

FROM THE CHAIR

Jacob K. Olupona

Let me begin by wishing you all a happy and prosperous new year. This edition of our newsletter is produced by our two new editors: Jan Platvoet and Patrick Maxwell. I apologize on their behalf for the lateness of this edition, related to the change in editors and other circumstances beyond their control.

The editors have compensated for the lateness in the superb newsletter you have in front of you. I seize this opportunity again to thank the former editors, Professors Abdulkader Tayob and Gerrie ter Haar, for piloting the newsletter from its inception in 1993. We continue to count on their assistance as always.

Our many plans for the next few years will appear in subsequent issues this year. However, I will comment on one important strategy that needs our urgent attention – the AASR publication series. I will begin working with the publication committee chaired by Professor Simeon Ilesanmi to address this series. You will also read Professor Jesse Mugambi's article on publication in the newsletter. Here is a summary of my thoughts on this issue that I also forwarded to members of the AASR and the IAHR Executive Committee:

As I looked through the bookstands at the African Studies Association and the American Academy of Religion meetings in Nashville in November this year, I saw very little coming from scholars outside the United States. While African Studies had one or two publishers who specialize in marketing books published in Africa, most publications were non-African. Indiana University Press, which specializes in African issues, offered about four manuscripts on Yoruba culture coming out soon. None of the four is written by an African! The AASR will be doing a great service to the continent if we embark on the task of breaking this barrier, by boldly taking new initiatives to help African scholars publish their works in their respective regions.

I suggest that the Publication Committee of the AASR embark on an AASR Monograph series that is entirely devoted to the research work of scholars in the continent. The production of these works will be based in three regions: Nairobi, Ibadan, and Durban. After the editorial board has reviewed and agreed to publish a manuscript, the editorial board will arrange with a reputable publisher in the region to produce and market the book for the AASR. Sales will be deposited in regional accounts to finance the next book from the region.

To further illustrate my point here, I recently received a note from the University of Ife Press (now called Obafemi Awolowo University Press) that a book the Press published for me five years ago has now generated about \$1,000, most of it realized from overseas sales through its distributor in England. I have since learned from the publisher that this has worked quite well in sponsoring more publications from their company.

As a start for this venture, I will donate this money to the AASR Publication Fund for this series. I will be contacting some of you this year to ask for donations for this venture. I realize that if we wait for our scholars in African universities to publish their works in the U.S. and in Europe, not only may publication not happen, but also when it happens, the books will be unaffordable to Africans who need them most. Whereas if the book is published in Africa, the overseas sales alone accruing to the African publisher may help finance the next manuscript!

Please assist the AASR in making this dream a reality.



DURBAN IN RETROSPECT

REPORTS ON THE 18TH IAHR CONGRESS

Rosalind I.J. Hackett
Deputy General Secretary, IAHR

Opening Remarks
by the Program Chair of
the 18th Quinquennial IAHR World Congress
in Durban, South Africa, August 6, 2000

As Program Chair, I have the honor of addressing you on the subject of our academic programme – its genesis, its structure and its rationale. This is nothing short of daunting since I have but a few minutes to convey to you what has taken three years to come into being, and what is going to be consumed in less than a week.

Early on we took a quite radical decision with regard to the programme which was to dispense with the formal, more tradition-specific categories of previous Congresses and instead encourage more cross-cultural and cross/inter-disciplinary themes. It was felt that this would both reflect the fluidity of contemporary scholarship as well as the less bounded nature of religious formations in our globalizing world. In my humble opinion, this has richly paid off with a number of exciting panels and symposia coming to the fore on topics such as sacred vows, religion and nature, visual religion, goddess studies, religion and human rights, religion and law, religious education, globalization, diasporas, religious pluralism, witchcraft and the occult, warfare and religion, millennialism, and syncretism. These panels showcase the best traditions of comparativism that historians of religion have to offer. Happily this de-emphasis of more traditional categories has not discouraged those groups of scholars who still want to explore their specific fields of inquiry such as indigenous religions, African religions, Graeco-Roman religions, Hindu identity, the Upanishads, the philosophy of religion, or Western esotericism and Jewish mysticism.

Several of the panels reflect a greater attention to locality and context. Yet those very contexts of religious experience and expression are becoming more multi-sited and transbordered, as epitomized by the rapid growth of electronically mediated forms of religion. There is a concomitant increase in visual religious culture and performance, as many of the panels attest to at this Congress. Another interesting development reflected in our program is the challenging new field of religion and cognitive studies, which draws in scholars from a range of disciplines. It is now ten years since gender

panels became a feature of the IAHR scene. This time around while there are some panels with an explicitly gendered focus, we have also sought to integrate gender as a category of analysis into panels more generally.

Whatever your take on the concept of the millennium, in terms of its timing, its impact, its artificiality, or its religio-cultural bias, you must surely agree that it has served as a useful stimulus to reflexive thought and 'stocktaking' as one set of panels has termed it. Our field has lagged behind somewhat in this regard. So this type of self-critical, introspective thrust which a number of the panels display at this Congress is surely welcome if at times unsettling. If the academic study of religion represents the scientific study of identity and difference, as David Chidester has argued, then this is well manifested in our program. But there is also a concern to address religion as a strategy for survival whether as healing or apotropaic force, and as both local and global phenomenon.

The Durban 2000 Congress has initiated a new type of plenary session. Each keynote speaker is subject to, or should I say is going to enjoy, a series of responses from a plenary panel of experts. These experts too will bring their own perspectives and diverse contexts to bear upon the keynote theme. We believe we have an impressive and varied range of speakers. Professor Michael Pye, as IAHR President, will share his extensive experience in the history of our organization and our subject. Professor David Chidester will not only bring his intellectual critique to bear upon the content of the Congress but also address the embattled position of the academic study of religion in the new South Africa. Professor Jonathan Z. Smith's topic is tongue-teasingly titled, 'The History of the History of Religion's History'. Professor Smith will actually be manifest only in virtual form at this Congress through a direct satellite link made possible by the United States Information Services (USIS) and the University of Illinois at Chicago. This will be an interesting manifestation for someone who normally hammers out his trenchant thoughts on a typewriter! On Tuesday morning Professor Abdullahi An-Na'im, a world-renowned scholar on religion (particularly Islam) and human rights, who is from Sudan and now based in the United States, will engage the challenging question of the relationship of religious and secular foundations of universal human rights. His talk is timely given the increasing prominence of religious conflict and freedom in international affairs and the growing demands on religion scholars to bring their knowledge to the table. On Thursday, Madhu Kishwar, a forceful and respected writer and commentator on women's issues in India will address the current relationship between women and religion in India.

A characteristic and, in my opinion, appealing, feature of IAHR Congresses is the dual forum that they provide for the showcasing of local scholarship as well as that of their constituent members worldwide. This as you know is the first time that an IAHR Congress has been held in Africa. Correspondingly there are a number of sessions that

focus on the South African scene and wider African context. We urge you to indulge yourselves and learn about Africa's rich and complex religious landscape. There is a longstanding tradition of religious studies scholarship in many parts of (mainly Anglophone) Africa. We are privileged and grateful to have several key figures from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Egypt with us today. For those of you from the more privileged academic environments of Europe, North America, and Australia, I encourage you to talk with your African colleagues and to appreciate the pressures and conditions under which they work. I am not just talking about economic stringencies and practical difficulties of communications and resources, but cultural, religious, and political pressures, which require careful negotiation to ensure academic survival and integrity. Many of our colleagues have extensive experience as public intellectuals. We would be well advised to consult them as we are pushed to consider more critically the relevance of religious studies within public culture. I consider it particularly significant that we are here in South Africa at this critical juncture in our field.

The closing plenary which occurs on Friday afternoon is also something of an experiment. A panel of younger scholars who are making their mark on the field in their respective ways have been invited to share two or three key ideas about the future direction of the academic study of religion.

This Congress would not have been possible in its present form without the benefits of electronic communication. It has allowed us to improve upon publicity and information sharing. I believe that this is reflected in the range of participants who have made it here or who tried to make it here. It has equally permitted a good deal more advance creative discussion about panel structures and content. Yet I have developed a relationship of extreme ambivalence towards email. Would Rudolph Otto mind if I appropriated his classic notion of the *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans* to this utterly liberating as well as utterly oppressive medium?

In closing, I extend my thanks to the colleagues with whom I have labored over the last few years, especially the local organizers. My wish is that all who are visitors to this wonderful country and continent will enjoy your time in Africa enough that you will want to return!



James L. Cox¹

The overriding theme of the 18th IAHR Quinquennial World Congress was aptly introduced by Michael Pye, the outgoing President of the IAHR, in his address entitled, 'Memories of the Future: Looking Back and Looking Forward in the History of Religions'. By examining who can be included among the key figures in the history of religions, Pye focused the attention of the conference on the identity of the academic study of religions, a theme which would recur throughout many of the panels in the conference. Pye reviewed the list of names found in Eric Sharpe's seminal work, *Comparative Religion: A History*, and asked what criteria we would employ if we were constructing a similar list. The issue of identity also cast an eye towards the future since, as Pye noted, religion is not a fixed object and thus calls for a continual assessment and re-assessment of its methodological approaches.

A similar theme was taken up by David Chidester of the University of Cape Town in his plenary address to the Congress, but Chidester emphasised the role of scholars writing from within the social sciences, particularly those who in the late nineteenth century produced ethnographic studies of so-called primitive peoples. Chidester is well-known for his analysis of the academic study of religions as seen through the history of nineteenth century colonialism, a theme he re-emphasised in his remarks to the plenary session as fitting to recall for a world congress on the history of religions taking place in South Africa.

The African presence in the Conference was particularly striking. This is demonstrated not only from the list of those participating, but, more significantly, by the many panels devoted to African religions, and from the organisational structures that were strengthened during the conference. I personally attended panels on Africa, which explored themes as diverse as witchcraft, healing, violence against women and the use of the media. In addition, I organised a panel entitled 'New Approaches to the Study of African Religions' that included two colleagues with whom I had worked closely, one from the University of Zimbabwe and the other from the University of Ghana in Legon.

