8th African Association for the Study of Religions Conference in Africa

Revisiting Religion, Politics, and the State in Africa and the African Diaspora

The University of Zambia and Justo Mwale University Lusaka, Zambia

1-4 August 2018

Venue: Justo Mwale University, Munali Road, Chamba Valley (http://www.justomwale.net)

ABSTRACTS

14:00-15:00 Afternoon Workshops I

Session 1: Religion and Politics

Danoye Oguntola-Laguda, Insha Allah (by the grace or power of allah): A critical response to democracy and the rule of law in Nigeria in the aftermath of the 2015 presidential election

Abstract: The interaction between religion and Politics in African like other parts of the world cannot be over emphasised. In Nigeria in particular religion has always been a determinant factor in the electoral processes against the laws of the land. This becomes more prominent during the 4th republic (1999-date). Political actors, especially elected officers of the nation have often brought religion into governance basing their performance or lack of it on God. The term "Insha Allah" in Islam literally mean" by the power (grace) of Allah (God). This implies that all things shall be done with the power, grace and approval of God. This coming from the leader of a secular State justifies the role of religion in politics and governance of the nation. The critical issue of the rule of law has confronted this current government under President Muhammad Buhari especially with the continued detention of the former National Security Adviser (NSA) Dasuki, who is been tried for corruption, in spite of various courts' rulings that he should be released on bail. This is contrary to any known law(s) of the country. The question therefore arose; Are the leaders of the ruling party All Progressive Congress (APC) ruling according to the laws of the land? Can the power, grace and approval of God be the basis for abuse of the rule of law as in the case of the former NSA? This paper seeks to examine the reality of the interaction between religion and politics in a secular society like Nigeria with regards to the rule of law. The paper adopts historical and critical analysis in pursuance of the thesis that religion have often been used by political elites in Nigeria to "deceive" the electorates and deny people their right to rule of law in governance.

Elizabeth Sperber: Relations Among God's Elect(ed): How, why and when African ruling parties attempt to spur the growth and politicization of Born Again Christianity providers?

Abstract: This paper draws on original data collected from African religious and political institutions between 2011-2017 to argue that the region's ruling parties have played significant, yet understudied roles in facilitating the growth and, to varying degrees, politicization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity – the fastest growing religious groups in sub-Saharan Africa (Pew 2010). Focusing on the post-Cold War period, I argue political conditions have often incentivized ruling parties to engage in "politicized propagation" of new religious movements, using public resources, political appointments, and other mechanisms to confer status upon supportive and relatively new churches and their leadership. Specifically, I enlist cross national data from over 30 African countries in addition to qualitative and subnational research, and find that in African states where the older established churches (e.g., Catholic and mainline Protestant churches) helped lead transitions to multipartiism, ruling parties typically faced increased political competition and credible Christian "watchdogs" capable of mobilizing opposition. Under these domestic political conditions, ruling parties often allocated public resources (e.g., cash, land plots, television licenses, and even media production subsidies) to newer, locally-run Pentecostal churches, while they simultaneously attempted to withhold resources from the "watchdog" churches. Zambia's strongly pro-democratic Catholic Church, for example, was repeatedly denied a television license by governments that actively subsidized Born Again Christian television. This is not to argue that domestic politics explain all growth of Born Again Christianity, but to note that in addition to commonly cited factors for the growth of African Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity, such as "glocalization," socioeconomic crises, and ideological and spiritual appeal, domestic politics have systematically influenced the relative size and public roles that these actors embrace in African states. I conclude by addressing how

my findings relate to democratic backsliding and prospects for future faith-based advocacy for democratic development.

Faith Kabata: Religion and international human rights in Kenya's constitution making process and the Kenya Constitution, 2010

Abstract: The paper will explore the relationship between religion and international human rights. Scholarship on religion and human rights has focused on the nature and scope of the right to religious freedom, conscience and belief and the incompatibility of religion with human rights. Even then, debate on the relationship between religion and human rights remains unsettled. There exists a gap in scholarship on the instrumental function that religion performs in uniting and mobilizing people against internationally recognized human rights. Kenya's protracted constitution making process highlighted the relationship between religion and human rights. Throughout the process, religion was invoked and religious groups united and mobilized to contest constitutional guarantees such as the right to abortion, equality and protection of religious and sexual minorities. Despite a political settlement between the government and religious groups to ensure a 'yes' vote in the national referendum on the draft constitution, religious opposition to certain constitutional guarantees led to a 33% 'no' vote proving the instrumental function of religion in human rights. The paper will trace the 1997-2010 constitution making process in Kenya in regard to the constitutional arrangements on religion and religious freedom and the debates and considerations that informed drafting of constitutional provisions. Post- promulgation of the Constitution 2010, the paper will examine the practical application of the provisions, the continuing religious contestations on abortion, protection of sexual and non-religious minorities' rights and equality and the courts' interpretation. Scholarship suggests that given the centrality of human dignity to both the religious and secular perspectives on human rights, human dignity can be invoked to resolve the existing tension between human rights and religion. Notably, human dignity is the motivating principle in the Kenyan Bill of Rights. This paper will discuss how human dignity could be invoked for constitutional arrangements on religion and guarantees on religious freedom to support protection of human rights.

Elias Bongmba: Catholic Bishops and the Anglophone Crises in Cameroon

Abstract: In 2016, Anglophone lawyers and teachers went on strike in Cameron claiming that the rights of Anglophone citizens were being violated in fundamental ways. First, the teachers argued that French speaking teachers who did not speak English were now teaching core subjects in all areas of the curriculum in the Anglophone region in French and a majority of students did not speak French. The lawyers argued that the Francophone legal system was being imposed on the Anglophone because Francophone legal system ignored the English Common law tradition which is still legal in Cameroon and for that reason, Anglophones were denied justice. The strike led to school boycott in the Anglophone Regions of the country, and when the issues were not resolved leaders of the movement declared the Anglophone Regions the independent state of Ambazonia in 2017. This paper discusses the Catholic Bishop's response to this crises that led to the strikes and argues that The Anglophone Catholic Bishops presented an opportunity for constitutional solutions which were ignored by the State and this missed opportunity contributed to the stalemate and state of violence that exists today in Cameroon.

