and how new modes of bridging and bonding in the sphere of love also imply explicit techniques of disconnection that can lead to insecure relationships.]

Kamp, Linda van der, 2016, *Violent Conversion: Brazilian Pentecostalism and Urban Women in Mozambique*. Martlesham [Suffolk]: Boydell & Brewer, 248 pp., ISBN 9781847011527 (hbk), £50

[There has been an extraordinary growth in Pentecostalism in Africa, with Brazilian Pentecostals establishing new transnational Christian connections, initiating widespread changes not only in religious practice but in society. This book describes its rise in Maputo, capital of Mozambique, and the sometimes dramatic impact of Pentecostalism on women. Here large numbers of urban women are taking advantage of the opportunities Pentecostalism offers to overcome restrictions at home, pioneer new life spaces and change their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, conversion can also mean a violent rupturing with tradition, with family and with social networks. As the pastors encourage women to cut their ties with the past, including ancestral spirits, they come to see their kin and husbands as imbued with evil powers, and many leave their families. Conquering spheres that used to be forbidden to them, they often live alone as unmarried women, sometimes earning more than men of a similar age. They are also expected to donate huge sums to the churches, often money that they can ill afford, bringing new hardships.]

Kangwa, Jonathan, 2016, 'The Role of the Theology of Retribution in the Growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Africa', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 1: 9 pp.; PDF at: <http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1542/pdf>

[Located within African theologies and African church history, this article maintains that the current discourse on Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Africa, as it concentrates on healing and prophecy, overlooks the role played by the theology of retribution in the growth of these churches.]

Kaoma, Kapyia John, 2016, 'African Religion and Colonial Rebellion: The Contestation of Power in Colonial Zimbabwe's *Chimurenga* of 1896-1897', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 29, 1: 57-84

[This article examines the unifying roles of the Mwari cult, the cultural symbol of land, and the authority of spirit mediums in the first anti-colonial socio-political and religious protest of the *Chimurenga* of 1896-97 in colonial Zimbabwe. Using their spiritually and socially defined authority, spirit mediums (*n'anga*) served as movement intellectuals to the *Chimurenga*—they crafted strategies and inspiration for social protest. The shared values of the Mwari cult, the cultural symbol of land, and the office of mediums were further employed to mobilize masses into a social movement that sought to reverse rapid sociocultural and political changes brought about by colonialism. To make this case, the article problematizes religion within an African lifeworld. Aside from showing that African religions share many aspects with other world religions, this article rejects Eliade's, and Durkheim's theory of 'the sacred and the profane'. It argues that this separation is hard to establish in African traditional religions and cosmologies. Spirit mediums, for example, employed African sociology, spiritual beliefs and customs in their attempts to reject the colonial order. Besides, the implementation of 'indirect rule' and land grabs led to the contestation of power between colonial authorities, chiefs, and spirit mediums. This contestation is analyzed from a social movement perspective. Amidst contemporary social injustices, human rights abuses and corruption in post-colonial Africa, and without underestimating the role traditional religions play in African politics, the study challenges Christianity to follow the prophetic example of spirit mediums in the *Chimurenga*.]

Kareem, Kewuyemi Muritala, 2016, 'Islamic Banking and the Question of Secularism in Nigeria', in *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 6, 1: 77-99; PDF at:

<http://unilorin.edu.ng/ejournals/index.php/ijourel/article/view/1877/1187>

[Since the introduction of Islamic banking in Nigeria, the importance of secularism has been the object of discussion, with the general belief by a large number of people that Islamic banking will Islamise Nigeria and disrupt its secularity. It is against this backdrop that this paper discusses the issue of secularism in relation to Islamic banking in Nigeria. Specifically, it examines the role of religion, particularly the main ones, i.e. Islam and Christianity, as an agent in the context of the politics in Nigeria. This study uses qualitative and descriptive methodology. Using structural-functional theory and employing largely Rajeev Dhawan's analysis of constitutional secularism, we found that secular life and religion are pervasively entangled to the extent that official indifference cannot justify politically or constitutionally the indifference. Many official practices, such as work-free days (Saturdays and Sundays), holidays (on Christmas, *Idul fitr*), churches and mosques in the state government houses and presidential villa clearly show that there is an engagement with religion. Islamic banking is one of the ways by which the economic aspect of Islam is practised; it does not violate section 10 of the Nigerian Constitution because it is not being financed directly or indirectly by the state funds. The conception of secularism in Nigeria is religious tolerance and equal treatment of all religious groups.]

Kasomo, Daniel, & Loreen Iminza Maseno 2011, 'A Critical Appraisal of African Feminist Theology', in *International Journal of Current Research* 2, 1 (January 2011): 154-162

[This paper presents a critical appraisal of African feminist theology in the twenty first century. It considers African feminist theology as a diverse and growing area bringing forth new research, new arguments and insights by the day. Yet, this vast diversity also poses problems and challenges for further examination. This paper introduces the constituent characteristics, norms, sources and themes of African feminist theology in order to discover what African feminist theology is about. It focuses on one major theme in African women's theology, that of community. It presents the treatment of

community by African women theologians, thus showing that the community that is to be hoped for in African feminist theology is the ordering of relations that empower both men and women.]

Kaunda, Chammah J., 2016, 'Reconstituting Ndembu Traditional Eco-masculinities: An African Theodecolonial Perspective', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 1: 7 pp.; PDF at:

[http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1514/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1514/pdf_1)

[African men have been accused of being ecologically impotent by some African ecofeminist theologians. This article investigates how through colonialism Ndembu men were alienated from nature. It engages with the notion of Ndembu traditional eco-masculinities which was conceptualised in a framework of sacrifice as ground for manliness. I utilised this view as hermeneutical point of departure for reconceptualising African Christian masculinities that are ecologically sensitive. Framed within theodecolonial imagination, the article suggests a reinterpretation of the notion of Christian sacrifice in dialogue with Ndembu notion as a theological model for constructing African Christian eco-masculinities for promoting gender and nature justice.]