Perhaps one of the most significant panels at the Congress was organised by a group of Kenyan women academics on the general theme: 'Women in Africa'. Two scholars from Kenyatta University, Mary Getui and Grace Wamue, focused on violence against women in Africa. Mary Getui examined the 'power of naming', in which she argued that 'naming' violence can empower women by bringing it into the open as a part of public discourse. This transforms communication about violence into a force promoting social and behavioural change. Grace Wamue noted that in Africa violence against

¹ This report appeared originally in BASR Bulletin no. 91 (November 2000): 31-33.

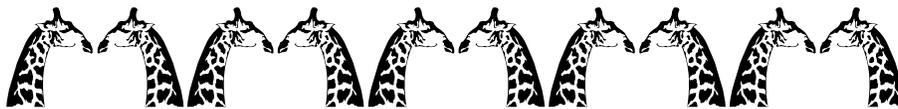
women occurs in five ways: 1) state violence; 2) men to women violence; 3) women to women violence; 4) women to self violence; and 5) children to women violence. The state supports violence by sanctioning the gender division of power. Men fear an erosion of patriarchy, and frequently seek to impose their power position through rage. Women feel insecure next to other women, and commonly try to block the progress of other women. Women do violence to themselves frequently because they have no means of communicating outside of their immediate social situations. As a result, they tend to deprive themselves, sometimes even of food, for the sake of others. The violence of children to women can be seen in the socialisation process common in African societies where women value their sons over their daughters. When a woman becomes a widow, the sons want the property immediately. By raising issues of violence against women, the panel highlighted the human rights of women in Africa and related these to methodological problems in the academic study of religions by applying value judgements on African cultural and social institutions.

The critical issue of publishing in Africa was addressed in a forum organised by Professor Gerrie ter Haar of the Institute of Social Sciences in The Hague. Representatives from several publishing companies in Europe and Africa attended the session, which not only rehearsed many of the problems that have plagued publications in Africa over the years, but also reviewed many constructive solutions. How to open up a flow of information between Africa and other parts of the world was emphasised, particularly in the light of important research that is taking place in Africa by Africans. The high cost of books published in Europe and North America relative to African currencies, moreover, makes most books originating outside of Africa financially impossible for most Africans to afford. It was noted further by participants in the discussion that the problems of publishing in and for Africa exacerbates the research isolation felt by academics working within many parts of the continent. Concrete proposals emerged from the workshop, such as co-publishing agreements, run-on arrangements, low-cost and relatively short research monographs and regional distribution centres in Africa. The dialogue between publishers and scholars of African religions has continued after the IAHR Congress and it is hoped that concrete results will be seen soon through the announcement of various publishing agreements that were initiated in Durban.

The African Association for the Study of Religions re-organised its executive in Durban and held a general meeting with over fifty participants, many from west, east and southern Africa attending. I was invited to become a member of the Executive of the AASR as General Secretary and Treasurer. I was also pleased to renew my membership in the Association for the Study of Religions in Southern African (ASRSA), which during the early to mid 1990s had sought to expand its regional context beyond South Africa by holding conferences which I attended in Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland. ASRSA has suffered a decline in the past few years, but at the meeting

held during the IAHR Congress, it was able to attract its largest membership in years and elected Professor J.S. Krüger from UNISA as its President, a post he held previously, early in the 1990s.

As an international conference held in Africa, the IAHR Congress raised serious issues about the nature, state and future of religious studies, made these issues relevant to the study of African religions and facilitated the renewal and revitalisation of organisations devoted to the academic study of religions in Africa.



UNIN Students' Impressions of the IAHR Congress

compiled by
Gerrie ter Haar

Below you will find a compilation of impressions and observations by students from the University of the North (UNIN) who participated in the Durban Congress.

A.G.P. Mhlodi writes the following about the Congress, some of its key themes and some of the contentious issues:

I had a golden opportunity to attend the 18th Quinquennial Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), held in Durban from the 5th till the 12th of August 2000. Prior to the congress, the South Africa-Netherlands Research Project on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) workshop was held on 2-4 August 2000. The SANPAD workshop was organised for the period so that Dutch collaborators and their South African counterparts, junior researchers as well as students, could come together for their annual meeting. I had an opportunity of presenting my research findings at the workshop. I have learnt a lot from the workshop because the guidance given to me by my mentors was superb.

The International Association for the History of Religions relied mainly on tradition- or area-specific categories in the past. At this congress, the choice was made to en-

courage more multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural, comparative and thematic approaches. This experiment seemed (to me) to have worked wonders, because African participation exceeded that of all other congresses combined. The congress benefited greatly from African experience as well.

A number of subjects closely related to my studies were covered, and thus contributed to my knowledge. Topics such as 'Witchcraft and witchcraft-related problems in Africa', which cover a broad scope of my research work, were also presented. One fascinating paper was read by a historian of religion from the University of Ghana, Dr Elom Dovlo. His research findings on the so-called 'witch-villages' in Ghana were similar to what we have in South Africa. My wish is that Dr Dovlo be invited as a visiting scholar to our University to share his experiences in Ghana with us in South Africa.

On the subject 'Millennialism, persecution and violence', Christine Steyn from UNISA presented a paper entitled 'A South African Millenarian Tragedy: the Xhosa Cattle-killing Movement', where she mentioned about 60,000 people who died. She further said that the Xhosaland was destroyed because of the incident. At the end of her presentation, during discussion time, she was severely criticized by Nokuzola Mndende – a South African scholar (and a member of Parliament) who is of Xhosa origin. Mndende wanted to know where Steyn got her statistics because there were no proper roads for cars to access the area during that period. She also wanted to know where the statistics originated since (according to Steyn), Xhosaland was destroyed. Mndende also mentioned that Xhosas are the second largest group in the Parliament. Steyn's failure to respond precisely to the questions caused an argument in the group.

Mhlodi concludes: It is mostly Westerners who do research and write books on African Religions. University of the North students should be given the opportunity to attend congresses, for this will broaden their reasoning capacity. It is during such occasions where students meet and live with academics who write books, that they are made aware of study opportunities and scholarships that are available elsewhere.

L.W. Malebye highlights some other aspects of the Congress, including recreational ones:

The Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission (HRC), Dr Barney Pitso, presented a paper on the problems facing the commission. He clearly stated the main problems like: exploitation of farm-workers, the right to burial on farmland, and racial discrimination. He was appealing to the IAHR to help in solving the problem of the HRC. Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, who attended on behalf of President Mbeki, addressed the people on the short history of the congress. His address was mainly on the programmes that the government has engaged itself in concerning religion. He stated

that Religion Studies should be adopted in South African schools as a teaching subject.

During our visit in Durban, we visited the Zulu herb market. There we saw different herbs that are used for *muti* [traditional 'medicine'] and also parts of animals used for *muti*, like crocodiles, monkeys and snakes. We also visited Durban City Hall where we had an opportunity to shake hands with Prof. Michael Pye and his committee and the deputy mayor.

It was an important opportunity of my life. I met the authors of the books I read, for example James Cox. I was interviewed by one of the newspapers of Denmark, that promised to report about my findings at the field work cases. I also managed to interact with people of different cultures...

K.A.K. Kgafela was one of the two students who presented a paper about his research: 'The Role of the Youth in Witchcraft related Conflicts in the Northern Province, South Africa'.

The paper discussed the real story of a conflict between two families. The problem consisted of accusing Hellen Tau of practising witchcraft. This happened after the death of Thomas, who was the husband of Hellen Tau who died. Phillip, who is the paternal uncle, accused Hellen, his sister-in-law, of bewitching his brother Thomas. Thomas' death spurred Phillip to turn against Hellen. Phillip spread a rumour that Hellen is a witch. One Saturday a monkey was spotted by the youth. The monkey was making its way through the village. It is unusual to see the monkey in the village. Monkeys are perceived by the community as familiars used by witches. This monkey ran towards Hellen's house and passed through her yard. Comrades, Phillip, as well as five daughters of the late Selina, were following the monkey in order to kill it. Just because the monkey passed through Hellen's yard and it was not seen then, Hellen was accused of hiding the monkey, and being a witch.

C. A. Maifala also presented a paper at the Congress. He states:

It was an auspicious and historic moment in my life to present a paper in a conference of this magnitude, an event of world class prestige. I presented a paper entitled 'The Dynamics of Witchcraft Accusations in a Village in the Northern Province', looking and analysing the social disharmony emanating from witchcraft accusations and their severe impact on development in the community. This paper was part of my research finding I recently undertook in the Moletjie district. For the first time in my life to present a paper at an international conference was certainly an enriching moment for me.

He continues: I have found papers most interesting, stimulating, and thought-provoking.

He was 'utterly impressed' with the following quotes from the address given by the Deputy Minister of Education: 'A new era will dawn upon mankind when religion will rise to the true tolerance and co-operation on behalf of the human race. To assist in preparing the way for this era is one of the finest hopes of the scientific study of religion.'... 'Every time a person anywhere makes a religious decision, at stake is the final destiny and meaning of the human race. If we do not see this, and cannot make our public to see it, then whatever else we maybe, we are not historians of religion.'

But there were more impressive occasions: The most spectacular moment in my life was the opportunity to visit the Durban Art Centre museum and see the artistic work crafted with passion, persistence and perfection. It was so wonderful seeing South Africa's real life imitation. This was just the beginning. The night was even more illuminating when we attend the cultural evening and we were entertained with the various items – the Zulu traditional dance, choral music, the Indian cultural dance. It was so marvellous to interact with people of different cultural, traditional, linguistic and religious orientations. We shared academic and socio-political experiences and realities. The nicest thing was sharing food, drink, clothes and rooms with the students from The Netherlands. We were one, loving, caring, sharing and big family during those inspiring two weeks.

S. I. Mabitso reports: The program was right and fascinating. Daily the congress started with a keynote address, responses as well as presentation of papers, for instance 'Memories of the Future Looking Back and Looking Forward in the History of Religion' as the theme of the presidential key address. At the end of the address there were clarity-seeking questions and responses.