Session 2: Religion and Development

Moses Adetunmbi: Impact of Religion on Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria

Abstract: Socio-economic development in the postcolonial state remains a challenge. But it also offers an invitation to all the stake holders in each country to rethink their contribution to economic development. In this paper, I will revisit the question of economic and social development. I argue that as members of the

Nigerian political community, religious groups (African Traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islam) have an important role to play. These religions already play a variety of roles to promote integral development through social interaction which cuts across all the regions of the country and covers a number of areas, namely education, health agriculture, and other social amenities in which religion plays a major role as the prime mover for sustainable development. While secular discourse continues to exclude religion in its analysis of globalization, progress and development, I argue that religion cannot be excluded from development. Religions bring other resources needed for development, such as their promotion of a strong moral ethos for the nation. Using historical and sociological approaches, this paper strongly advocates that Nigerian religions can benefit from a critical appropriation of Catholic Social Teachings. I discuss aspects of Catholic Social Teaching to demonstrate how its main themes remain vital to economic development.

Mamati Kingasia: The challenges facing Indigenous African religion in conserving natural environmental resources: a case of the Sengwer in Embobut Forest of Kenya

Abstract: Environment degradation has brought in a trail of effects and destructions that keeps on imperiling human existence on earth. This research article is about the African religious beliefs and practices on the conservation of natural environmental resources. The study seeks to establish the challenges and prospects of African religious worldview in conservation of natural environmental resources using the Sengwer tribe as a case in point. The Sengwer are a hunter-gatherer tribe who inhabit the Cherang'any Hills forests in the northwestern part of Kenya. The current environmental situation in the area is exasperating due to the destruction of the water catchment area, which threatens human existence in the region. Measures laid down by the government and various stakeholders to tackle environmental degradation have not yielded the expected results. This prompted research to ascertain the Sengwer religious beliefs on natural conservation and the challenges that thwart the Sengwer in utilizing their indigenous religion to combat environmental crisis. The findings of the study reveal that the Sengwer had different ways of influencing the conservation of the environment; this was done through attaching taboos to environmental resources and religious specialist policing efficient utilization of environmental resources. The study identified the various challenges that the Sengwer face they include; the colonial and post-colonial government oppressions, modern religions, population growth and development initiatives. Despite these challenges, they have come up with various initiatives to grapple with these challenges; to ensure that they can still utilize their religion to tackle the environment crisis. This paper provides salient recommendations on how various stakeholders can partner with and utilizes the indigenous African religious worldview in conservation efforts, and is expected to benefit government agencies, policy makers, and researchers in environment matters and religion.

Edward Nondo: Faith-based Organisational Management: Strengthening Church-led Healthcare in Malawi and Zambia

Abstract: Collaboration between government, faith-based organisations (FBOs) and local communities for healthcare management and delivery in southern Africa or continentally, are seldom the focus of empirical study. The core work of churches is pastoral care. Literature searches reflect that pastoral care characterised by congregational governance lacked management strategies and stakeholder inclusivity in local healthcare. Meanwhile, current cross-national study of four mission hospitals explored challenges and opportunities for performing healthcare management functions in collaboration with government and communities. Driven by the transformative worldview, this qualitative study used multi-grounded theory and case study strategies in tandem with a design of meta-conceptual framework in stakeholder-congregational style, to examine inclusivity of hospital workers and civil society as key stakeholders in

local healthcare. Two Malawian mission hospitals led by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), and two Zambian mission hospitals led by the United Church of Zambia (UCZ), provided units of analysis. Participants included 38 interview informants and 144 focus group participants across 13 focus groups of diverse stakeholders. Data sets were analysed through a combination of content, thematic and matrix approaches. Findings revealed the need for secular management training to be integrated with pastoral care approaches; that hospital workers perceive themselves minimised from inclusivity in management decision-making, and that members of civil society believe themselves marginalised from participation in the management of healthcare delivery. Recommendations for systems strengthening are made such as reformation of formal mission hospital administration structures to allow wide stakeholder participation. Further, local people should be empowered with capacity and skills to participate in preventive and curative interventions to make meaning from 'community-based' healthcare. The study contributes a conceptual model. Re-visiting collaborative arrangements between church, mission partners and government with stakeholder inclusivity and community voices in mind would help reconstruct the meaning of faith-based community participatory healthcare for southern Africa countries.

Michael Bowen The Perception and Involvement of Christians in Environmental Conservation: The Case of Urban Kenya

Abstract: *The consequences of failing to address environmental destruction are dire. Part of the proposed solution to environment destruction is for Christians to take a more active part in efforts to restore the environment. There is growing recognition that effective, long-term solutions to environmental problems and issues require moral basis for action. God's word provides this moral basis. The purpose of this research was to find out the perception and involvement of Christians in Environmental Conservation. The research took a descriptive approach focusing on Christian clergy and leaders in 7 towns and 3 cities in Kenya. The research collected data from 116 Christian leaders across different denominations. The data collected shows that nearly all the respondents agree that the Bible is clear that Christians have responsibility for the environment. In spite of this knowledge, 30.1% of the respondents reported that the environment is not a priority in their church with 42.2% of the respondents reporting that their church did not have a policy on how to conserve the environment. More than a third (34.4%) of the churches have not started any environmental projects or programmes. More than a third (33.3%) of the respondents reported that they were not taught about environment during their theological training. Slightly more than half of the church leaders have trained/taught the congregation on environmental matters. Further, Christians at 97.0% are not happy with their level of involvement in environmental matters. The explanation for low involvement in environmental matters is the perception that environmental concerns are for the educated while others are of the opinion that God puts human needs above non-humans implying neglect of the environment. Clearly the Christians have the correct attitude towards environmental conservation but this has not translated into action.*

J. l. Ilubala-Ziwa, Moses Changala and Maligelita Njobvu: The role of faith-based organisations in caring for orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia

Abstract: Addressing the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and mitigating negative outcomes of the growing OVC population is a high priority for national governments and international stakeholders across the globe. In sub-Saharan Africa, Zambia ranks as having one of the highest levels of orphanhood on the continent due to the increased cases of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. For example, in 2012 the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) reported that 1,603,928 of the Zambian population were orphans and vulnerable children (GRZ, 2012). Currently, the population of orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia stands at approximately 2,100,530 (UNICEF, 2015). Factors contributing to the ever-increasing population of orphans and vulnerable children include family breakdown and loss of care givers due to HIV and AIDS related illnesses, among others. Confronted with these problems, government efforts

alone to care for the orphans and vulnerable children are not only inadequate but also under-resourced. In this context, the Zambian government and international agencies recognise the role of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) in providing care to the orphans and vulnerable children. As such, the study will present a platform for FBOs to share the challenges they may encounter in their endeavour to help the OVC. Suggestions on how the OVC would like to be helped by generous communities will also be gathered during this study. In order to effectively meet these objectives, the study will adopt a qualitative research approach which will also be phenomenological in design. Two FBOs and two religious denominations will be selected from Lusaka District. Two officials and religious leaders from each organisation and denomination will be interviewed. Three male and female OVC from each FBO will also be interviewed.

15:45-17:45 Afternoon Workshops9

Session 1: Religion and Politics

Willy Lubeme Mafuta: On Race, Religion and Identity in Sophiatown: A Search for the Role of the Churches in the Post-Apartheid South Africa

Abstract: Many around the world have come to know South Africa as the rainbow nation, yet this notion has been subject to enormous critiques in the political discourse. This paper argues that the rainbow nation was conceived by the Government of National Unity that came to power in 1994 but it failed to materialize. The post-apartheid south Africa has yielded a nation where race and ethnicity never receded but are no longer pathological and have become normative and typifications of the overarching identity. Churches, in particular, have been playing a major role in this identity formation. They have led the way in deconstructing the perceived or realized power or disempowerment that is residual to the Apartheid and have re-imagined an environment where race and ethnicity remain the standard component of the south African national identity. This re-imagining, however, requires that race and ethnicity be constructed as relational rather than hierarchical. It also requires that one acknowledges the woundeness that racial typifications create.

Devison Telen Banda: Worship Spaces or Political Election Polling Stations?

Abstract: One growing phenomenon in the African society is leadership aversion by perceived good candidates or indeed election withdrawal in an election year. It happens that when people living in a given African society are expecting regime change as a response to agonizing pressure from the incumbency, leading candidates withdraw even at critical moments or decide to do nothing. This study leans on comparative religion or 'religion and politics.' The methodology used to investigate the phenomenon combines observation, analysis written and oral sources and exegesis of Judges 9:8-15. Key research questions undergirding the study include: do election withdrawals work in the African society? Do candidates who withdraw even when they are needed most, do a service to their followers or they betray them more and more? Does leadership aversion contribute anything to the development of any society? What happens when good people do nothing? When a candidate withdraws from the contest, whose interests are served? The working hypotheses are that: (a) In Africa election withdraws and leadership apathy do not work and only perpetuates the rein of the incumbents, (b) When good people do nothing, myopia takes over and society pays the costly price. *The study concludes with a call for persistent participation in leadership roles with an understanding that 'quitters never win and winners never quit.' Candidates who withdraw from contests serve their own interests and betray their people.*

Knut Holter: The regimes of the civilians were even worse': Nigerian biblical studies and political criticism in the late junta and early post-junta years, 1985-2010

Abstract: Nigerian scholars have played a leading role in the establishing of a critical guild of biblical studies in Africa. With the exception of South Africa, Nigeria has the highest number of university positions

and PhD holders in biblical studies on the continent. Again with the exception of South Africa, Nigerian scholars formed the first national organization (Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies) and the first academic journal (African Journal of Biblical Studies) for biblical studies on the continent, both as early as back in the mid-1980s. Also, from a thematic perspective, Nigerian scholars have developed their own version of social and political criticism in relation to the Bible. The present paper will go into the latter field, asking—in the context of the AASR conference's focus on 'religion and politics'—how the Nigerian guild of biblical scholars over the years approached a political situation where Nigeria went from a governmental context of 'junta' (military regime) to 'post-junta' (democratic elections). The paper will argue that Nigerian biblical scholars, generally speaking, ignored the kind of overall liberation hermeneutics that characterized their contemporary South African colleagues' participation in their struggle for democracy. Rather, they focused—both in the junta and post-junta years—on concrete examples of corruption and other examples of misgovernment.

Sublime Mabiala: What if Caesar were under Christ's rule?: Re-examining the Religion-Politics Nexus in Post-Secular Africa (Case study: the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo)

Abstract: Two phenomena require considerable attention for political theologians and social scientists interested in post-secular Africa. First, the resilience of religion as statistically indicated by a striking southward growth of Christianity in the continent. The second feature is the salience of participatory methodologies promoting local empowerment. The demise of the Soviet empire and the ending of the Cold War in the early 1990s launched a new revolutionary era labeled "third democratic wave" (Gifford, 1998; Huntington, 1997). The Benin government in 1989 initiated a national platform to discuss political reform under the leadership of a local clergyman. This model was replicated in many other francophone African countries with the visible participation of religious leaders in the political space. These national conferences became a powerful catalyst for raising pressures on authoritarian regimes to accept political pluralism and democracy (Fawcett & Sayigh, 1999, pp. 37–42; Bompani, 2017). At that level of reflection, three enquiries emerge. The first point relates to "why" Religion is still resilient in Africa despite secular modernity on the continent. The second question axes on "how" Religion is relevant in contemporary politics in view of current societal challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa examining its impact as "moral conscience" on state governance and citizens' everyday life. The last and third enquiry points to "what" sustains the resilience and relevance of Religion on the African soil. The paper draws from a critical conversation between African scholars John Mbiti and Kwame Bediako with the Congolese theologian-ethicist Benezet Bujo. This dialectic inquiry puts forward an interdisciplinary alternative framework sustained by an emic, constructivist and prognostic perspective. This paper analyzes the effects and prospects of religious participation in African politics and statecraft with particular regards to the ongoing political crisis of the Democratic Republic of Congo as a predominantly Christian nation at the heartland of Africa.