Kedzierska-Manzon, Agnieszka, 2014, *Chasseurs Mandingues: violence, pouvoir et religion en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Paris: Karthala, 250 pp., ISBN 978 2 8111 1150 2 (pbk), €28

[Dans cet ouvrage consacré à l'habitus et à l'imaginaire cynégétique mandingue, A. Kedzierska-Manzon s'interroge, dans une perspective diachronique et comparative, sur le rôle des chasseurs (*donso*) – et des associations qu'ils fondent – dans les sphères du politique et du religieux ainsi que sur les ressorts de la légitimité du pouvoir qui leur est attribué. L'ouvrage s'articule en trois parties dont chacune rend compte d'un aspect des relations complexes entre chasse, violence, pouvoir et religion. Le texte est accompagné d'une annexe audiovisuelle qui permet de suivre en images les déplacements des chasseurs entre brousse et village et les performances dansées et chantées par lesquels ils réactivent publiquement leurs exploits.]

Kerlis, B., 2013, 'Sacred Spaces in Virtual Places: Locating Religion in the Financial Market', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 26, 1: 23-44

[Up until the late 1980s, Muslims had largely been excluded from participating in the global financial market due to their inability to discern *halal* (permissible) investments from non-permissible investments or income. This predicament changed after the endorsement and global adoption of the Shari'ah screen. The Shari'ah screen aims to ensure that organisations seeking to raise investment capital from pious investors in the financial market space are indeed acting within parameters that are religiously permissible for Muslim investors. Within one decade, the Shari'ah screen gave rise to a new space: the Islamic financial market space. While still small, this space has been growing faster than its secular counterpart. This paper utilises Kim Knott's spatial framework as a theoretical and methodological resource for exploring the boundaries between religion and non-religion. By examining the various ways in which the "sacred" operates across these boundaries, Knott's framework provides a critical lens through which to enable a systematic description, analysis, and contextualisation of Islam within the global financial market space—and, more so, how the Islamic financial market space is practised, represented, lived, produced, and reproduced.]

Klinken, Adriaan van, 2011, 'Male Headship as Male Agency: An Alternative Understanding of a 'Patriarchal' African Pentecostal Discourse on Masculinity', in *Religion and Gender* 1, 1: 104-124; PDF at: <https://www.religionandgender.org/articles/abstract/10.18352/rg.19/>

[In some Christian circles in Africa, male headship is a defining notion of masculinity. The central question in this article is how discourses on masculinity that affirm male headship can be understood. A review of recent scholarship on masculinities and religion shows that male headship is often interpreted in terms of male dominance. However, a case study of sermons in a Zambian Pentecostal church shows that discourse on male headship can be far more complex and can even contribute to a transformation of masculinities. The main argument is that a monolithic concept of patriarchy hinders a nuanced analysis of the meaning and function of male headship in local contexts. The suggestion is that in some contexts, male headship can be understood in terms of agency.]

Klinken, Adriaan S. van, 2013, 'God's World Is Not an Animal Farm—Or Is It?: The Catachrestic Translation of Gender Equality in African Pentecostalism', in *Religion & Gender* 3, 2: 240-258; PDF at: <https://www.religionandgender.org/articles/abstract/10.18352/rg.9167/>

[Building on scholarly debates on Pentecostalism, gender and modernity in Africa, this article engages a postcolonial perspective to explore and discuss the ambivalent, even paradoxical nature of African Pentecostal gender discourse. It analyses the conceptualization of gender equality, in particular the attempt to reconcile the notions of 'male-female equality' and 'male headship', in a sermon series delivered by a prominent Zambian Pentecostal pastor, and argues that the appropriation and interruption of Western notions of gender equality in these sermons can be interpreted, in the words of Homi Bhabha, as a catachrestic postcolonial translation of modernity. Hence, the article critically discusses the Western ethnocentrism in some scholarly debates on gender and Pentecostalism in Africa, and points to some of the fundamental questions that Pentecostalism and its ambivalent gender discourse pose to gender-critical scholarship in the study of religion.]

Klinken, Adriaan, & Ezra Chitando 2016, 'Introduction: Public Religion, Homophobia and Politics of Homosexuality in Africa', in Adriaan van Klinken & Ezra Chitando (eds.) 2016, *Public Religion and the Politics of Homosexuality in Africa*. Farnham [Surrey]: Ashgate, 1-16; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/25033299/Introduction\\_Public\\_Religion\\_Homophobia\\_and\\_Politics\\_of\\_Homosexuality\\_in\\_Africa?auto=view&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/25033299/Introduction_Public_Religion_Homophobia_and_Politics_of_Homosexuality_in_Africa?auto=view&campaign=weekly_digest)

Knight, NaShieka, 2015, 'Say My Name: Failure to Name, Misnaming, and Renaming as Acts of Violence against Africana Women', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 167-???

Kobo, Fundiswa, 2016, 'Umfazi akangeni ebuhlanti emzini ... : A Womanist Dialogue with Black Theology of Liberation in the 21st Century', in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 1: 6 pp.; PDF at: <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3268>

[This article is premised by pervasive attitudes arising from a complex interplay of cultural practices, which have succeeded in dislocating black women from what is perceived to be black men's sites, *ebuhlanti* (kraal), *esuthwini* (initiation school); locating them in culturally designated womanised sites *eziko/egoqweni* (kitchen and household), *ekuzaleni nasekukhuliseni abantwana* (child birth and rearing) in a patriarchal society. The crux of the article lies in its attempt to re-locate both men and women by its adoption of 'a hard-line pro-black position'. Womanists acknowledge the interlocution of black men and thus suggest firstly, a shift in mind-set for both to view these sites as life giving and therefore to look for convergences. The article is thus a dialogue between a womanist and Black Theology of Liberation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the purpose of understanding liberation of black people for the liberation of humanity.]

Kondemo, Marthe M., 2016, 'What now of the *Vashti* Character in the Hebrew Bible?: Ruminating on the Future of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians among Emerging Scholars in Democratic Republic of the Congo', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 7 pp.; PDF at:

[http://verbumeteccllesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1588/pdf\\_1](http://verbumeteccllesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1588/pdf_1)

[Concerned about the relative absence of activities (including the writings) by members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians within the Democratic Republic of the Congo Circle, Francophone context in general and her Congolese context in particular, the author uses the marginalised character of *Vashti* in the Hebrew Bible to see which light the character might shed within these contexts. Can *Vashti's* identity in terms of boldness, courage and independence serve as a model for Congolese women in their efforts to make a positive impact on their contexts which remain glaringly patriarchal even today after many years of political independence? In this article, it is argued that the character of *Vashti*, especially her sense of independence and courage, can serve as a motivation for Congolese female theologians in their search for new identities.]