I observed that IAHR is [the] agent promoting the academic study of religion through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. This is the reason why the papers were so interesting and many of them addressed social problems.

He also points out the importance of entertainment: Entertainment was the key factor to relieve academic stress. We visited museums and attended a cultural show where items like Zulu traditional dance, Indian dance and other cultural dance were performed. We interacted with people of different cultures, traditions and religions. We also shared academic and socio-political experiences.

He concludes: I have learned many things from the Congress. I have seen how scholars use different methods in their researches and how academics challenge each other

in various discourses and how to learn to be a scholar. I learned that criticisms serve as a stepladder of greater heights. The congress was full of enthusiasm and laughter.

Other Observations²

Prof. **Kim Knott**, of Leeds University, writes:

Mary Getui, a scholar from Kenya, told me in good humour how she and some of her colleagues from the African Association for the Study of Religions had been helped to come to Durban with assistance from the IAHR and those who had donated to its fund to help bring scholars from poorer parts of the world. Getting to Durban from Kenya, though not as easy as you might think, had gone smoothly, and when they had arrived they had gone to the hotel at which they'd made a reservation. Within half an hour they had left, for it had become clear that they could not afford to stay there: the bill for seven nights would have represented months of their salary. They took the proprietor's directions to a much cheaper establishment where, after much haggling, they agreed to stay, with four of them sharing a room. And I was staying in a single room in the Holiday Inn, helped by the strong pound, and because of my access to public funding for conference attendance. For this, my profound thanks go to the British Academy and the BASR for their grants. Without them, I would not have been able to go to Durban, and would certainly not have experienced the unforeseen luxury and comfort of the Holiday Inn Elangeni; neither would I have seen so clearly the inequalities which still beset us even at a time when international participation in the IAHR is at an all-time high.

And this certainly was an international occasion. There were participants from many African countries (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt), from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Korea, Indonesia, India, Israel, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and Western Europe, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, and the USA. The UK was very well represented. [...] My own summary of the occasion would be: remarkable, forward-looking programme, high-quality organisation, in a politically and religiously significant location. It was certainly the best Congress of the four I have attended (Sydney 1985; Rome 1990; Mexico 1995), though I was not able to take as full advantage of Durban and its environs as I would have liked (the early morning dips in the Indian Ocean will remain in my memory, however).

² The observations of Kim Knox, Jo Pearson, and Krzysztof Jozajtis are quoted with permission from BASR Bulletin no. 91 (November 2000): 24-31.

The list of newly elected officers was as follows:

President: Peter Antes, Germany
Vice-President: Rosalind Hackett, USA
Vice-President: Montserrat Abumalham Mas, Spain
General Secretary: Armin Geertz, Denmark
Deputy General Secretary: Gerrie Ter Haar, Netherlands
Treasurer: Gary Lease, USA
Elected Members-at-large: Mary N. Getui, Kenya; Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, Norway; Paul Morris, New Zealand; Jacob K. Olupona, USA; Akio Tsukimoto, Japan; and Alef Theria Wasim, Indonesia.

It was a pleasure to see an incoming Committee with an even gender balance.

Following the General Assembly, the list of the 38 affiliated organisations was as follows: AASR (Africa, regional association), ÖGRW (Austria), Société Belgo-luxembourgeoise d'Histoire des Religions, CSSR/SCÉR (Canada), SQÉR (Quebec), CARS (China), ACER (Cuba), Ceska Spolecnost Pro Studium Nabozenstvi (Czech Republic), DAHR (Denmark), EAASR (Eastern Africa), EASR (Europe, regional association), Religionsvetenskapliga Sällskapet i Finland (Finland), Société Ernest-Renan (France), DVRG (Germany), Magyar Vallástudományi Társaság (Hungary), IAHR (India), Indonesian Association for the Study of Research of Religion (Indonesia), Israel Society for the History of Religions, Società italiana di storia delle religioni (Italy), Nihon Shukyo Gakkai (Japan), ALER (Latin America, regional association), Sociedad Mexicana para el estudio de las Religiones (Mexico), NGG (Netherlands), NZASR (New Zealand), NASR (Nigeria), NRF (Norway), Polskie Towarzystwo Religioznawcze (Poland), Russian Association for the History of Religions, SSSN (Slovakia), ASRSA (Southern Africa), KAHR (South Korea), SECR (Spain), SSRF (Sweden), SGR/SSSR (Switzerland), TARS (Taiwan), UARR (Ukraine), BASR (United Kingdom), and NAASR (United States).

At the General Assembly, profound thanks were offered to Professor Rosalind Hackett, outgoing Deputy General Secretary of the IAHR, for her work as Programme Chair and Programme Webmaster, and to Professor Pratap Kumar, the Congress Organiser, and his local team. No one doubted that the success of the Congress had been in large measure due to their commitment and activity over the last five years.

The XIX Congress of the IAHR will be held in Tokyo in 2005.

Dr **Jo Pearson**, of the Department of Religious Studies, The Open University, at Milton Keynes, UK, writes:

My conference would be centred on the Nature Religion sessions (included for the first time at an IAHR congress). [...] What stands out most in my mind is the Monday afternoon session on Nature Religion, for here was something very active, something that was happening 'on the ground'. I had agreed to chair this session at a late stage, and was glad that I had done so as a number of other sessions might otherwise have tempted me away and caused me to miss out on this experience. The session was rearranged due to various members of the original panel being unable to attend, and so it became a very integrated panel of three papers concerned with the Mijikenda and Samburu peoples of Kenya, and their relationship with sacred forests, mountains, and graves. With slides and overheads we gained a clear picture of the sacrality of nature to these groups, but what particularly fascinated and excited me was that two of the speakers came from other disciplines – Asenath Omwega is a geographer, and Leina Mpoke a veterinary scientist. Their work had begun as a specific project related to conservation, but the important role played by religion in this environment had alerted the researchers to the need to include it in their study, and then to present their work in Durban (despite Mpoke being bitten by a cobra two weeks previously!) Learning from and including other disciplines as we study religion is, to my mind, extremely important for the future of religious studies.

This brings me on to my second important memory – that of the final session, entitled 'Visions of the Study of Religion for the New Millennium'. Rosalind had invited a selection of scholars to outline, in five minutes, their view on the future of our discipline. Drawing from a wide range of those countries represented by delegates at the conference, we were treated to eight varied responses to the challenges facing Religious Studies, out of which three themes seemed to emerge. Firstly, we must recognise and move away from the static images of the past, exposing the historicity of concepts and terms and being as critical as possible about the discourse itself, and becoming more aware of the cultural sides and historical agency of our discipline. In doing so, we might better engage with the challenge of seeking to understand how religion informs the life of real people, people who often live in a fast-moving and ever-changing landscape, whilst recognising that we ourselves also live in this world – a world in which we as academics have our role to play, in which what we write has immediate currency in court whenever and wherever religion needs defining or religious freedoms need defending. Being aware of the potential legal context of our work highlights all too well the problems of definition and of discrimination!

Secondly, though related to the first theme, was the need to break free from concepts which are eurocentric ('magic', 'primitive' were used as examples) and applied to the non-Western world only years after being used in the west to refer to 'our own inner demons'. We need to overcome our nineteenth-century hangovers, becoming more aware of our ideological blindness in order that we might better deal with the complexity of our discipline. Our colleagues in African and Asian countries will have

much to contribute to this process – internationalisation is vital and must remain high on the agenda, so that the input of ‘non-Western’ scholars challenges the way ‘we’ do things.

Linked to this need to see ourselves as scholars of religion in society, who also represent society, brings me to my third theme – the greater inclusion of women and younger scholars. We were reminded by many speakers of the ‘all white, all male’ IAHR in Rome in 1990, and there was a feeling that the feminist perspective needs integrating far more into the IAHR and the discipline, rather than putting women aside in their own panels.

Krzysztof Jozajtis, University of Stirling, writes:

There are plenty of reasons other than surf, sand, and seafood to commend the IAHR for choosing South Africa as a venue for a global gathering of over six hundred practitioners in the broad church that is Religious Studies. Right from the opening ceremony, the choice of location gave this conference a very real ‘edge’. South African dignitaries such as the Deputy Minister for Education, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, and the Commissioner for Human Rights, Barney Pityana, had not only made the effort to learn something about the history of the IAHR, but they were fairly blunt in reminding us how live issues such as race, religion, and multiculturalism are in their country only six years after the final dismantling of Apartheid. A poststructuralist and postcolonial turn is transforming the academic study of religion right now, and this reflexive, critical aspect of what can only loosely be called a ‘discipline’ was well to the fore of the proceedings in Durban. What the South African context furnished, however, was an almost constant reminder that developments in terms of the theory and method of ‘doing’ religion were not an end in themselves, but subject to moral and practical judgements as to their relevance and worth which would come from outwith the academy...

The IAHR congress... was important because at a time when the study of religion is itself a subject of intense critical scrutiny, it raised consciousness of the global economic, political, social and moral contexts in which we as scholars ‘do’ and, in some cases, ‘create’ religion. In that sense, Durban challenged us to assess the meaning of our work by some other, higher, criteria than peer review.



THE 2ND AASR GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday, 10 August 2000,
at Durban, South Africa**

Report by
Dr James L. Cox
General Secretary

The African Association for the Study of Religions held a general meeting on 10th August 2000 during the 18th Quinquennial Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions in Durban, South Africa. The fact that the meeting occurred in Africa and that it coincided with the IAHR Congress ensured wide participation among those who had been members of the Association for many years and it encouraged interest among those who wanted to learn more about the goals of the organisation.

The meeting was attended by forty-four people representing academic institutions throughout Africa, Europe and North America. The list of African participants included representatives from Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, and Namibia. Of the forty-four attending the meeting, twenty-three came from institutions or organisations in Africa, nine came from North America and ten from Europe.

The meeting was begun with an address from the President, Prof. Jacob Olupona. After warmly welcoming the members and guests to the meeting, Prof. Olupona reviewed the history of the AASR and drew particular attention to the Regional Conference held in Kenya in July 1999 and to a proposed West African Conference in 2002. Prof. Olupona also distributed copies of the AASR Constitution to the members and underscored the aims of the Association, outlined in the Constitution and printed on the rear cover of each AASR Newsletter.