Session 2: Religion, Gender, Masculinities and Sexualities

Beth Williams: East African Women's Ordination Debates: Female Bodies in Male Spaces

Abstract: Religious leaders often hold immense power within their spheres of influence, able to convince others to believe a certain idea, turn against a politician, or throw their energy behind a community project. In part because of the power associated with official church leadership, ordination has often been restricted to privileged classes or groups. One of the most extreme and longest lasting barriers to ordination has historically been gender. Throughout much of church history, women of all classes, ages, and races have been limited to unofficial roles and general membership in their congregations. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, however, many denominations around the world began ordaining women. In this paper I consider the dimensions and effects of opening ordination to women for East African communities. Using oral interviews and archival research from Kenya and

Tanzania, I argue that women's ordination challenged a broad spectrum of societal norms in East African communities, including ideals of authority, masculinity, and community representation. Ordination debates were not straightforward conflicts between conservative defenders of patriarchal prerogatives and radical feminists. Rather, they took place within entangled communities and metaphorical church families. It was the communal nature and context of the decision and implementation of women's ordination that defined the challenges and high stakes of the process. But that same entangled reality ultimately contributed to general acceptance of women's right and ability to assume religious leadership. As we think about the importance and impact of religious institutions and ideologies across a range of pressing concerns, we must remain attuned to the ways theology and doctrine are actually lived out in communities. The case of East Africa women's ordination illuminates both the political importance of religious leadership and the centrality of culture for shaping religious practice.

Tomaida Milingo: The role of gender in church leadership in Zambia: a case of selected churches in Lusaka

Ntobeko Dlamini: Gender and Leadership: The Implications in the Ministry of the First Black Woman to be Ordained in South Africa, Reverend Nikiwe Mbilini

Abstract: In 1972, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) resolved to ordain women in to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. Reverend Nikiwe Mbilini became the pioneer of black women of South Africa in ministry when she was received into full connexion by the MCSA conference of 1985. Many churches in Africa has resolved to ordain women. However, there is still inequality in terms of gender among ministers since the Church exist and is influenced by a patriarchal society. Through the 'history from below' framework, this paper seeks to highlight the experiences of the Reverend Nikiwe Mbilini in relation to gender and leadership in the African context. The author engages on how the perceived gender roles by African cultures has deprived women the opportunity of leadership. The paper is concluded by a call for the deconstruction and reconstruction of the gender terminology for the sake of equality.

Thursday, 2 August 2018

9:00-10:15 Morning Session

Session 1: Religion, Politics and Methodology

Dianna Bell: Malians and the Algerian War of Independence: A Biographical Perspective

Abstract: *In the late 1950s, Hamidou Samaké lived a happy, normal life as a child in Bamako with his family. In a twist of fate that the family still suffers from, Hamidou's father became one of many Malians sent to Algeria to fight on behalf of their French colonizers. Young Hamidou's father returned a different man – his disgust against the French led him to pull his children out of school modeled after the European system. His shame about fighting against fellow Muslims prevented him from sending his students to a Qur'an school or even to the mosque to pray. Overall Hamidou's father was mentally deranged and the poverty that the family lived under went from bad to worse. A curious and bright nine-year-old, Hamidou Samaké was abruptly left without schooling or an outlet for religious expression. With resolve and gumption, by adulthood he had turned himself into an astonishingly self-educated renaissance man who found the Baha'i faith. Using biography, this presentation will consider the *longue durée *of how one man's time spent in battle has continued to impact the religious lives and economic well being of his kin more than two generations later.*

Familusi Olumuyiwa Olusesan: Between theory and practice: an appraisal of the place of religion in the constitution of the federal republic Nigeria

Abstract: Religion, an inescapable phenomenon is markedly a fundamental and sensitive factor across the globe. Hence, religious policy is contained in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As stated therein, no religion shall be adopted as state religion, every citizen shall be entitled to freedom of religion and there shall be no discrimination or favouritism on the grounds of religion. This provision is premised on religious plurality as evident in the country; with citizens embracing Christianity, Islam, Indigenous religion and other religions. Sequel to the foregoing, Nigeria is believed to be a secular society and by implication, religion must not be a determinant in decision making and policy formulation. However, this has proved to be a mere theory as seen in what actually obtains. From all indications, absolute secularism is impracticable in Nigeria as religious inclination always features in the public sphere. This paper aims at examining religious policy in Nigeria and how it is implicitly disregarded by the government, institutions; and citizens of the country, with emphasis placed on infiltration of religion into politics, its influence on decision making and governance. Implications of the violation of the constitution for the rule of law, unity and integration, socio-economic development, human value and international relations shall also be discussed. Recommendations shall be made towards ensuring careful handling of religious matters by the government, policy makers, international community and the entire citizenry in order to avoid a crisis-prone religious atmosphere in Nigeria, especially at this period of systemic upheaval.

Satoko Fujiwara: Between the North and the South: The History of the Study of African Religions in Japan

Abstract: This paper will introduce the works of major Japanese "Africanists" with a focus on religions. Any substantial efforts to investigate African religions started in Japan only after the 1950s, when it became possible for Japanese scholars to travel to Africa for fieldwork purposes. What drove early Japanese scholars to specialize in African religions? What kind of theories and methods did they employ, and in what way were they different from those used by contemporary Western scholars? Moreover, did they consciously try to be different from Western scholars and, if so, for what reason? How has the lack of African colonialist backgrounds affected Japanese scholarship on African religions? How, then, could post-colonial critique exert influence on the Japanese scholars of African religions? This paper will address these questions and critically overview the history of the study of African religions in Japan.