Labeodan, Helen Adekunbi, 2015, 'Exploring Yoruba Proverbs with Feminine Lexis as a Tool for Reimagining African Womanhood', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 21-34

Labeodan, Helen A., 2016, 'Revisiting the Legacy of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians Today: A Lesson in Strength and Perseverance', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 6 pp.; PDF at:

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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[http://verbumeteclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1586/pdf\\_1](http://verbumeteclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1586/pdf_1)

[This article sets out to do a historical review of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians from its inception to date. An appraisal of the challenges of the founding mothers is critically analysed, how they were able to overcome obstacles as African women theologians in a society that is predominantly patriarchal and how the Circle was able to inspire African women to become subjects of their own histories, lives and stories. This article reflects on the experiences of the founding mothers and how they were able to identify and reinterpret some of the oppressive African cultures and strategies for overcoming them. The research methodology for this article will be qualitative. One of the major key players in the founding of the Circle – Mercy Amba Oduyoye – is interviewed. It is expected that the wealth of experience of the legacy of Circle women theologians will help to resolve the current impasse within the Circle.]

Laplantine, François, 'Préface', in Santiago & Rougeon 2013: 7-17

Lindhardt, Martin, (ed.) 2015, *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*. Leiden: Brill, 387 pp., ISBN 9789004281868 (pbk), €65, \$84, £52

[Within recent decades Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity has moved from an initially peripheral position to become a force to be reckoned with within Africa's religious landscape. Bringing together prominent Africanist scholars from a wide range of disciplines, this book offers a comprehensive and multifaceted treatment of the ways in which Pentecostal-Charismatic movements have shaped the orientations of African Christianity and extended their influence into other spheres of post-colonial societies such as politics, developmental work and popular entertainment. Among other things, the chapters of the book show how Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity responds to social and cultural concerns of Africans, and how its growth and increasingly assertive presence in public life have facilitated new kinds of social positioning and claims to political power.]

for the chapters: <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/books/9789004281875>

Loffman, Reuben, 2015, 'On the Fringes of a Christian Kingdom: The White Fathers, Colonial Rule, and the Báhembá in Sola, Northern Katanga, 1909-1960', in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 45, 3-4: 279-306

[This article charts the history of a White Fathers' mission in a challenging rural milieu on the margins of the Christian 'kingdom' they established in southeastern Congo. It follows the Society from their arrival in the town of Sola in 1909 to the end of the colonial period. The history of this mission contradicts Jan Vansina's claim that missionaries in general were part of an ensemble of actors able to shatter a millennia-old political tradition in Central Africa. Their position on the margins of their Christian 'kingdom' meant that the White Fathers in Sola were not powerful enough to fully enforce their will on the population of the town. Rather, they struggled to gain converts before the First World War because they were unfamiliar with Sola. Afterward they had to compete with waged labour, Protestantism, and traditional 'secret societies' for Africans' attention.]

Loimeier, Roman, 2013, *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 376 pp., ISBN 978-0-253-00788-9 (hbk), \$55

[*Muslim Societies in Africa* provides a concise overview of Muslim societies in Africa in light of their role in African history and the history of the Islamic world. Loimeier identifies patterns and peculiarities in the historical, social, economic, and political development of Africa, and addresses the impact of Islam over the *longue durée*. To understand the movements of peoples and how they came into contact, Loimeier considers geography, ecology, and climate as well as religious conversion, trade, and slavery. This comprehensive history offers a balanced view of the complexities of the African Muslim past while looking toward Africa's future role in the globalized Muslim world.]

Mack, Beverly, & Jean Boyd, 2013, *Educating Muslim Women: The West African Legacy of Nana Asma'u 1793-1864*. Markfield [Leicestershire]: Kube Publishing Ltd, 240 pp., ISBN-13: 978-18477-40441 (pbk), \$20.95

[Nana Asma'u was a devout, learned Muslim who was able to observe, record, interpret, and influence the major public events that happened around her. This book recounts Asma'u's upbringing and

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

critical junctures in her life from several sources, mostly unpublished: her own firsthand experiences presented in her writings, the accounts of contemporaries who witnessed her endeavours, and the memoirs of European travellers. For the account of her legacy the authors have depended on extensive field studies in Nigeria, and documents pertaining to the efforts of women in Nigeria and the United States, to develop a collective voice and establish their rights as women and Muslims in today's societies.]

Maina, Wilson Muoha, 2016, *The Making of an African Christian Ethics: Benezet Bujo and the Roman Catholic Moral Tradition*. Eugene [OR]: Pickwick Publications, 210 pp., ISBN 9781498279390 (pbk), \$26.00

[This book is a study of the work of Benezet Bujo, an African moral theologian. An analysis of Bujo's work shows the various aspects of an African Catholic moral theology. Bujo's work is viewed here as critically bridging African moral theology and the development of moral theology in the Catholic Church, especially in the West. An African moral theology in this work builds on the elements of the renewal of moral theology after the Second Vatican Council. The renewal elements reflected in Bujo's work and other African Catholic theologians include, among others, the use of Scripture, the relevance of history, the debate on moral norms, the relevance of social sciences to moral discourse, the theory of natural moral law, and the relation between the theologian and the *magisterium*. This work, therefore, locates the theology of Bujo in the development of moral theology after the Second Vatican Council. The author establishes a relation between African traditional religions, African history, Christology, natural moral law, moral autonomy debate, the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, and political-liberation theological ethics.]