Professor Olupona indicated that these aims were being met, but that the Association needs to consider how it can enhance the opportunities for strengthening the academic study of religions in Africa. The links among members and institutions to date had been maintained largely through the AASR Newsletter, which had been edited by Dr. Abdulkader Tayob and Professor Gerrie ter Haar.

Dr. Tayob then reported to the meeting on the progress and distribution of the Newsletter. He provided copies of the most recent edition and suggested that in future the newsletter might be expanded to include academic contributions, such as book reviews or short articles. The membership list needs clarifying and updating in order

that the newsletter can be distributed most efficiently in order not only to disseminate information but also to encourage the recruitment of new members.

Professor Simeon Ilesamni, Chair of the Nominating Committee, conducted the election of the new officers in accordance with the Constitution. They were elected unopposed as they had been recommended by the Nominating Committee to the outgoing Executive and approved by the latter. The newly elected officers for the Association for the period 2000 to 2005 are:

President:	Prof. Jacob Olupona
Vice-President:	Dr. Grace Wamue
General Secretary and Treasurer:	Dr. James Cox
West African Representative:	Dr. Umar Danfulani
European Representative:	Prof. Gerrie ter Haar
Southern Africa Representative:	Dr. Isabel Phiri
North American Representative:	Prof. Teresia Hinga
East African Representative:	Dr. Adam Chepkwony
Publications Officer:	Prof. Simeon Ilesamni
Newsletter Co-editors:	Dr. Jan Platvoet and Mr Patrick Maxwell
Ex-officio members of the Executive Committee:	Dr. Abdulkader Tayob, Prof David Westerlund, Prof Rosalind Hackett, Prof Ulrich Berner.

The President then called for the creation of a 'think tank' to review the aims and programmes of the Association over the next five years. In particular, he noted that a five year plan should be developed to clarify the priorities of the AASR and to address specifically the areas of fundraising, membership, publications policy and to determine if the best strategy for the Association is to expand its scope or to consolidate. The question of affiliations with other associations for the study of religions should also be addressed. In order to facilitate this suggestion, Professor Olupona appointed the following persons to the new 'think tank': Prof. Jesse Mugambi; Dr. Muslih Yahya; Prof. Robert Baum; Dr. R. Leslie James; Prof. Gerrie ter Haar; Prof. David Westerlund, Dr. Adam Chepkwony; Dr. A.I. Tayob; Dr. J.G. Platvoet; Dr. Anne Kubai.

Dr Jan Platvoet and Professor Gerrie ter Haar had prepared a paper for the 'think tank', entitled 'Toward an AASR Policy Plan 2000-2005', which was intended as a discussion document and which might lead to proposals for consideration by the Executive Committee.

As the new General Secretary and Treasurer, Dr James Cox was given primary responsibility for consolidating the membership list of the Association in close co-operation with the newsletter editors and to develop an overall statement of the budget for

the Association. He was also asked to develop fundraising plans to help the Association fulfil its aims.

The President closed the meeting by thanking those who had attended and by affirming his belief the AASR has a vital role to play in the promotion of the academic study of religions in Africa. The meeting concluded with a reception hosted by Professor Jacob Olupona for our members and their guests.

THE AASR EXECUTIVE (2000-2005)

During the 18th IAHR Congress at Durban, South Africa, a new AASR Executive was elected for the period 2000 to 2005 in the AASR General Meeting held on Thursday 10 August 2000 in accordance with the AASR constitution. Its Officers and Ex-officio Members are introduced below by means of a brief 'bibliography' and policy statement for the benefit of the many AASR members who were unable to attend the congress. All this in order that every AASR member may be aware who they are, what they intend to achieve in the coming five years, and especially how they may contact them. For the latter purpose, their mail and email addresses and their phone numbers will always be quoted on the inside front and rear covers of AASR Newsletters, as they are in this one. The following officers and ex-officio members were duly elected:

AASR President: Jacob Kehinde Olupona

Jacob Olupona is Professor and Chair, African American and African Studies and formerly Director of the Religious Studies Program at the University of California, Davis. Born in Nigeria in 1951, he received his BA degree in Religion from the University of Nigeria and PhD in Comparative Religion from Boston University. He was on the Faculty of the Department of Religious Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly University of Ife) from 1977 to 1990. His many visiting lectureships and fellowships include: Commonwealth Universities Academic Fellowship, Birmingham, England, 1987; Research Fellow, University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany; Visiting Fulbright Professor, Muhlenberg College; Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University; and the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, 1997-1998. In the fall of 1999, Dr. Olupona was the Davidson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities at the Florida International University, Miami. Professor Olupona was recently awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. In addition to authoring and editing over seven books and contributing numerous articles to learned journals, Dr. Olupona is the recipient of several awards and research grants and holds membership on many national and international professional associations and boards. He is a member of the Executive Board of the IAHR. He was a member of the Executive Committee and Board of

Directors of the American Academy of Religion and he chaired its Committee on International Connections for several years. Professor Olupona recently received a Ford Foundation Grant to study African Immigrant Religious Communities in the United States. He has recently been named E. Desmond Lee Professor in African and African American Studies at the University of Missouri, St Louis (beginning Fall 2001).

Policy Statement

My main contribution to the AASR and other international associations I belong is to continue to emphasize the African voice in the richness of diversity of our global world today. One of our goals in the next five years is to pursue the publication plan of the AASR whereby the works of our colleagues based in Africa can be published.

Vice President: Grace Wamue

General Secretary and Treasurer: James L. Cox

James Cox was born in 1945 in Wichita, Kansas, USA. He grew up in northern Idaho, just south of the border between the United States and the Canadian Province of British Columbia. His first degree, taken at Wichita State University in Kansas, was in philosophy, which was followed by a theology degree at Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. He earned his PhD in 1977 from the University of Aberdeen in the Department of Religious Studies. His first academic appointment came in 1981 as Assistant Professor of Religion at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage, Alaska. He was appointed Lecturer in the Phenomenology of Religion in the University of Zimbabwe in 1989 and became Director of the African Christianity Project for Edinburgh University in 1993. In 1999, he assumed his present post as Reader in Religious Studies in Edinburgh University. He is currently also head of the department. His most recent publications have focused on methods in the study of African religions, but he is currently engaged in a book project outlining some of the key figures in the phenomenology of religion, with a view to identifying formative influences on, and subsequent debates within, Religious Studies.

James Cox has been a member of the African Association for the Study of Religions since its inception in 1992, and served as the local organiser for the IAHR African Regional Conference in Harare where the AASR was founded. As Director of the African Christianity Project, he worked closely with the AASR by promoting the Association at all of the regional conferences organised by the Project and by involving AASR members in many of the activities of the Project.

Policy Statement

I see the primary aim of the AASR as facilitating the work of African scholars of religion and of making research done in Africa available internationally and affordable within Africa.

Representative for East Africa: Adam Kiplangat arap Chepkwony

Adam Chepkwony received a BA degree from Houghton College in 1976, a M.A.R from Asbury Theological Seminary, USA, in 1978, and the Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the University of Nairobi in 1981. In 1997, he earned his D. Phil. from Moi University, Kenya. He is currently Head of the Department of Religion of Moi University (Kenya). His areas of teaching and research are Comparative Religion with special emphasis on African Religion, New Religious Movements, and Religion and Society.

Policy Statement

My immediate concerns and objectives for the AASR are three:

- 1) To recruit as many committed members as possible in East Africa. So far I have written over 60 letters to institutions and individuals as a way of introducing and soliciting for memberships. The responses are encouraging.
- 2) To encourage regional associations for the Study of Religions in Africa. It is encouraging to note that three new associations for the Study of Religions in East Africa were launched this year (2000).
- 3) To introduce and recruit members for AASR in the Central Africa Region. This is of great concern since there is little known about the study of religion in this region. I have written over 15 letters to institutions in this region to introduce AASR. No responses yet.

Representative for Southern Africa: Isabel Apawo Phiri**Representative for West Africa: Umar Danfulani**

Umar Habila Dadem Danfulani is currently Head of the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Jos in Nigeria. He earned his BA at that university in 1982 with an unpublished thesis entitled *Islam, Christianity and Traditional Religion in a Changing Nigerian Society: [A] Case Study of the Ngas of Plateau State*. He became a lecturer in its Department of Religious Studies in 1984 and earned his MA degree in the Postgraduate School of the University of Jos in 1986 with a thesis on *A Historico-Missiological Analysis of Fifty Years of the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) in Mupun Land*. He was a PhD student at Uppsala University in Sweden from 1992 to 1994 on the basis of a scholarship from the Swedish Institute. He earned his doctorate at Uppsala University in 1994 with a thesis published as *Pebbles and Deities: Pa Divination among the Ngas, Mupun and Mwaghavul in Nigeria* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995; ISBN 3-631-49161-1). The thesis is based on materials which he collect-

ed between 1985 and 1993 among the Ngas, Mupun and Mwaghavul, three little known Chadic-speaking ethnic groups on the Jos Plateau in central Nigeria. In addition, Dr. Danfulani published several articles. His major research interests are the indigenous religions of Africa and African Christianity.

Dr. Danfulani has been AASR Representative for West Africa since 1997. He participated in the First AASR Conference in Africa in Nairobi in 1999.³

Representative for Europe: Gerrie ter Haar

Gerrie ter Haar is Professor of Religion, Human Rights and Social Change at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague (Netherlands). She is also working with Utrecht University, where she is in charge of a research collaboration programme with various universities in Africa. Over the years, she has done extensive research both in Africa and among African communities in Europe. Her most important publications include: *Faith of our Fathers: Studies on Religious Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1990), *Spirit of Africa: The Healing Ministry of Archbishop Milingo of Zambia* (1992), *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe* (1998), and *Strangers and Sojourners: Religious Communities in the Diaspora* (editor, 1998). She is co-editor of several other publications and author of numerous articles.