Blessing Nyahuma: The Gospel of Power and the Power of the Gospel: Christianity in Zimbabwe and the Ambivalent Flirtation with the Tyrant, The Case of Robert Mugabe

Abstract: This paper investigates the ambivalent relationship between religious and political power, it is a dialogue in the politicization of religious power and the religionization of political power. I investigate in history, the theologies that sustain empires in the person of Robert Mugabe. The paper further examines forms of religious resistance against Mugabe, especially by Ivan Mawarire. In the dialogue of pro-empire and anti-empire theologies, I highlight notions of both anti-empire and pro-empire theologies. I underline why some religious power players must not be trusted when they sit together at the table of brotherhood with tyrants. In anti-empire theologies, I focus on the different forms of religious resistance used by Christians in Zimbabwe. Looking at Robert Mugabe this paper further, highlights the role of African initiated/Indigenous/independent churches especially the concept of Divine Election, and African Theology, as forms of anti-western theology which legitimatized the political and religious power of Robert Mugabe. I further highlight why tyrants must not be awarded religious power as they will eventually play man-god in their discharge of both political and religious duty. I conclude by stressing that political leaders in Africa must never be trusted even with the least minimum of religio-political power.

Session 2: Religion, Ethics and Sacred Text

Cheela Chilala: Crucifying the devil: biblical imagery in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's devil on the cross

Abstract: One of the reasons Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Devil on the Cross (1982) is such an engaging and impressive literary work is because of its unique style and effective use of literary devices such as imagery and allusion. This paper is concerned with the use of biblical allusion and Bible-inspired imagery in Devil on the Cross. The narrator, for example, refers to himself as a "Prophet of Justice" - an image characterised by biblical overtones. The whole first chapter is characterised by Bible-related expressions – but much of what the Prophet says, in this and other chapters – is in the form of biblical allusion. This paper is concerned with examining how Ngugi employs biblical allusion and prophetic persona as literary devices. One of the key issues is to analyse how Ngugi, despite being Marxist, appropriates biblical content in developing setting, theme and character. How much does biblical content contribute to the narrative? The central allusion of the narrative is that of the crucifixion of the devil – and it is also a key motif This paper argues that the intertextuality arising from the use of biblical content demands that the reader understands the biblical context of the allusion in order to understand the meaning or application of the allusion in Devil on the Cross. It further argues that Ngugi has a workable understanding of the biblical texts to which he alludes otherwise he would not be able to effectively use the device. The paper is also concerned with the question of how Ngugi appropriates biblical imagery to foster the Marxist view of life.

Ala Alhourani: Ethics of Religion in and of Long Street (Cape Town) (with film)

Abstract: The paper explores ethics in everyday life in and of Long Street. One of the busiest streets in Cape Town, Long Street is a public space and time of conviviality and differences, marked with relatively familiar social dynamic and hybrid social relationships and interactions. Long Street is discussed as a postcolonial Africa's public space that is challenged by ever-increasing social problems, class differences, the rise of neoliberalism and globalization, and the threat posed by postapartheid political corruption. Within this ever-changing social reality, the paper unpacks the complexity, temporality, unpredictability, innovation and breakdown of ethical values in and of Long Street. The paper explores the everydayness of ethics through people's social interactions and evaluation of themselves, of other and of Long Street. The ethnography account of the everyday ethical life within a complex social reality juxtapose presumed stability of the discursive traditions of various religion in Long Street. Historically, religion forms part of Long Street landscape and public culture. It is embodied as lived reality through a sensorial regime of aesthetics. The paper observes ethics of religion; the ways in which religion respond to social problems and contribute ethical values to everyday lived experiences in Long Street.

Loreen Maseno: Hagar and Sarah in Two Paintings: Adaptations for Religion and Media

Abstract: Three world religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism draw some relation to Hagar and Sarah in their histories. Abrahams family story has been subject of various discussions and elicits a continuum of expression, ranging from sympathy to shock. This paper is about the construction and transformation of religion in contemporary culture and media. In this paper, two paintings by Richard Mcbee are used alongside each other to demonstrate how the social identities of Hagar and Sarah are represented, questions we might ask and the answers we could receive. The paper positions Hagar and Sarah in a broad network of social discourses and institutions within gender and sexuality studies and media studies. For analysis, this paper appropriates adaptation theory. Recent developments in adaptation theory refrains from the dichotomy of touchstone or source text and the diluted or derivative text. Rather, there is a move to engage multidirectional flows thus emphasizing what the text has gained as opposed to what the text has lost. In the two paintings, Mcbee fills in the story line gaps in various ways, adding to the text, to enrich

contemporary viewers' understanding of the difficult story of Hagar and Sarah. In sum, there is clear adaptation of texts represented in the two paintings of Hagar and Sarah for contemporary relevance.

Session 3: Religion, Conflict and Peace

<u>**Nicholas Githuku:**</u> Redeeming Our Tainted Soul: A Call to Armed Moral Reason, Moral Rearmament and Critical Conscience

Abstract: *This essay posits religious fundamentalism and subsequent violence within the even more cumbersome subject of human nature that preoccupied some of the greatest minds from Plato to Aristotle; and from Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, to Bertrand Russell. However, it does not rehash insights offered by these thinkers. Rather, it scrutinizes and questions the success, many millennia in the making, of the positive modification and moral refinement, and therefore, uplift of human nature and the human condition by religious faith and practice. After all, there is nothing wrong with the insistence and expectation than man meliorate. Humanity has had enough vicious historical as well as contemporary crises for this to appreciably happen. But if the prevalence of religious tension and conflict, and gross economic inequalities and incidence of grinding poverty, is anything to go by, amelioration from our apparently deep-seated "evil" human nature is far from achieved. It is, indeed, uncertain and seems an almost impossible expectation. The main objective of this essay is to answer the question, "Why, considering the gains made over millennia, is the stubborn dark side of our human nature still not softened or lulled let alone extirpated, especially by religious faith?" I scrutinize what Reuven Firestone (1996) calls "the moral acceptability of human slaughter" on the basis of religion. The essay also addresses the theme of recurrent ethnic violence in Kenya in the hope that this reawakens "good" Muslim and Christianly people to be more conscious and accountable for the role that they play in inflaming and fanning tribal and religious hostilities and, subsequently, electoral violence. Some of broad questions that guide my reflection include, how do we define the "truly evil" in our world today? What does it embody? Does it, necessarily, embody a human body? Does it necessarily embody a vilified "Other?" Why aren't we reformed yet, and why is there so much ethnic hatred, and religious intolerance and violence?*