Manala, Matsobane, 2016, 'A Therapeutic Community as a Relevant and Efficient Ecclesial Model in African Christianity', in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 4; 8 pp.; PDF at:

<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/viewFile/3226/pdf>

[This article sets forth the argument that Christian ministry in Africa must become socially and culturally informed and constructed or else it will not touch the African soul and thus remain superficial. Black African people aspire above everything else to experience fullness of life and wellbeing here and now, as demonstrated by their greetings that are actually an enquiry into each other's health and an expression of the wish for the other's good health and wellbeing. The mainline churches that operate in Africa should embrace the scripturally sound Christian healing ministry in obedience to Christ's commission to preach the gospel and heal the sick, if they are to prosper. Hence, this article discusses the following eight points, namely, (1) good health and healing as Africans' important aspiration, (2) healing as the work of God and thus of the church, (3) the imperative of serious consideration of and respect for the African worldview, (4) membership decline and mainline churches' loss of influence, (5) rethinking church in African Christianity, (6) the need for the black African church to adopt a therapeutic or healing community ecclesial model in order to position itself strategically to cater for the holistic needs of African (South African) church members and surrounding communities, (7) the rationale of the healing ministry in today's Reformed Church in Africa and (8) the recommended healing ministry. The article closes with a few concluding statements and advice]

Manus, Chris, & Des Obioma 2016, 'Preaching the 'Green Gospel' in our Environment: A Re-reading of Genesis 1:27-28 in the Nigerian Context', in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 4: 6 pp.; PDF at: [http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/viewFile/3054/pdf\\_1](http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/viewFile/3054/pdf_1)

[This article focuses on the text of Genesis 1:27-28 within its broader context where the Jahwist author describes humankind as charged with the responsibility to fill and to subdue the earth, which has generally been misunderstood by wealth prospectors. Our methodology is a simplified historical and exegetical study of the two verses of the creation narrative in order to join other contemporary theologians to argue the right of humans to treat the nonhuman as private property as source of material wealth is immoral. As we re-read the text, our findings resonate with the contemporary clarification call for respect and protection of the environment such as COP 2015 in Paris. This provides the justification of our title 'Preaching the green gospel', especially in the Nigerian oil-rich states and in

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Africa in general. The paper takes cognisance of the positive views expressed by the evangelists of the 'New Theology' in Africa. Whilst the paper raises Biblically friendly ecological awareness in modern Africa, using Nigeria as a contact point, it concludes, inter alia, that the text demands human-kind to partake in God's will for order and peace in the universe as it struggles to maintain the ecological sustainability of mother earth.]

Maponda, Anastasie M., 2016, 'The Impact of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians: French Zone on Church and African Theology Issues', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 5 pp.; PDF at: [http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1597/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1597/pdf_1)

[This article presents the history of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians from creation to now. Issues related to traditional culture, gender and sexual-based violence, gender-based injustice, and HIV and AIDS are discussed under different approaches such as the biblical approach, hermeneutical approach, ethical approach, historical approach and practical approach. The impact of African Women Theologians speaking French will be particularly highlighted.]

Masenyana (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Madipoane, & V. Ndikhokele N. Mtshiselwa 2016, 'Dangling between Death and Hope: An HIV and AIDS Gender-sensitive Re-reading of Psalm 6', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 8 pp.; PDF at: [http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1579/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1579/pdf_1)

[The genre of laments (both individual and communal) can be traced historically, even up to today, to periods of crisis. The psalms of lament in the Hebrew Bible point to periods both of national crisis such as wars, exile, and individual crisis, namely attacks from enemies and illness among others. The crisis of the exile was typified by death (in the literal and metaphorical sense), pestilence, disease and war. It was also typified by hope as some of the prophets such as Jeremiah could prophesy both doom (read: death) and salvation (read: hope). If there is any crisis that people of African descent, particularly those located within the sub-Saharan continent, have ever come to experience it is the crisis brought by the pandemic of HIV and AIDS. The pandemic is better approached by scholars who hold the view that it is multisectoral. According to the latter view, the pandemic impacts the social, the economic, the religious or spiritual, and the psychological lives of both the affected and the infected. It is a justice issue. It can thus not be relegated to the individual because it is communal. Is it any wonder that in 2002 the members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians set out to theologise and conduct God-talk that would be both gender- and HIV and AIDS-conscious? In this article, we engage the works of Circle theologians and biblical scholars to see what kind of reading could emerge if we re-read the lament psalm, such as Psalm 6, gender and HIV and AIDS consciously. In this article, the disciplines of biblical studies, gender studies, and HIV and AIDS studies, among others, converge as the authors draw from Circle theologies and biblical hermeneutics to re-read Psalm 6 through an HIV and AIDS lens. In the process, issues such as patriarchy, poverty and social justice are also dealt with.]

Mashau, Thinandavha D., 2016, 'Moving to Different Streams of Healing Praxis: A Reformed Missionary Approach of Healing in the African context', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 1: 8 pp.; PDF at: [http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1508/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1508/pdf_1)

[There are different streams of healing praxis in Africa today, namely African traditional healing, biomedical healing and spiritual healing (which includes the more recent 'touch your TV screen' healing method) among others. These streams offer contemporary African people diverse alternatives with regard to healing. As much as the hegemony of Western biomedicine, as endorsed by missionaries in the past, can no longer serve as a norm in the area of healing, we can also not use the African traditional healing methods and or any other alternative presented to Africa without discernment. This suggests that Reformed mission ecclesiology and missionary practitioners should critically engage the African context, worldview and culture on the matter of healing. It should also engage other forms of spiritual healing methods on offer in the African soil.]

Maskens, Maïté, & Joël Noret 2007/2016, 'La Nouvelle Jérusalem: Eléments d'histoire et de sociologie d'une Eglise pentecôtiste en Belgique', in *Le Figuier. Annales du Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etude des Religions et de la Laïcité* 1, 2007, pp. 117-137.; PDF 2016 at:

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

[https://www.academia.edu/29320056/La Nouvelle Jérusalem. Eléments d'histoire et de sociologie d'une Eglise pentecôtiste en Belgique](https://www.academia.edu/29320056/La_Nouvelle_J%C3%A9rusalem._El%C3%A9ments_d_histoire_et_de_sociologie_d_une_Eglise_pentec%C3%B4tiste_en_Belgique)

[Après une rapide mise en perspective historique de La Nouvelle Jérusalem – Église de Dieu en Belgique, qui est aujourd'hui la principale Eglise pentecôtiste largement fréquentée par une population d'origine africaine en Belgique, on cherche dans ce texte à montrer (1) comment l'Église a acquis dans la dernière décennie un certain capital politique, (2) comment aussi les fidèles, et en particulier les élites ecclésiales, ont obtenu les ressources financières nécessaires à l'expansion de l'Église, (3) comment enfin La Nouvelle Jérusalem s'inscrit, comme bien d'autres Églises pentecôtistes, dans des réseaux transnationaux de différents types, lesquels font définitivement du monde pentecôtiste un 'monde en réseaux' et un phénomène emblématique de l'accélération de la globalisation du religieux dans les dernières décennies du XXe siècle.]