Gerrie ter Haar is one of the founding members of the AASR. She has served the Association since its foundation in Harare 1992 as Editor of the AASR Newsletter and AASR Representative for Europe. She has also been raising money for the Association. For the next five years, she will continue to serve the AASR as Representative for Europe.

Policy Statement

One of my major goals during this period of office will be the consolidation of African participation within the international body of scholars of religion, notably the IAHR. In addition, I consider it of crucial importance to encourage and facilitate the work of a younger generation of scholars in Africa, and to contribute to an effective publication and distribution strategy in Africa.

Representative for North America: Teresia Hinga

Publications Officer: Simeon Ilesanmi

Simeon Ilesanmi is Professor of Ethics in the Department of Religion of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA. He received a BA in religious studies from the University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria (now Obafemi Awolowo University) with First Class Honours. His PhD in religious ethics was from Southern Metho-

³ Due to communication problems, Dr Danfulani could not be reached. This bio-bibliography was culled by the editors from his *Pebbles and Deities*.

dist University, Dallas. He also undertook non-degree post-graduate studies in political theory at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has published a book, numerous articles in learned journals and contributed chapters to books and encyclopedias on a wide variety of topics in religion and ethics. He has been a visiting scholar at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, and King's College, University of London, and was a National Endowment for Humanities scholar. In 1999/2000 academic year, he was Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Fellow at Princeton University's Center for Human Values and also an associate member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, and Collegiate Press, and he reviews books and manuscripts for many others. His teaching, research and publication are generally restricted to ethics and religion from a historical and comparative perspective. He has focused on contemporary ethical and religious questions within and between Christianity, Islam and the indigenous religions of Africa. His current research has focused particularly on various issues having to do with political and religious ethics in Africa, such as human rights, religion and the state, religion and law, and political theory.

Policy statement

As the publication officer for AASR, it is my goal to collaborate with other members of the publication committee to develop a coherent publication policy that will facilitate easy access to publishing avenues for our members. The need for such access is particularly acute for our colleagues in Africa who need special assistance to make the fruits of their research known to the wider academic community. It is my hope that the Association will support such an effort and offer suggestions on how it might best be executed.

Ex-officio Member of the AASR Executive: Ulrich Berner

Born in 1948, Ulrich Berner graduated from the university of Göttingen and has been in the chair of *Religionswissenschaft* at the university of Bayreuth since 1986. Some of his articles touch upon African subjects, e.g. in *Zeitschrift für Missions- und Religionswissenschaft* 73 (1989) and in the *Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph* (1994). The University of Bayreuth is a center of African Studies in Germany and professor Berner is involved in an interdisciplinary long-term research project on 'Local Actions in Africa in the Context of Global Influences'.

Policy statement

My special concern is bringing over African students: out of five African PhD students, two have already earned their degree at Bayreuth, while the third one is just now finishing. Another concern is making sure that the courses on African Religions are taught by African scholars working as guest lecturers in my department.

Ex-officio Member of the AASR Executive: Rosalind I.J. Hackett

Rosalind I.J. Hackett was elected to Vice-President of the IAHR at the Durban Congress in August 2000. Previously she had served as Deputy General Secretary of the association from 1995-2000. She was Program Chair for the 18th Quinquennial World Congress of the IAHR in Durban from August 5-12, 2000. She was one of the founding members of the African Association for the Study of Religions and was for several years the North American representative. She also relaunched with Robert Baum the African Religions Group at the American Academy of Religion in the late 1980s. From 1993-94, she served as President of the North American Association for the Study of Religion.

Rosalind received her PhD in Religious Studies from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland in 1986. Since then she has taught at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she is also an adjunct in the Anthropology department. From 1998-2000 she was a Lindsay Young Distinguished Professor in the Humanities. She also taught for several years in Nigeria at the Universities of Ibadan and Calabar from 1975 to 1983. Her publications have been mainly in the area of new religious movements in Africa. She most recently published *Art and Religion in Africa* (London: Cassell, 1996) and *Religious Persecution as a U.S. Policy Issue* (co-edited with Mark Silk and Dennis Hoover, 2000). Currently she is a Liberal Arts Fellow in Law and Religion at Harvard Law School and Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University. She is working on a project on the relationship between the media, religious conflict and freedom in Africa. See <http://web.utk.edu/~rhackett>

Policy Statement

As a scholar who specializes in Africa my business is not just to study and analyze, but also to promote and defend, Africa at every opportunity. My greatest chance came to do this in my role as Program Chair of the IAHR Congress Durban 2000. I sought to highlight scholarship on religion in Africa and to bring as many African and Africanist scholars to the Congress as possible. I was also concerned for visitors to South Africa to gain some understanding of the riches and challenges of studying religion in the African context. In general I love putting people together and sharing information so that is why I have been behind AASR from the start. We ALL need it, especially the newsletter! Just to know what other people are doing or plan to do can be helpful and inspiring. So I am looking forward to the website that we must soon develop.

Ex-officio Member of the AASR Executive: Abdulkader I. Tayob**Ex-officio Member of the AASR Executive: David Westerlund**

David Westerlund's studies of the history of religions began at Stockholm University, where he presented a PhD thesis in 1980 on religion and politics in Tanzania (1961-1977). After some years of work as a research fellow in the interdisciplinary Africa

project at the Department of Cultural Anthropology, Uppsala University, he came to the Faculty of Theology at the same university in the late 1980s, where he now teaches the history of religions. His main research interests concern indigenous African religions and Islamic studies. Thematically, he is particularly interested in issues of religion and politics, religion and health, historiography and inter-religious relations. His most recently published book, which he co-edited with Ingvar Svanberg in 1999, is entitled *Islam Outside the Arab World*.

As one of the participants of the regional IAHR conference in Harare 1992, he became involved in the formation of the AASR and was eventually assigned the duty of being its first publications officer. During the 1990s, it was discussed repeatedly how the AASR could help decrease the problem of publishing and book famine in Africa. Some humble first efforts were made in terms of, for instance, book drives and the start of publication activities, particularly the book series Religions of Africa, intended primarily for works by African scholars.

Policy Statement

For the coming period of five years, I feel that the AASR needs to emphasise strongly the issue of fund-raising. As we all know, publication ventures as well as conferences and other important efforts can be very costly. Moreover, it is my hope that, after expanding and consolidating its position in the Anglophone parts of Africa, interest may be focused on reaching out to the Francophone areas of West and North Africa too. In the field of publication issues, I hope that increasing attention may be devoted to possibilities and problems of publishing within Africa. The publication of inexpensively produced research reports of moderate length may be a valuable complement to the publication of books. Moreover, as publishers and scholars who took part in the workshop on publication issues at the IAHR congress in Durban agreed, it would be both good and possible to increase the amount of co-publishing between African and non-African publishers.

Jan G. Platvoet: AASR Newsletter Editor

Dr. Jan G. Platvoet (1935) has recently retired from Leiden University, The Netherlands, in which university he held the post of Senior Lecturer in the Comparative Study of Religions since 1991. Before this appointment, he had served as Lecturer in the Study of Religions in the KTU (a RC institute of academic theology at Utrecht, The Netherlands) and in the Faculty of Theology of Utrecht University since 1969. His studies were in RC Theology in the Seminary of the *Societas Missionum ad Afros* (a Dutch RC missionary society) in Hulsberg, The Netherlands, from 1954 to 1961. After teaching in Ghana from 1962 to 1966, he studied Missiology and Anthropology of Religions in the RC University at Nijmegen, The Netherlands, obtaining the degree of *doctorandus* (drs.) *cum laude* in 1969. He earned a PhD from Utrecht University in 1982 with a thesis on method in the comparative study of religions. His other publica-

tions are on the history of the traditional religion of the Akan of Ghana, the development of the Study of Religions in Africa, the analysis of rituals in Anthropology of Religions, spirit possession, and the history and methodology of the study of religions, especially in The Netherlands. He edited *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour* (1996), and *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion* (1999). He served as Secretary to the Dutch Association for the Study of Religions from 1986 to 1991, and as Visiting Lecturer at the University of Ghana in 1981, at the University of Zimbabwe in 1985-1989, and at the University of Natal, at Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, in 1995.

Jan Platvoet served as International Organiser of the IAHR Regional Conference at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare in September 1992 (together with James Cox), at which the AASR was founded. Together with James Cox and Jacob Olupona, he edited the volume proceeding from that conference, *The Study of Religions in Africa: Past, Present and Prospects* (Cambridge: Roots and Branches, 1995). He served as AASR Vice President from 1995 to 2000. Together with Dr. Mary Getui (of Kenyatta University), he organised the First AASR (and Special IAHR) Conference in Africa at the Amani Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 1999, at which the East African Association for the Study of Religions was founded.

Policy Statement

My concern is in particular with strategies and means (financial and technical) by which the 'book famine' in African universities in the field of a broad, neutral and multidisciplinary study of religions may be diminished. This means, firstly, that the AASR must promote opportunities for publication for African scholars on African religions, in particular in Africa itself. And secondly, that it should also facilitate that publications of non-African scholars on the religions of Africa are published in Africa, preferably by African publishers, at prices which libraries, staff and students in Africa can afford.

Patrick Maxwell: AASR Newsletter Editor



CHALLENGES TO PUBLISHERS AND WRITERS OF SCHOLARLY BOOKS FOR AFRICAN READERSHIP

by
**Prof Jesse N.K. Mugambi,
University of Nairobi, Kenya,
and Publisher, Acton Press, Nairobi**

This is the outline of a talk which Professor Mugambi delivered to the 'Workshop on Academic Publishing and Book Distribution in Africa' during the IAHR Conference in Durban South Africa, August 2000. Participants were drawn both from the academic and the publishing world. Among the publishers present were from Africa: David Philip, Cluster, and Acton Press; and from Europe: Hurst & Co, Routledge, and Brill. Also present were several academics who are also Series Editors with different publishing companies. The workshop had been organised jointly by Gerrie ter Haar (Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands), Margaret Ling (Zimbabwe International Book Fair [ZIBF], London), and Isabel Mukonyora (University of Zimbabwe).