<u>**Britt Halvorson:**</u> Brokering Futures, Reworking Pasts: Religious Hybridity and Strategic Foreign Alliances in Malagasy Aid

Abstract: *This paper explores the shifting relationship of religion, nationalism and foreign alliances in the operation of the Malagasy Lutheran health department or SALFA in Antananarivo, a church-based medical aid organization. SALFA provides technical and financial support to thirty-nine Lutheran clinics and nine hospitals across the island. Though many scholars have attributed the presence of aid organizations to structural adjustment reforms in African states, SALFA originated at a slightly earlier time in Madagascar and built on a longer practice of Merina Malagasy Protestant nationalism as well as Merina-Anglo Protestant alliances. As a mainline Lutheran church organization with extensive ties to the charismatic fifohazana movement, SALFA also does not fit into commonly used categories that divide Protestant groups stemming from mission churches from Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. I suggest these historical and religious dimensions of SALFA's operation are significant, often overlooked cultural resources through which current aid administrators flexibly maneuver the challenges of their aid work, building on a much deeper Malagasy cultural history of using strategic foreign religious alliances to achieve political aims. Drawing upon ethnographic research in SALFA headquarters in Antananarivo, the paper describes how SALFA administrators, most of whom are ethnically Merina and Betsileo, nurture and seek forms of spiritual and material benefit from a range of religious and professional networks in which SALFA itself is situated, such as Madagascar's charismatic fifohazana or "awakening" movement, their paid employment, ties to foreign NGOs and public/private medical aid partnerships. Examining religiously-based aid in this manner unsettles Western liberal divisions of religion and politics, calling for more studies of religion, nationalism and the state grounded in African cultural histories.*

Rosalind I.J. Hacket: Interpreting the Soundscape of War in Northern Uganda

Abstract: The emerging fields of sound studies and sensory history have led to new research on the sounds of war, past and present, in a range of historical and geographic contexts. People's experiences and memories of conflict may be associated with specific sounds such as shelling, helicopters, drones, landmine explosions, sirens, bugles, songs, and cries of pain. Scholars argue that this new attentiveness to the descriptions and testimonies of the sounds of war by those who lived through it may provide audionarratives that tell us more about the event than visual accounts alone. Documentary recordings may lack nuance and feature films tend to have stylized soundtracks. Using listening as a methodology can give us access to the ways in which people "infuse the aural environment with meaning" (Kutzler 2104) and how the terror of war was experienced on an everyday, embodied basis (Damousi 2017). While sound leaves no trace, sonic cues and memories can plunge people back into the past, evoking complex and ambivalent feelings (Velasco-Pufleau 2017). They can activate mythological interpretations and beliefs about spiritual agency and human response (such as prayer). Using the recent (1986-2006) war in northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda as a case study, and written and oral accounts of survivors, I investigate memories of the war through sound and silence. I discuss how the Acholi made tactical use of vocal sounds as resistance and listening as survival, drawing on environmental and cultural knowledge to avoid (nocturnal) attacks or abduction by rebel or government soldiers, whether in their homesteads or Internally Displaced Persons' camps. Through this paper, I hope to argue more generally that scholars of religion in Africa could be more attentive to sound and hearing in their research.

David Omona: Religion and political cleavage in Uganda: Challenges and opportunities for peaceful coexistence

Abstract: This paper highlights the use of religion for political cleavages in Uganda. It argues that, although as an aspect of civilization meant to help people explain the mystery of life, from time immemorial, people have invariably used religion as identity marker. When the foreign religions of Islam, Christianity, and so forth were introduced in Uganda, being able to achieve a political position depends, to some extent on belonging or not belonging to a religious affiliation. In a situation where religion becomes a centre piece of identity marker, people will either identity with you or not depending on the religious faith you subscribe to. In spite this, unlike in other countries where there are overt inter-religious clashes, in the present Uganda there is apparent peaceful relation between people of different religious groups. Whereas there is outward expression of peaceful relations, there are instances where religious affiliations evoke strong attachment between and amongst Ugandans. This is most especially when it comes to allocation of jobs and political positions, key aspects to resources allocation. What follows from this is that once a person from a particular religious group is positioned at the helm administration the royalties that comes with the office goes to those who s/he shares the same religious affiliation with. Given such exceptions, this paper argues that although belonging to religion is not bad, however when people became obsessed with religious ideals and used them to identify or not to identify with others, it lead to societal coexistence thus breading simmering or overt acrimonious relations.

11:30-13:00 AM Panels

Panel I: Religion and Politics in Zambia, Kaunda/Hinfelaar

Abstract: Scholars have argued that the reason religion and politics have remain inseparable in Africa, Zambia in particular, is because "it is largely through religious ideas that Africans think about the world today" (Ellis and ter Haar 2004:2). Since the 19th century, Zambia has seen major political and societal transformations, from anti-colonial politics that resulted in independence from British colonial

imperialism to the defeated of one of Africa's longest-serving dictators, Kenneth Kaunda, who ruled for 27 years, and to ushering in the process of democratisation in 1991. In all these political developments, religion has played a vital role and remains intertwined with present-day politics. The declaration of Zambia as Christian nation was not only a recognition and but also affirmation of significance of religious presence in the public imaginary and its potent political power. However, the declaration's Christian connotation and its seemingly political guardianship has not only been utilised as cultural tool for legitimating state power, but also promoted an apparent religious hierarchy in which some traditions have positioned themselves as religious hegemony by seeking to subordination minority religious groups especially by those who perceived themselves as architect and protectors of Zambian Christian nationalism. Thus, the role of religion in Zambian politics has not always being constructive. With all its applauded contribution to the struggle against colonialism and the rise of modern democracy, religion has also contributed to endorsing and perpetuating postcolonial autocratic tendencies among Zambian politicians and denial of human rights for some minority groups. The question most scholars have faced is how religious leaders can emphasise the constructive role of religion beyond self-interest and challenge dominant discourses in which religion is largely associated with conflict, competition, social status and promotion of fundamentalist ideas that legitimize political powers.