Mason, Garth, 2016, 'The Moral Rearmament Activist: P.Q. Vundla's Community Bridge-building during the Boycotts on the Witwatersrand in the mid-1950s', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 2: 154-180

[In this article I examine Philip Qipa (P.Q.) Vundla's Moral Rearmament-inspired (MRA) politics with a view to explicating the previously hidden currents at work in his political activism. In my analysis, I draw on the theoretical frameworks of Paul Ricoeur and Homi Bhabha. In terms of these conceptual foundations, I investigate Vundla's involvement in two foundational events in the history of the South African struggle, namely the school boycott of 1955 and the bus boycott of 1957. The official history of these two events, written by social historians such as Tom Lodge, interprets them as the dawn of mass opposition against apartheid. However, I contend that a closer analysis of these two events via biographical material reveals a more complex history, implicitly connected to the person of P.Q. Vundla and his politics of negotiation and finding common ground between opposing ideologies. Vundla stands out within this context because he was a nonconforming ANC leader, who disagreed with the way the party leadership approached political activism. His approach was driven by MRA values, which sought political solutions through dialogue and aimed to benefit all communities within South Africa. Vundla can be seen as an early forerunner of the bridge-building politics of Nelson Mandela. It is hoped that, by examining the role of MRA values in Vundla's activism, a fuller, more complex account of politics in the 1950s can be arrived at.]

Masondo, Sibusiso, 2016, 'Indigenous Conceptions of Conversion among African Christians in South Africa', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 2: 87-112

[This paper explores the meaning of conversion for African Christians in South Africa by looking at some of the indigenous terms that have populated the Christian vocabulary. The paper focuses on terms like *ukuguquka*, *ukukholwa*, *ibandla*, *ikholwa*, *igqobhoka*, *inkonzo*, and *inkolo*. These terms are found among people who speak Nguni languages. It shows how they were used in pre-Christian context and traces their evolution in Christian contexts. Research conducted in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, St John's Apostolic Faith Mission, and Methodist Churches in Cape Town between 1997 and 2001 has indicated that conversion was not a simple religious process but involved diverse political, economic and social aspects. Conversion involved a transformation of an African Christian identity from the margins to the centre. It also involved extensive negotiation of what it means to be Christian through the translation of Christian content into an African idiom. The paper goes through various terms and how their original meanings were discarded for new ones.]

Masquelier, Adeline, & Benjamin F. Soares (eds.) 2016, *Muslim Youth and the 9/11 Generation*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 312 pp., ISBN 978-0-8263-5698-7 (pbk), \$49.95

[A new cohort of Muslim youth has arisen since the attacks of 9/11, facilitated by the proliferation of recent communication technologies and the Internet. By focusing on these young people as a heterogeneous global cohort, the contributors to this volume - who draw from a variety of disciplines - show how the study of Muslim youth at this particular historical juncture is relevant to thinking about the anthropology of youth, the anthropology of Islamic and Muslim societies, and the post-9/11 world more generally. These scholars focus on young Muslims in a variety of settings in Asia, Africa, Eu-

rope, the Middle East, and North America and explore the distinct pastimes and performances, processes of civic engagement and political action, entrepreneurial and consumption practices, forms of self-fashioning, and aspirations and struggles in which they engage as they seek to understand their place and make their way in a transformed world.]

Matsha, Rachel .Matteau, 2014, 'Mapping an Interoceanic Landscape: Dube and Gandhi in Early 20th Century Durban, South Africa', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 2: 238-269

[Building on existing scholarship in the field of Indian Ocean studies, this paper argues that through two major historic figures, namely John Langalibalele Dube (1871-1946) and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869- 1948), the Indian Ocean and the Black Atlantic converged in *Inanda* (Durban), where notions of nation, nationalism, modernity and civilization were articulated and defined. In doing so, this paper offers a South African vantage point from which to understand the Indian and Atlantic Oceans' role in the intellectualization of the imperial context in South Africa, as part of a set of South-South exchanges and connections. Following a brief historical overview of 20th century Natal, the differences, parallels and interactions between Dube and Gandhi's personas and ideologies, and the influence of religion on their work, are discussed and supported through an examination of the Ohlange Institute and the Phoenix Settlement, as well as a comparative analysis of *Ilanga* and Indian Opinion archival material, as physical and written expressions of their respective outlook on life. Finally, this case study suggests an understanding of the emergence of African and Indian nationalism and modernity in 20th century South Africa as a transnational phenomenon.]

Mawere, Munyaradzi, 2015, 'Indigenous Knowledge and Public Education in Sub-Saharan Africa', in *Africa Spectrum* 50, 2: 57-71; PDF at:

<http://journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/view/859/866>

[The discourse on indigenous knowledge has incited a debate of epic proportions across the world over the years. In Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region, while the so-called indigenous communities have always found value in their own local forms of knowledge, the colonial administration and its associates viewed indigenous knowledge as unscientific, illogical, anti-development, and/or ungodly. The status and importance of indigenous knowledge has changed in the wake of the landmark 1997 Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, which emphasised the urgent need to learn, preserve, and exchange indigenous knowledge. Yet, even with this burgeoning interest and surging call, little has been done, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, to guarantee the maximum exploitation of indigenous knowledge for the common good. In view of this realisation, this paper discusses how indigenous knowledge can and should both act as a tool for promoting the teaching/learning process in Africa's public education and address the inexorably enigmatic amalgam of complex problems and cataclysms haunting the world. ]

McAlister, Melani, 2014, 'US Evangelicals and the Politics of Slave Redemption as Religious Freedom in Sudan', in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113, 1: 87-108; doi:10.1215/00382876-2390437

[In the 1990s and early 2000s, the civil war in Sudan and the fate of Christians there became the abiding international preoccupation of US evangelicals. Framing the complex issues in Sudan as straightforward matters of religious and racial oppression, the Americans became activists, determined to change US policy toward Sudan. One of the signature activities of the Sudan movement was the practice of "slave redemption," in which activists purchased people who had been abducted by northern militias, bringing them back to their villages in southern Sudan. Overall, the conflict in Sudan was one aspect of a fundamental transformation, in which US evangelicals wove themselves into a global, self-consciously decolonizing church, built in part on a narrative of its own suffering.]