Introduction

A Publisher is an individual, firm or organization that links the Author with the Audience. The Author's work may be a book, an article, a work of art or a piece of music. When the Author submits the Manuscript to the Publisher, the Publisher packages it in such a way as to make it readable, attractive and marketable for the target Audience. For this investment, the Publisher expects returns. For the authorship, the Author expects Royalties, depending on the success of the Work in the market. The bigger the distribution, the greater the income, and the more the royalties. On the other side of the equation, the bigger the print-run, the more the amount that the publisher will have to invest in the production process. If too many copies are printed and not sold, the publisher loses the investment in 'dead stock'. These facts have a great significance for the book industry in Africa, as we shall soon illustrate.

Publishing has become a very competitive, capital-intensive, high-technology industry which brings together several highly specialised professions. An academic researcher who submits a Monograph to a Publisher for publication is interested only in seeing his or her work in print. The Publisher will accept a Manuscript only if it is deemed marketable to the target Audience. Printing is only one part in the publishing process. It is neither the first nor the last part, but it takes a huge chunk of the production budget for every title. The packaging of a Manuscript into a printed Book makes it possi-

ble to take it out to the prospective Readers. But it is not a guarantee that the Readers will buy it. Even if it is given as a free copy, there is no guarantee that it will be read. Books are published to be read. For this reason, it is in the interest of a Publisher to ensure that books bearing his imprint are not only bought, but that they are read. These introductory remarks lead me to comment about Africa as a market for the book industry.

Africa as a Market for the Book Industry

Although the African population is large, the readership is very small. According to the 1997 UNDP Human Development Report, tropical Africa uses 2.3 metric tons of printing and writing paper per 1000 people, in contrast with 74 metric tons in the industrialised countries. The following are some of the factors contributing to the dismal readership:

- a) Foreign languages are used for schooling and administration in most African countries: French, Portuguese, Arabic and English. Consequently, reading in foreign languages is associated with cultural alienation rather than with cultural self-affirmation for most of those who can read and write.
- b) The language of nurture is different from the language of education and governance. Consequently, reading and writing in foreign languages is for functional utility rather than aesthetic satisfaction.
- c) Only a small percentage of the population is literate. According to the 1997 Human Development Report, adult literacy in the OECD countries is 100% while in tropical Africa it is 56%. The Gross enrolment ratio for all levels of schooling (age 6-23) is 39% for tropical Africa and 100% for industrialised countries.
- d) Of those who are literate, only a tiny percentage is proficient enough in foreign languages to read with full comprehension books written primarily for foreign audiences.
- e) Only a tiny percentage of those who are proficient in these foreign languages have surplus savings they would be willing to set aside for books.
- f) The economies of tropical Africa have deteriorated to such an extent that there is hardly any saving available for luxury expenditure, such as buying books. Thus the few who buy books do so as a matter of extreme necessity.
- g) African culture is still predominantly oral rather than literary.
- h) Of the very few who may wish to spend time and money on books, only very few are interested in religious literature of any specialisation. The most widely read book is the Bible, mainly in the African languages, for devotional rather than academic purposes.

Considering these and other factors, it requires a subtle strategy to cultivate a reliable target audience to sustain a publishing enterprise. Under these circumstances, foreign publishers with outlets in Africa have concentrated on the textbook market, exporting into this continent books that are culturally intended for schools, colleges and univer-

sities in Europe and North America. Education is a cultural enterprise. Ideally, the publishing industry ought to support that enterprise. Thus the publishing industry has contributed immensely towards the alienation of the African elite from its own culture, by providing texts that are culturally uncontextualised. I shall illustrate this point with reference to books in Christian theology and religious studies.

Available Books in Religious Studies and Christian Theology

I have travelled widely across tropical Africa. In every country I have been interested in visiting the bookshops in all the towns and cities through which I passed. I have also visited the college libraries in those countries. Theological literature is particularly worrying. It has been surprising for me to note that there are hardly any books by African scholars in the bookshops. Most of the books in stock are tracts intended for devotional reading, presupposing a North Atlantic urbanised and highly secularised culture. An African pastor, teacher, counsellor or lay leader can hardly find any texts relevant for daily use at home, in school or in church. The texts are highly subsidised, so they cost much less than they would in Europe and North America. Most of them are out of print and out of date in the countries where they were published. They seem to have been dumped into African bookshops. That is partly the reason why they are so cheap. Others are published by evangelical groups sponsored by various foundations and charities. There are very few textbooks, and these are very expensive in the context of the local economies.

The libraries in colleges, seminaries and universities in tropical Africa are stocked with books written mainly for other education systems. Many of the books are out of date. In some colleges the purchase of books stopped in the 1970s and 1980s. How can Africa's elite chart the future of this continent when its education is based on policies and ideas intended for other cultures? How can Africa's youth develop new insights to solve problems in the context of its own culture, while it is exposed only to literature coming from other cultures? The time has come for Africa's elite to contribute towards shaping the future of this continent through publication of the knowledge and experience accumulated at home and abroad.

Publishing in Africa

It is interesting and worrying to note that most of the leading publishers in tropical Africa are subsidiaries of transnational corporations based in Europe and North America. Thus the corporate policies and objectives of these subsidiaries originate in the metropolis, and the staff are obliged to meet those objectives irrespective of what they themselves might think or feel. The regional managers of these subsidiaries are under pressure to make profits for repatriation. Under such pressure, there is hardly any motivation to develop new authors and new segments of readership. Most of the subsidiaries have competed for the textbook market, very often canvassing with the relevant ministries in order to have their texts listed as required texts.

Local publishers have found it difficult to compete under these circumstances. Only a few have survived. Most of them become insolvent within a few years after registration. Having failed to cultivate a sustainable audience of their own or compete in the textbook market, their proprietors often stop publishing books and focus on stationery, and eventually close down.

A few church-sponsored publishing enterprises have survived through reprints of liturgical books, hymn books, lectionaries, and prayer guides. However, deterioration of African economies in the last quarter of the twentieth century has led to a heavy decline in sales, leading many such enterprises to become insolvent. Donations from abroad cannot sustain such loss-making projects for too long.

A Personal Story

Turning to Acton Publishers, I would like to tell you briefly how we have grown. I happen to be one of the very few African scholars educated and trained entirely within the continent of Africa. I spent one academic year at Selly Oak, Birmingham, in the late 1960s, but that was all. That was prior to my undergraduate training! All my academic books (about two dozen) have been published in Kenya except one, published in Geneva in 1987. I have dealt with most publishers in Kenya, including Oxford University Press, Heinemann, Longman, Nairobi University Press, East African Literature Bureau, Kenya Literature Bureau, Longhorn, Initiatives, Uzima Press and East African Educational Publishers. This long and wide exposure acquainted me with the intricacies of the publishing industry, particularly the constraints which scholars face when they wish to have their works published.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, most prescribed and recommended textbooks in theology and religious studies (as in other disciplines) in African tertiary institutions (including colleges, universities and seminaries) are still published abroad. This is not because there are no African scholars to write such books. Nor is it because of the absence of local publishers. It has to do with an old legacy, which has yet to be broken. I have committed myself to help younger African scholars to improve their research skills and to publish their works within the continent, for use in the courses they themselves teach, at affordable prices in the context of very weak economies. This is the background within which Acton Publishers was registered in 1992.

Acton Publishers

Acton Publishers was registered in Kenya for academic and specialised works. It was launched in response to the fact that reputable subsidiaries of transnational publishing firms were unwilling to publish academic texts unless they were prescribed textbooks with guaranteed sales of several thousand copies per year. Even when such sales could be assured, the production period was too long for the needs of the academic guild of

theologians which I was co-ordinating. By utilising new technologies, it became possible to reduce production time and cost considerably. Our books are retailed in East Africa at Kenya Shillings 500.00 on average, which would be only Four Pounds Sterling (about seven US Dollars) at current exchange rates. Lamentably, the African currencies continue to depreciate arbitrarily against OECD currencies. The books retailing at this price in Kenya would cost about Twenty Pounds Sterling in the UK. Thus the difference is five-fold. Compared with other North Atlantic countries, the difference ranges from three-fold to five-fold more than the local retail price in Kenya. Yet our prices are still considered high by our readers.

The distribution network of Acton Publishers extends to all English speaking countries, and we have the capacity to have some books translated into French for distribution to francophone countries. Marketing in a continent so vast as Africa is extremely expensive. We have tried to keep such costs as low as possible in view of the low returns. Since 1994 we have learned a great deal about the book market in Africa, particularly with regard to books in religious studies and Christian theology.

Collaboration with North Atlantic Publishers

It is in the context of this background that I have negotiated with some North Atlantic publishers for a small, nominal One-Time Royalty Fee for each title released to Acton Publishers for an Africa Edition. The first two such titles are already off the Press: Prof Kwesi Dickson's *Uncompleted Mission* and Prof Mercy Oduyoye's *Hearing and Knowing*. In year 2001 several more titles will be published on these terms. These include Gerrie ter Haar's *Strangers and Sojourners* and *Halfway to Paradise*. These two books are about the African Diaspora in Europe. We are willing to discuss with North Atlantic publishers and foundations that are ready to help us produce contextualised books by African scholars for African readers at an affordable cost.

A Challenge to Africanist Scholars

The ethics of Africanist scholarship is of great concern to me. Most Africanist scholars from Europe and North America come to Africa, collect knowledge from Africans, copyright it and publish it in their respective countries. They become experts at the expense of the people who give them the knowledge that they eventually claim as their own. That knowledge never comes back to the people who supplied it, and it never benefits the real owners of the knowledge or their posterity.

What is the difference between this kind of exploitation and the exploitation of Africa's natural resources? In my view, knowledge collected from Africa should be published in Africa. In this era of 'globalization' and electronic communication there should be hardly any difficulty in implementing such a policy. Acton Publishers would be willing to discuss with those Africanist scholars and publishers that have taken this challenge seriously.

Conclusion

In this talk I have raised several issues only peripherally. Each of them will need further elaboration and reflection. It is my hope that each African and Africanist scholar, and each publisher interested in Africa's book market, will take the trouble to deal with the challenges I have posed.