The panel brings together a group of academics working on Zambia to share their perspective on religion and politics in Zambia.

Teddy Sakupapa: Sectionalism, Politics and the Role of Religion in Zambia

Abstract: This contribution will offer a decolonial analysis of religious mobilisation in the political arena against the background of recent sectionalism in Zambian politics. It will interrogate the phenomenon of sectionalism and the role of religion in this regard as persisting colonial tools. While some contend that the politicization of religion is part of a progression in competitive politics that come with multi-party democracy, this contribution will underscore how this trend lends support towards the erection of sectional walls and the concomitant disruption of ecumenical unity among churches. The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation and its subsequent enshrinement in the constitution has received a variety of responses from different religious and Christian bodies in the country. Despite the large protestant mainline Christian base, the pentecostal form of Christianity has arguably been instrumental in the nationalisation of Christianity in Zambia consequently lending itself to an ambiguous role in national politics. The country's political landscape has recently been altered owing to inter alia the use of Christian (religious) symbols for political mobilisation by the ruling patriotic front coupled with a subtle framing of the main opposition political party as tribal. At the heart of these developments are tactics of differentiation employed by those with state power in ways that are no different from the colonial state. Therefore, problematising the contemporary Zambian nation-state as a colonial legacy, this contribution accentuates the role of religion in urging transformational reforms and challenging hegemonic structures. It will suggest some trajectories towards highlighting the promotion of a peaceful and reconciling role of religion in society. Theoretically, the contribution entails a decolonial theological critique of religious mobilization for political expediency.

Lilian Siwila: Both Sinners but Sinning Differently: Church and State as Bedfellows, a Social Responsibility Perspective

Abstract: Soon after the 1994 independence in the new South Africa which saw the dawn of the country's democracy after decades of bondage form apartheid regime, Desmond Tutu published an article where he was responding to the church's position in the post-Apartheid era. Bearing in mind the role that the church played in bringing the new era in South Africa, despite its compromise in some areas such as (the Dutch Reformed Church's policies during apartheid), Tutu concluded that after a few years of the church's victory of being a prophetic voice to the nation, the church had now gone to bed with the government. In this

paper l use Tutu's framework to assess the church state relationship in Zambia and its influence to social responsibility. Tutu's concept of the church state relationship in South Africa, found both the church and state guilty of sin; hence the statement; "both sinners but sinning differently". The questions that this paper seeks to answer are; To what extent has church state relationship been compromised in Zambia. What are some of the social responsibilities that have been overlooked by the church that have led to its failure to be being a prophetic voice? Therefore using the theories of social responsibility the paper will interrogate ways in which the church state relationship can either be life giving or life denying to the church in Zambia.

Julius Kapembwa: Philosophical Reflections on the Pitfalls of Christian Paternalism in Zambia

Abstract: Since the early 1990's, Zambia has been on the ascendance towards the political adoption of Christian teaching as an overarching moral framework for the country, culminating in the creation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and National Guidance in 2016. One of the functions of the ministry is ensuring 'national values, principles and ethics'. Although there has been substantial public debate over Christian paternalism, there has been no systematic discussion of the use of Christian values to chart the country's moral direction. Many Zambians may not share some purported Christian values. Some Zambians are Christian but find problematic the top-down interpretation or implementation of Christian values and principles. They cherish the value of individuals having to make personal moral decisions on their own rather than have the government decide for them. This paper aims at exploring, elucidating, and disentangling the unease relationship between imposed Christian values and some democratic normative values espoused by legal statutes and invoked by Zambians wary of the spectre of Christian paternalism. The paper addresses theoretical and practical challenges in realising a Christian moral code given Zambia's multiculturality and both the moral and legal primacy of the values of autonomy and liberty that morally constrain the government's scope in advancing any moral agenda. The paper argues that a consistent application of Christian paternalism leads inexorably to a reductio ad absurdum which can only be avoided on pain of committing the ad hoc fallacy and moral hypocrisy, itself a Christian vice. The paper argues instead for greater deliberative democracy in national value formation and adoption. This will engender national unity and yield a national value ethos not unilaterally imposed by a dominant majority but an inclusive one that all reasonable Zambians would accept to be guided by.

Anthony Musonda: The Politicization of Religion and Religionization of Politics in Zambia

Abstract: One reason for the importance of the theme of the relationship between politics and religion is that religions often make strong claims on people's obedience to the will of the supernatural being. Thus, it is inevitable that religious commitment will at times come into conflict with the competing demands of politics on peoples' obedience to the state and its laws. This article aims to demonstrate, from a political philosophical perspective, how the religionisation of politics or the attempt by African leaders, as evidenced by the Zambian constitutional preambular Christian nation, attempts to establish an existential common ground of homogeneity between the ruled and themselves in order to provide unity, harmony and stability for society and drive people to obey the state and its laws. However, evidence to the contrary points to the tendency by leaders to use religion for purely personalized political ends that discredits religion itself. The objective of this article is to demonstrate that, much as the Christian nation clause does not explicitly establish a state religion and permits individuals to practice their religions in the private sphere, legislating the Christian religion into the Constitution, as a form of politicization of religion, has negative consequences; it privileges Christian Zambians in the public sphere whilst keeping non-Christian Zambians in a marginal position of second-class citizenship and excluding them from public office. The researcher will use interview and document analysis to meet this objective. The article concludes by arguing for the principle of toleration as recognition in law and public policy to reverse the marginality and exclusion of group differences, guarantee their access to public spaces and the benefits this brings, and avert the possibility of conflict that religious pluralism portends.