McCaughey, John F., 2013, 'Africa's New Big Man Rule?: Pentecostalism and Patronage in Ghana', in *African Affairs* 112 (no. 446): 1-21

[The concept of 'big man rule', conventionally invoked to refer to a kinship-based relationship between patron and client, is now finding application in the charismatic Pentecostal movement in Africa. This article explores why new Pentecostalism emerges as an alternative to traditional clientelism, and how well the analogy of big man rule applies. It traces the Pentecostal form of big man rule to

four socio-economic transformations: ongoing weakness in the state's ability to provide social welfare; a change in social values in the wake of the global financial crisis; expanding state control over customary activities; and urbanization. Drawing on data collected from both patrons and clients in Ghana, the article shows that Pentecostalism mirrors traditional big man rule by encouraging members to break from their past, to trust leadership, and to commit exclusively to their religious social network. Among church leaders, Pentecostalism also encourages internal competition and the provision of social services. Most importantly, the movement creates pay-off structures that replicate the exchange of resources for loyalty central to big man rule. The implication is that Pentecostalism's success as an alternative informal institution is not a function of Weberian ethics or occult spiritualities, but rather its ability to fill voids left by the state and to provide new social networks.]

McDonald, Zahraa, 2016, 'The Classroom: An Inadequate Mechanism for Advancing Diversity via Religion Education in the South African Context', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 28, 2: 202-219

[In the interest of instilling a respect for diversity in learners, the South African policy on religion and education (DoE 2003) aims to recognise religion in teaching and learning in public schools. The policy provides one mechanism for advancing diversity via religion education; Life Orientation in the classroom. Research however suggests that embracing religious diversity in the classroom is challenging. This article therefore examines whether this is an adequate mechanism for achieving the intended outcome of the policy. The article proceeds to examine the mechanism for advancing diversity via religion education, the classroom, in relation to integration of the post-apartheid classroom and teachers' capacity. The article finds that the mechanism to advance diversity via religion education provided by the national policy on religion education is inadequate within the current South African context.]

Mchunu, Mxolisi R., 2016, "'We have finished them": Ritual Killing and War-doctoring in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1980s and 1990s', in *African Historical Review* 47, 2: 58-84

[Muthi, *intelezi* and associated rituals have played an important role in the lives of Africans for many centuries. For almost everything they do, *muthi* and rituals are applied, more so during times of war. Controversy around the use of *intelezi*, *muthi*, ritual killing and the role of *izinyanga* in, prior to and during the colonial period, is well documented. This paper, first, challenges the Comaroffian analysis of the subject which purports to contextualise the 'deployment, real or imagined, of magical means for material ends'. They add that the discourse is entirely about 'modernity' and 'neoliberalism'. Here I fundamentally disagree with this explanation; I indicate that it is a cultural continuity. The paper contends that ritual killing and *muthi* use continues into the present and was prevalent during the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1980s and 1990s. Secondly, the paper will discuss the centrality of the use of *muthi* during the violence. I reason that *izinyanga* played a clandestine but powerful role in this violence. In this, they were at the core of the violence and of the rise of warlords to power in the region. In this paper, I will also present reasons (or offer recommendations) why historians should pay attention to these practices in the recent past, as well as in colonial times. For one thing, they are a means of understanding the present. However, in many ways, because of its reliance on oral histories and insider content, this paper is neither history nor ethnography, but could be described as historical ethnography.]

Mebenga Tamba, Luc, 2016, 'Seeking Peace Through Bëti Funeral Rites in South Cameroon', in *African Study Monographs* 37, 1: 29-44; PDF at:

[http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/209027/1/ASM\\_37%281%29\\_29.pdf](http://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/209027/1/ASM_37%281%29_29.pdf)

[Discourse intended to promote notions of peace and human rights in Cameroon, as well as elsewhere in Africa, appears to presuppose that these notions are part of models or practices acquired from elsewhere. Taking, as a basis for our study, the funeral rites of the Bëti in Cameroon, our research aims to answer the following question: "In this era of globalization, how do Africans intend to restore and maintain peace in the continent and throughout the world?" Here, the Bëti culture is simply used as an example for comparison with other Cameroonian or African cultures, as funeral rites exist in all cultures. The objective of this study was to demonstrate that social milieus have always nursed social

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

values capable of promoting peace and mutual respect among individuals. Peace-promoting values in Bëti society (dialogue, speech, the oath, sharing and the respect of time) are examined in the social context of the death of a head of household.]

Meier, Barbara, & Arne S. Steinforhand (eds.) 2013, *Spirits in Politics: Uncertainties of Power and Healing in African Societies*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 265 pp., ISBN 978 3 59339 915 7 (pbk), \$49

[This volume explores the interface between religion and politics in African societies by examining recent and ongoing research in a variety of regional settings. Case studies from across the African continent exemplify how—and at which social levels—spirits, witchcraft, and other supernatural agents play an active role in political action and the conceptualization of power. This volume illustrates not only how ritual techniques such as divination or spirit possession may play a vital role in people's efforts to regain control over the political processes that determine their lives, but also how magical and other secret practices are at the center of local discourse on democratization and state politics. Moreover, the contributors show that these practices are prominent in day-to-day decision-making processes at local levels, including the interaction between spirit-based and democratic institutions of social organization in modern urban life and economies.]

Meyer, Birgit, 2010, 'Aesthetics of Persuasion: Global Christianity and Pentecostalism's Sensational Forms', in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109, 4: 741-763

[One of the key features of Pentecostal/charismatic churches is their sensational appeal. Taking as a point of departure the experience of the Holy Spirit as a "portable," embodied power source, this essay seeks to contribute to developing alternative concepts that expand our view of Pentecostalism as it emerges through a "Protestant lens." First, I critically discuss the severance of aesthetics and Protestantism, and the concomitant dismissal of "form" in the work of Max Weber. I argue for the need to recapture an understanding of religion as aesthetics, albeit taken in the broad sense of *aisthesis*, advocated by Aristotle. Calling for the re-appreciation of form as absolutely essential to religious experience, I then introduce the notion of the sensational form, which allows us to grasp how the Holy Spirit operates according to Pentecostal understanding and experience. Presenting the term aesthetics of persuasion, I address the question of how aesthetics is relevant to broader modalities of binding and politics of belonging - paying attention to Jacques Rancière's "distribution of the sensible." Taking Pentecostalism as a prominent representative of global Christianity, I seek not only to enhance our understanding of its particular sensational religiosity but also to outline new directions in the broader study of Protestantism and Christianity in general.]