AN OPEN MIND

by
Gerrie ter Haar⁴

An interim report on the SANPAD project 'Crossing Witchcraft Barriers in South Africa' was presented at the IAHR Congress held in Durban from 5-12 August, 2000. The project, now in its second phase, is based on field research findings by students and staff of the University of the North (UNIN), in partnership with Utrecht University. Among the 500 participants in this congress were the Dutch and South African managers of the 'Crossing Witchcraft Barriers' project and a group of students from UNIN, who had travelled all the way down from Northern Province for this event. The idea was to combine a regular SANPAD workshop with an opportunity for students to participate in a major international conference. It proved to be a great experience for them.

Their contribution to the IAHR congress came during a day-long symposium on the issue of 'Witchcraft and Witchcraft-related problems in Africa'. The students, none of whom had any prior experience of making a formal academic presentation, presented the research done in the SANPAD project to date. The problems that South Africa is experiencing in regard to witchcraft accusations are particularly acute in UNIN's

⁴ JGP: This report is due to be published in the SANPAD Newsletter. SANPAD is the 'South Africa – Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development'. It started in 1998. It 'wants to facilitate the development of pluralistic perspectives and practice in scientific research' and 'to promote collaboration between South African and Dutch academics on the basis of partnership and mutual benefit' (SANPAD, *Annual Report 1999*. Durban/The Hague, 2000, p. 8).

home province but are not, alas, unique. Presentations on similar problems were made on other African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Botswana, Madagascar and Namibia.

The two UNIN students who had been selected to make the presentation rehearsed in advance under the eye of their supervisors and colleagues. They performed brilliantly, making a lucid exposition of the problem and of their research and (unlike quite a few internationally famous scholars!) keeping to the time limit. A sophisticated audience was most impressed. The students were confident enough to respond to questions from eminent professors. Some of the non-Africans present were particularly interested in this research, since they had not been aware of the terrible implications of witchcraft accusations, which all too often lead to public lynchings. The students described this from first-hand experience.

Participation in a world congress was a wonderful eye-opener for these young students, who not only performed very well in debate, but also experienced the excitement of ideas. One of the students expressed it well when she, still a bit overwhelmed, said: 'my mind has opened up'. She had come to look at events in ways she had never been able to do before.

The relative isolation of the so-called Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI's) in South Africa could hardly be better illustrated. All the UNIN students – and not just the presenters – took part in the special symposium on witchcraft accusations in Africa, as well as attending other panels of their choice. They found it particularly useful to have a comparative perspective on matters pertaining to South Africa.

The students found themselves in the extraordinary position of having their views solicited by famous scholars from all over the world. They were even interviewed by a Danish journalist. All this contributed immensely to their self-confidence. They especially enjoyed meeting African scholars of religion from other parts of the continent. Some of the students are now saying that they want to do a PhD after finishing their first degree!

Congresses are also important social events. Among those in Durban was a party of MA students from Utrecht University who have been doing research in Namibia, and others who had come directly from the Netherlands. They and the UNIN students all stayed in the same youth hostel together with their supervisors. They shopped, cooked and ate together, forging a friendship which is likely to continue. The Utrecht students, like their UNIN counterparts, received much praise for their performance at the Congress.

This project has already achieved two objectives which are not easy to combine: research development and capacity building. We all await the final report.



LAUREATION ADDRESS

Jacob Kehinde Olupona was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Edinburgh on 21 July 2000. On that occasion, Professor Alistair Kee, Professor of Religious Studies in Edinburgh University, presented the following address:

Jacob Olupona has become increasingly recognised by his peers over the last decade as one of the leading innovative scholars in Religious Studies, particularly through his research into the religions of Africa. He was born in Nigeria into a devout Anglican family which, on both sides, supplied archdeacons and senior high chiefs to the church. His first degree was from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. After obtaining his PhD in Comparative Religion at the University of Boston, he returned to Nigeria to teach in the Department of Religion at the University of Ife. It was at this time that he revitalised its academic programme, transforming it from an essentially theological curriculum to Religious Studies, with close links to disciplines in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. This transition was also to characterise his writings. His first book, published in 1991 utilised a phenomenological methodology in the study of *Kingship, Religion and Rituals in a Nigerian Community*. The book is significant, not only because it analyses Yoruba religion with deep insight and empathy, but because it represents one of the earliest efforts by an African scholar to study an African religion from a non-theological perspective. Professor Olupona has since widened his studies to other areas of Africa. However, these ancient religions are not simply the subject of historical research. They are the religions of living communities which are being influenced by global forces. His most recent book reflects this ongoing process, *Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity*.

Jacob Olupona has therefore been immensely influential in the development of Religious Studies as a discipline pursued by African scholars, and his contribution has been recognised by the principal international academic associations in the field. He is president of the African Association for the Study of Religions, serves on the Executive

Committee of the International Association for the History of Religions and is on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion.

For ten years he has been teaching in the African-American and African Studies programme of the University of California at Davis, where he is also Director of the Religious Studies Program. He has just been named E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor of African and African American Studies at the University of Missouri in St Louis. However, his studies have continued to be rooted and he chairs the African Religions and the Indigenous Religions sections of the American Academy of Religion. These are two areas in which Edinburgh itself has a growing reputation in the United Kingdom and beyond.

In the Yoruba tradition Professor Olupona is greeted as *Omo Alago Ajilu*: 'he is the descendant of those who ring the bell for morning prayer'. By his example he too has sent out a call, for commitment to the highest traditions of scholarship and integrity in Africa and beyond.

Jacob Kehinde Olupona Honoured in Ile-Ife, Nigeria

By
Matthews A. Ojo

Professor Jacob Kehinde Olupona, Director of the African-American and African Studies Program, and of the Religious Studies Program, University of California, Davis, was recently honoured by his friends and former colleagues in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Professor Olupona was until December 1992, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Professor Olupona was the guest of honour at a dinner organised by Drs Sola Akinrinade and Matthews A. Ojo, under the aegis of a new NGO, the Institute for Human Development and Public Policy. The programme, held on Wednesday, 23 August 2000, was chaired by Professor Michael Faborode of the Department of Agricultural Engineering at the O.A.U., Ile-Ife, and Chairman of the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering.

Participants seized the opportunity of the occasion to reflect on the state of scholarship in the university and the role of former colleagues now in the Diaspora in restoring lost glories. Olupona was particularly praised for upholding high scholarship ideals, and for his commitment to raising and equipping the next generation of African schol-

ars even though he is physically no longer on the ground in Nigeria. He was equally praised for his philanthropic spirit, and for upholding the Nigerian image high in the Diaspora. There were reminiscences of time spent together with Olupona in Nigeria and elsewhere. The Edinburgh award recently made to Olupona was considered an international acknowledgement and acceptance of his scholarship.

In his speech, Professor Olupona highlighted his current research programme on African Religion and African Studies in the United States of America. His current research is examining the religious experience of recent African immigrant communities in the US. This new religious phenomenon challenges the notion that Black Religion in the US is only limited to African-American religion.

It would be recalled that on 21 July, 2000 Professor Jacob Kehinde Olupona was honoured with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Part of the citation reflected on Olupona's immense contribution to the development of the study of African Religion. Mention was made of his contributions to the development of scientific study of religion here at the Obafemi Awolowo University.

Since 1983, Jacob Olupona has been immensely influential in the development of Religious Studies as a discipline pursued by African scholars, and his contribution has been recognised by the principal academic associations and colleagues in the field. He is President of the African Association for the Study of Religions, and has served on the Executive Committee of the International Association for the History of Religions. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion. His most recent appointment is as E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor of African and African American Studies at the University of Missouri, St. Louis, USA. He will assume this position in August 2001.

Professor Olupona has many publications to his credit. Among his books are *Kingship, Religion and Rituals in a Nigerian Community* (1991); *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society* (1991); and *Beyond Primitivism: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity* (forthcoming).

Professor Olupona, a native of Ute in Ondo State, earned his first degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1974; and the PhD from Boston University, Boston, USA in the early 1980s.

Present were Sola and Rita Akinrinade (History); Matthews & Florence Ojo (Religious Studies); Michael & Folake Faborode (Agric. Engineering); Chris U. Manus (Religious Studies); T. M. Ilesanmi (African Languages & Literatures); Juliet Dixon (Alumni Relations); Remi Sonaiya (Foreign Languages); Monone Omosule (History);

Jare Oladosu (Philosophy); Rev. (Dr.) E.O. Oyelade (Religious Studies); Archbishop S.G.A. Onibere (Religious Studies).

NEWS ITEMS

From Kenya

Three new Associations for the Study of Religions in East Africa

Apart from AASR, which was launched in Eastern Africa on 12 May 2000, three other associations relevant to the study of religion have been launched this year. The first of these was the **Eastern African Association of Biblical Studies**. It was launched on 24 March 2000. Dr. Joseph Mutuuki, Daystar University, Kenya, is the Chairperson. The second is the **Association of Third World Studies (ATWS), Kenya Chapter**. It was officially launched on 19 May, 2000, at Moi University. Prof. Edward Kembo-Sure is the Chairperson. ATWS, though not necessarily a religious association, has always accommodated themes in Religion in its deliberation. Its first Conference in Africa was held on November 15-17, 2000, at Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya. The third is the **Church History Association of Kenya**. It is to be launched on 17 November, 2000. The officials are yet to be elected. This development of associations of the study of religions is indeed encouraging. (Adam Chepkwony)

Two symposia

The **Ecumenical Symposium of Eastern African Theologians** held its annual symposium at Sagan, Kenya, on April 6-9, 2000. Similarly, the **Ecumenical Association of Third World Studies (Kenya Chapter)** held its annual conference on 31st August to 1st September, 2000. The two associations are committed to producing books out of their meeting each year. The two series of books have proved popular and relevant for teaching purposes world wide. The Chairpersons of the two associations are: Prof. Hannah Kinoti, University of Nairobi, and Mrs. Philomena Mwaura, Kenyatta University, respectively. (Adam Chepkwony)



CONFERENCES AHEAD

European Traditions in the Study of the Religions of Africa

This academic conference will take place in the *Wissenschaftszentrum* of the University of Bayreuth at Schloss Turnau, in Bayreuth, Germany, from 4 to 7 October 2001. It will examine what views of the religions of Africa were developed in Europe in the past three centuries. Papers will be read by scholars from Europe, Africa and North America.