Meyer, Birgit, 2016, 'Three Points about German Anthropology', in *American Anthropologist* 118, 2 (May 2016)

Miedema, S., 2014, 'From Religious Education to Worldview Education and Beyond: The Strength of a Transformative Pedagogical Paradigm', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 27, 1: 82-103

[A core concept in Cornelia Roux's writings is the term 'paradigm shift'. We can for example notice pleas for paradigm shifts in teaching religion, in dealing with the multicultural situation, in concretizing citizenship education, and finally her plea for a paradigm shift towards human rights education. In this essay I will first elaborate on some of Roux's paradigm shifts with a special focus on the role and place of religious education. Then, I will follow up with a plea for strengthening the transformative paradigm in pedagogy. A transformative paradigm is inclusive by definition, thus addresses all students. One of the consequences of this inclusivity is that instead of using the term 'religious education' I prefer to use the notion of 'worldview education', and going beyond this I conceptually relate the latter notion in the final section to the concept of 'citizenship education' too. Inspired by the work of Cornelia Roux my plea is even broadened in that section to an intertwinement of worldview education, citizenship education and human rights education, thus reconciling the sacred, the civic and the just within a transformative pedagogical paradigm.]

Mhango, M., 2012, 'Recognising Religion: Emerging Jurisprudence in South Africa', in *Journal for the Study of Religion* 25, 2: 23-50

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

[This paper examines the emerging jurisprudence with respect to religion in South Africa. The paper submits that South African jurisprudence has matured and will likely shape the jurisprudential trend in Southern Africa. The paper briefly discusses the history of the religious freedom under the apartheid government of South Africa, and argues that the laws passed during apartheid government were inclined towards Christian religious values and that to some extent this has persisted in post-apartheid jurisprudence. The paper also discusses the current judicial interpretations of the freedom of religion under the South African Constitution. In this regard, the paper examines the decisions in Prince, Pillay and Popcru, and their impact on human rights and the transformative agenda of the South African society.]

Miran-Guyon, Marie, 2016, 'Islam in and out: Cosmopolitan Patriotism and Xenophobia among Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire', in *Africa* 86, 3: 447-471

[The nativist ideology of *ivoirité* of the 1990s generated brutal discriminatory policies against those labelled as 'strangers', especially Muslims. Reversing that perspective, this article focuses on the interface between religion and national identity in twentieth-century Côte d'Ivoire from within Muslim society. The argument is divided into two parts. The first puts forward the counter-hegemonic, patriotic-cum-cosmopolitan narratives that a new Muslim leadership formulated in order to write Islam into national history. The second focuses on grass-roots, demotic, day-to-day realities. It explores Muslim takes on belonging and alienation in practice, paying careful attention to the community's internal diversity. It shows how, over time, Ivorian Muslims have showcased varying degrees of cosmopolitan patriotism but also of their own, local xenophobia. The concluding section returns to the new Muslim leadership and its multifaceted endeavours to reconcile Muslim lived experiences with their cosmopolitan patriotic aspirations. The article ends with a short epilogue surveying the violent armed conflicts of the period 2002 to 2011 and how Muslims were a part of them.]

Mkasi, Lindiwe P., 2016, 'African Same-sexualities and Indigenous Knowledge: Creating a Space for Dialogue within Patriarchy', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 6 pp.; PDF at:

[http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1576/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1576/pdf_1)

[Current debates on homosexuality claim to give voice to the voiceless but only target the youth whose concern for freedom and rights differ markedly from older, more traditional concerns. Recent debates on same-sexualities are framed in a modern discourse and leave no room for traditional epistemologies. This article argues that knowledge of same-sexualities in African communities requires a far more complex narrative that is inclusive of indigenous knowledge and culture and of the older generations that uphold them. South Africa has gone through many changes and there is a need for new knowledge to face new challenges that come with democracy. The assumption here is that some issues need attention in contemporary societies which have never been properly investigated. One such issue is African same-sexualities. Although there is a need to interrogate the issue of freedom of speech from Western theoretical impositions, same-sexuality research needs to be contextualised and analysed through the eyes of indigenous societies. This could be achieved by creating space for debates between traditional and modern communities. This article addresses African indigenous same-sexualities using indigenous ways of knowing to unpack the practice. The article suggests a different approach on African same-sex practice based on ancestral knowledge found in African traditional religion and in African culture. It will further demonstrate how this practice relates to issues of gender and religion in the South African context. It also disapproves Western discourse on African sexuality based on human rights approaches and transformation that ignore African cultural practice that affirm life.]

Molobi, Victor M.S., 2016, 'Dealing with Poverty, Health and Maternal Child Survival: The Organisation of African Independent Churches Perspective', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 1: 8 pp.; PDF at:

[http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1521/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1521/pdf_1)

[The Organisation of African Independent Churches (OAICs), as a representative of the African Independent Churches (AICs) across the African continent and in the Diaspora, disclosed that poverty has its own culture, and this was also confirmed by their undertaking of the Millennium Development

Goals. AICs are commonly classified under the disadvantaged groups in the communities they inhabit. As a consequence, it cuts across their spectra as well. Members of these churches are domestic workers, cheap labour, factory workers, and unemployed. Often they come together with men of cheap labour and coupled as husbands and wives, forgetting their families in the rural regions where they came from. Many children are kept in these dark situations and poverty affects them badly, because for most of them they hold tempos without any guarantees for long lasting usage. This article investigates how the AICs are affected and survive in these sites and the use of the OAIC in salvaging it.]

Motswapong, Elizabeth, 2015, 'Sita's Story as a Text of Terror: A Motswana Woman's Impressions', in Ross & Amenga-Etego 2015: 153-166

Mtshiselwa, V. Ndikhokele N., 2016, 'The Poor in the Psalms and in Tsepo Tshola's Song *Indlala*: African Liberationist Remarks, in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 1: 7 pp.; PDF at: <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3173>

[Firstly, this article discusses an African liberationist paradigm with the view to anchor the reading of psalms within a theoretical framework. Secondly, within that framework, this article uses the song *Indlala* as a hermeneutical tool to unlock the reality of poverty in South Africa. Thirdly, guided by an African liberationist framework the article teases out the categories and voices of the poor in the psalms. In the end, this article argues that the reading of poor in the Psalms, particularly with an African liberationist lens, could have liberating implications for poor black South Africans.]

Mtshiselwa, Ndikho, & Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele) 2016, 'Gender and Sexualities in African Contexts and Circle Theologies', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 1-3; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/26851235/Editorial\\_statement\\_Gender\\_and\\_sexualities\\_in\\_African\\_contexts\\_and\\_Circle\\_theologies?auto=view&campaign=weekly\\_digest](https://www.academia.edu/26851235/Editorial_statement_Gender_and_sexualities_in_African_contexts_and_Circle_theologies?auto=view&campaign=weekly_digest)

Mtshiselwa, V. Ndikhokele N., & Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele) 2016, 'South African Female Presidential Leadership and the Inevitability of a *donga* [dry watercourse] as final destination?: Reading the Deuteronomistic Athaliah the *Bosadi* Way', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, 2: 8 pp.; PDF at: [http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1583/pdf\\_1](http://verbumetecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/viewFile/1583/pdf_1)

[Drawing from the insight in the fields of the Old Testament, gender and social sciences studies as well as Indigenous Knowledge Systems (with particular focus on an African proverb), this article addresses the topic of the South African Female Presidential Leadership and the Deuteronomistic *Athaliah* the *bosadi* way.]

Mumo, Peter Mutuku, 2016, 'The Role of Sunday Schools in Christian Socialisation of Children in Africa: A Case Study of Africa Inland Church in Kenya', in *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 6, 1: 47-58; PDF at: <http://unilorin.edu.ng/ejournals/index.php/ijourel/article/view/1875/1185>

[Since the advent of modern changes in Africa, African societies, just like other global societies, have been beset with a myriad of moral challenges such as corruption, sexual abuse and immorality, nepotism, theft, drug abuse, violence and lack of positive work ethic. The traditional institutions which used to instil discipline, character, purpose of human life and social co-existence have been undermined and rendered ineffective. This paper contends that Sunday Schools which were founded by Robert Raikes in the eighteenth century can be adapted to religiously socialise children and the youth in Africa. Since Sunday Schools were introduced in Africa from nineteenth century they have been accepted and adopted in most Christian denominations in Africa. Research for the paper was conducted in Africa Inland Church Machakos in Kenya where questionnaires were administered to both teachers and officials of the Christian education department. Key informants who included Sunday school superintendents and leaders of district church councils were personally interviewed. Participant observation was conducted in eight selected churches. The study found out that Sunday schools lacked basic facilities such as class rooms, reading materials and adequately trained teachers. It was also found that Sunday schools have been neglected by church leaders. The study recommends that improved and well equipped Sunday schools would be attractive and effective in religiously educating African children and youth hence positively influencing them and enhancing their quality of life.]

## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

[www.a-asr.org](http://www.a-asr.org)

Munier, Hadrien, 2013, 'L'élaboration du sens du malheur dans les consultations vodou de Montréal', in Santiago & Rougeon 2013: 55-75; PDF at:

[https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN\\_X\\_Possessions\\_Plurielles\\_Exp%C3%A9rience\\_Ethnographique\\_%C3%A0\\_Bahia\\_Br%C3%A9sil\\_1992-2012](https://www.academia.edu/3629020/VATIN_X_Possessions_Plurielles_Exp%C3%A9rience_Ethnographique_%C3%A0_Bahia_Br%C3%A9sil_1992-2012)

[Il s'agit de comprendre, par l'analyse d'un rituel, comment se crée le sens du malheur dans l'usage thérapeutique du vodou. Et, plus spécifiquement, comment la médiation par le praticien des relations entre les *lwa* et le patient au cours des 'visites' est une étape centrale dans la production du sens du malheur.]

Musoni, Phillip, 2016, 'Contestation of 'The Holy Places in the Zimbabwean Religious Landscape': A Study of the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church's Sacred Places', in *HTS Theologese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 1, 8 pp.; PDF at:

<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3269>

[The fundamental questions addressed in this study are: what makes a place holy? Do Christians share sacred places with other religious groups? The study theorises that the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church has forcefully appropriated most of the African indigenous sacred places such as hills, shades and dams for all-night prayers and water baptisms. The researcher has selected two indigenous religious shrines; Chivavarira hill and Gonawapotera pool of Chirumhanzu located in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The two shrines are regarded by the indigenes as renowned and sacred. This study analyses what makes the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church to enthusiastically appropriate most of the African indigenous shrines and, to some extent, turn them to be their shrines making them contested places, especially as perceived from both the indigenes and Christian perspectives. This research study relies heavily on participant observation and interviews for data collection, since there is hardly documentation readily available about the Masowe yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe.]

Muwowo, Simon, 2016, 'Democracy and Consensus Decision-making among the Bemba-speaking People of Zambia: An African Theological Perspective', in *HTS Theologese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, 1: 12 pp.; PDF at: <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3090>

[This article contributes to a critical assessment of the concept of democracy and consensus decision-making of the Bemba matrilineal governance system as a basis for a democratic model of engagement in African politics from an African theological perspective. It is of the opinion that assessing the concept of democracy by consensus decision-making of the Bemba provides a dialogue between the African traditional governance systems as a viable form of political governance ideal for multi-ethnic countries such as Zambia. This is a pinnacle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century debate which elaborates the important task of African Christian Theology in the rehabilitation, or renovation process of politics of identity for an authentic governance system with authentic African flavour for African governance systems.]



## AASR Bulletin 45 (November 2016)

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## THE AIMS OF THE AASR

The AASR was founded in 1992 for the purpose of promoting the academic study of religions in Africa, and the study of the religions of Africa worldwide, through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the study of these religions. AASR is a regional member affiliate of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) since 1995.

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- By encouraging the development of linkages and research contacts between scholars and institutions in Africa, as well as between scholars in Africa and those overseas;
- By developing publishing opportunities particularly for scholars based in Africa;
- By establishing a travel fund to enable scholars to attend academic conferences both in Africa and overseas;
- By organising conferences in Africa on topics relevant to scholars of the religions of Africa and panels on the religions of Africa in IAHR and other conferences held outside Africa;
- By publishing a bi-annual AASR Bulletin and maintaining an AASR internet site (<http://www.a-asr.org>) as major means of communication between scholars of the religions of Africa around the world;
- By maintaining an online directory of scholars in the field of the religions of Africa who have joined the AASR