The conference will have several sections. The first one is on the 'Sources and Pioneers'. In the sub-section on the 'sources', papers will be read by Terence Ranger (Oxford/Harare) on 'British Bible Translations and Methods of Inculturation'; by Muhammad Haggag (Cairo/Bern) on 'German Quran Translations and their Implications for Africa'; by Verena Böll (Hamburg) on 'Ethiopian and Arabic Sources and their Impact on Europe'; by Adam Jones (Leipzig) on 'Sources in Missionary Archives'; and by R. Debuschmann & F. Ludwig (Bayreuth) on 'The Accounts of European Travellers'. In this subsection, papers will also be presented on 'The French Enlightenment' by J.-G. Bidima (Paris); on 'Johann Gottfried Herder' by Werner Ustorf (Birmingham); and on 'T.F. Buxton' by M. Gaia (Jos).

The subsection on the 'pioneers' has as its title: 'Africanists and their Governments'. It will deal first with the colonial period, in which part a paper entitled 'General Survey' will be presented by J.-L. Triaud (Aix-en-Provence), to be followed by papers on Joseph Oldham by Suke Walton (Oxford), on Edwin Smith by Henk van Rinsum (Utrecht), on 'Germany to 1914' by Stephan Reichmut (Bochum), and on Dietrich Westermann by Holger Stöcker (Berlin). It will deal then with the late and post-colonial period, in which part papers will be presented on Placide Tempels by Benazet Bujo (Fribourg), on 'G. Parrinder in the Setting of the New African Universities' by Andrew Walls (Princeton), on J.S. Trimingham by M. Yahya (Jos), on Evans-Pritchard & Victor Turner by Burkhard Schnepel (Frankfurt), and on Bengt Sundkler by Adrian Hastings (Leeds).

In section 2, the contributions of the academic research institutions in the several European nations will be examined. In it, papers will be presented by Jan G. Platvoet (retired from Leiden) on 'Dutch Studies of the Religions of Africa'; by Amèlè Ekuè (Hamburg) on the Hamburg Academy of Missions; by Richard Gray (London) on SOAS and other institutions in London; by U. van der Heyden (Berlin) on institutions in Leipzig and East Berlin in the former German Democratic Republic; by J.-P. Chretien (Paris) on institutions in Paris and France; by Umar Danfulani (Jos) on the contri-

butions of Missiology in Sweden; by Justo Lacunzo-Balda (Rome) on institutions in Italy; and by Gerhard Grohs (München) on the World Council of Churches.

The third section is on the contributions from the disciplines of Religious Studies in papers by Ulrich Berner (Bayreuth) and Jacob Olupona (Davis); from Sociology & Social Anthropology by Elisio Macamo (Berlin) and John Peel (London); from Church History & Mission Studies by Kevin Ward (Leeds) and Christopher Steeds in Uppsala; from Islamology by Nehemiah Levtzion (Jerusalem) and Roman Loimeier (Bayreuth); from History by David Maxwell (Keele) and Andreas Eckert (London/Berlin); and from Migration Studies by Klaus Hock (Rostock).

The conference will be concluded by a section in which ‘the use of European traditions for the Study of Religion in Africa’ will be examined from South African perspectives by Ebrahim Moosa (Stanford) and by B. Tembe (Recklinghausen); from West African perspectives Afe Adogame (Lagos/Bayreuth); and from East African perspectives by Grace Wamue (Nairobi).

For further information, one may get in touch with the organisers, Dr Afe Adogame and Dr Frieder Ludwig, c/o Lehrstuhl Religionswissenschaft, Universität Bayreuth, D-95440 Bayreuth, Germany.

Phone: +49 (921) 555.018 (Adogame); +49 (921) 555.045 (Ludwig)

Fax: +49 (921) 558.45045

Email: Afe.Adogame@uni-bayreuth.de; Frieder.Ludwig@uni-bayreuth.de

Pentecostalism and Globalization

The Department of Studies in Religion of the University of Bayreuth, Germany, is also convening a small conference on ‘Pentecostalism and Globalization’ between 24-25 March 2001. For further information, one may contact: Dr. Afe Adogame, c/o Lehrstuhl Religionswissenschaft, Universität Bayreuth, D-95440 Bayreuth, Germany.

Phone: +49 (921) 555.018

E-mail: Afe.Adogame@uni-bayreuth.de

Religion and Community

BASR (the British Association for the Study of Religions) will hold its 2001 Annual Conference from 10 to 14 September 2001 in Newnham College, Cambridge, UK, in association with the newly founded European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and the University of Cambridge Faculty of Divinity. The theme of the conference is 'Religion and Community'. It is intended that this theme be interpreted in the broadest possible way and by scholars from a variety of backgrounds in a multi- and inter-disciplinary forum. For example, 'community' may be considered within and between religions. So may issues concerning religion, community and the state; diaspora communities; issues of gender and community; of community and the media; and methods in the interpretation of religious communities.

Enquiries and offers of papers should be directed to: Dr Marion Bowman, the Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, UK.

E-Mail: m.i.bowman@open.ac.uk

Music and Song in Contemporary and New Age Religions

The Annual Contemporary and New Age Religions Conference will hold a conference on 'Music and Song in Contemporary and New Age Religion' on 12 May 2001 in Walton Hall, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK. Offers of papers and requests for further information should be sent to: Dr Marion Bowman, Contemporary and New Age Religion Conference, Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, UK.



GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Nordic Africa Institute

African Guest Researchers' Scholarship Programme 2002

Purpose of the Programme

One important task of the Nordic Africa Institute is to establish and maintain relations with African research communities. This is (inter alia) carried out through a Guest Researchers' Scholarship Programme, the aim of which is to provide opportunities for its participants to pursue their own research projects, thereby indirectly strengthening the academic milieu in African countries, and promoting scholarly exchange with Nordic research communities.

Who can apply?

The Guest Researchers' Scholarship Programme is directed at scholars in Africa engaged in research on/about the African continent. It is open to advanced post-graduate students and scholars with PhD degrees. We would especially like to encourage women to apply for these scholarships.

Applications are invited from scholars preferably with research projects related to the following current research themes at the Institute:

- 1) Cities, Governance and Civil Society in Africa;
- 2) Sexuality, Gender, and Society;
- 3) Conflict in Africa; Post-Conflict Transition in African States; The State and Civil Society;
- 4) Cultural Images in, and of, Africa.

Applicants are requested to identify which research theme they want to be attached to.

Grants and facilities

The Guest Researcher's scholarship includes a return air-fare (Economy Class); accommodation; a subsistence allowance of SEK (Swedish kronor) 250 (approx. USD 25) a day (maximum SEK 25,000 for three months) plus an installation grant of SEK 2,500 (approx. USD 250); a shared office and free photocopying facilities up to a maximum of 1,000 copies. Guest Researchers have access to Macintosh computers / MS Word and have to do their own typing.

The maximum duration of the stay is three months. If the Guest Researcher spends less than three months at the Institute, the scholarship of SEK 25,000 is reduced proportionally. To be entitled to the travel costs, the Guest Researcher has, however, to stay for at least two months. Please note that most academic institutions in the Nordic countries, including the Nordic Africa Institute, are closed or at least running at a reduced capacity during the periods 15 June - 15 August and 15 December - 15 January. Applicants are thus advised to avoid these periods.

The Institute's library, which is specialised in literature on contemporary Africa, is of course available to our Guest Researchers. Guests also have access to the Uppsala University Library, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Library of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Expected commitments

As a part of the exchange between the guest researchers and the Nordic institutions, each Guest Researcher is expected not only to give a lecture at the Institute but also to make a lecture tour to at least one other Nordic country. Train or special fare air tickets and accommodation will be provided for this trip.

The Institute also invites the Guest Researcher to write a brief presentation of his/her research work for 'News from the Nordic Africa Institute', an information bulletin issued three times a year. Guest Researchers who produce manuscripts during their stay at the Institute are invited to have them evaluated for publication in the Institute's regular Research Report series.

The application should contain:

- 1) A covering letter addressed to the Programme Officer stating during which period the applicant may be released from his/her duties;
- 2) An up-to-date *curriculum vitae*;
- 3) A well elaborated research proposal outlining the main features of the research topic to be worked on during the period in Uppsala;
- 4) Copies of and/or references to the applicant's writings;
- 5) A letter of support from his/her Head of Department or other senior scholar in the same field.

PLEASE NOTE! Incomplete applications will not be considered!

Deadline for applications

Applications for positions in 2002 must reach the Institute by May 17, 2001. Please note that airmail from Africa may take three weeks (sometimes more) to reach Sweden. Selection of Guest Researchers will take place during June 2001. The application should be addressed to:

The Programme Officer, The Nordic Africa Institute, P.O. Box 1703, SE-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden.

Ms. Mai Palmberg, Research Fellow and Coordinator of the Research Project 'Cultural Images in and of Africa', writes: 'These grants only apply to researchers based in Africa. I encourage applications for research on identities and cultural production in contemporary Africa.' She also provides the following further means of information and contact:

Phone: direct +46 (18) 56 22 39; exchange 56 22 00

Fax: +46 (18) 56 22 90

Website: <http://www.nai.uu.se/>

Catalogue Search: Search in the Nordic Africa Institute Online Catalogue at <http://noak.nai.uu.se:4505/ALEPH>

Orders Online: Order the Nordic Africa Institute's publications online at <http://www.nai.uu.se/webbshop/ShopGB>



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

DR. AFE ADOGAME has been appointed as a Lecturer and Research Fellow in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, in August 2000. He is also participating in a three-year research project on 'African Religions in Germany' by a sub-group (part of a wider research programme on 'Globalization and Localization' at the University of Bayreuth).



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