Panel II: Religion and Sexuality: Law, Human Rights and Faith Perspectives

Abstract: Over the past 10-15 years, issues of homosexuality and LGBT rights have become subject of public and political debates in several African countries. The papers in this panel examine the intricate ways in which religion both contributes to, and intervenes in, the politics of homosexuality and LGBT human rights in contemporary Africa. Adopting various perspectives and approaches, such as law, constitutionalism, human rights, and theology, the papers explore how in the contexts of Zambia, Nigeria and Ghana, religious actors and beliefs play a complex and multifaceted role. On the one hand, religion appears as a critical force in policing homosexuality and reinforcing heteronormativity, while on the other hand religion also appears to be a critical resource for enabling alternative ways of engaging with sexual diversity and LGBT human rights.

Bolaji Bateye/Funke Oyekan: Problematizing LGBT and Engendering Faith Communities in Nigeria

The complex interface of societal laws as it impact on the lives of LGBT is hotly contested. In a nation suffused with diverse faith groups, the paper examines the connections between policy, faith communities and the LGBT group in Nigeria. In the 21st century Nigerian polity while other social institutions dwindle, faith communities continue to provide platforms for the expression of camaraderie. Using the historical antecedents of House of Rainbow as a case in point, the paper examined the following captions: "The 10th year anniversary of House of Rainbow popularly known as the "Gay Church" is fast approaching on the 2 September 2016. It all started in Lagos Nigeria, we currently are working in 9 countries, spreading the queer theological and inclusive messages of Christ." "Unlawful Police Raid on Events of Pride Uganda on the 5th August 2016: ...Reverend Jide Macaulay, British Nigerian, Founder and CEO of House of Rainbow who was in Kampala Uganda as the Guest and "Grand Marshall" of Pride Uganda 2016, gave an eye witness account of the raid. This was a grand involvement of House of Rainbow, an organization that reaches out for the welfare of the LGBT people of Uganda, I am humbled and honoured to be the Grand Marshall for the pride and to have witnessed these abuses..."

The foregoing set the pace for the discussion in this study. It seeks to unravel the relationship between LGBT theory and activism in Nigeria. What legislations exist on LGBT communities? It specifically investigates how LGBT actors reclaim religious beliefs, practices and symbols. The role of religion as a motive force in the emerging field of African queer studies is x-rayed. Lastly the paper engages a mind boggling question as to whether LGBT has come to stay especially given the burgeoning religious liberalism.

Bishop Joshua Banda: Sexuality in the Context of Rights based Approaches to HIV Prevention-Interplay between International Polity and Spiritually Based Sexual Behaviour Change: An African Pentecostal Perspective.

Abstract: *The HIV/AIDS pandemic ranks fairly high among notable global phenomena that have, to a great extent, 'reframed' the narrative on human sexuality in various contexts over the past three (3) decades. Related discourses have been witnessed in diverse fora, ranging from house-hold settings to academia lofts, churches to political podia, board rooms that churn global policies to electronic and print media production centers, to name but a few. The bulk of such engagements have sought to highlight the AIDS scourge with the intent to catalyze life saving societal responses. However, the efforts by respective Actors in this respect, have not been without tension. This Paper utilizes anecdotal personal reflections, alongside empirical evidence to highlight enigmatic tensions between conventional public health approaches (to HIV Prevention/sexuality) promulgated largely by donor-backed entities on one hand, and spiritually-based sexual behaviour change ideals propagated by Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) in general and Churches in particular, on the other hand. The Paper brings to light, disconcerting detail*

showing that some entities promoting conventional public health approaches have tended to raise sustained apprehensions towards spiritually-based sexual behaviour programmes. It is observable that the apprehensions are mainly as a result of over-emphasis on sexual reproductive health rights, as it is alleged by some within the said quarters, that the Churches may be essentially stifling individual choices of young people. Surprisingly, this is despite growing evidence since as far back as 1992 when, high level Agencies like the World Health Organisation (WHO), observed that FBO initiatives such as abstinence and marital fidelity, might constitute strategies capable of completely eliminating the risk of infection from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The Paper presents relevant findings from a study undertaken in Lusaka, Zambia (2007-2014) that focused on congregation-based HIV Programmes and explored whether a person's sexual behaviour may be influenced by their attitude and behaviour towards God. A case is made for spiritually-based ethical transformation anchored on biblical teaching in an African Pentecostal setting.

Danoye Oguntola: Their Rights, Our Rights: A Critical Response to Homosexual Violence in Nigeria

Abstract: The social, economic and political rights of homosexuals have come under severe attacks and criticism in some African countries including Nigeria. People with a sexual identity beyond heterosexuality have often been subject of abuse and violent attacks. The antagonists are of the opinion that such sexual identities are alien to African culture and as such should not be allowed. Consequently the mere suspicion that someone is gay or lesbian is a "call" for physical and emotional attacks. The situation is more dangerous in the urban areas in Nigeria as many have been molested, raped, beaten and made to undergo severe punishments due to their sexuality. The main issue concerns the legality or illegality of homosexual practices and identity in the country. As a response, the government introduced the Same Sex Marriage Acts (SSMA 2013). This Acts criminalized all forms of homosexual activities and advocacy. Homosexual identities therefore become moral, legal, and rights issue in the country. The questions therefore arise; can sexuality determine the rights of category of human beings? Are homosexuals in Nigeria protected under the human right charters? Is it true that homosexuality is alien to Africa or imported to the continent by colonial masters? Exploring these questions, the paper evaluates the submissions of the protagonists and the antagonists of the homosexual rights debate in Nigeria. Historical and sociological methods are adopted in pursuance of the thesis that the criminalization of homosexuality is a violation of the fundamental human rights of homosexuals in Nigeria.

14:00-15:30 PM Panels

Panel I: Religion and Politics in Zambia Continued

Naomi Haynes: Constructing the Christian Nation: Zambia's "House of Prayer" in Lusaka's Built Environment

Abstract: How do religious boundaries become spatialized? Anthropological answers to this question have focused primarily on immaterial practices and patterns, such as the soundscapes created by sermons and prayer. But what about the material aspects of this process? This paper will focus on current efforts to construct a national "House of Prayer" in Lusaka. This proposed interdenominational church building will, when erected, boast the largest auditorium in the country. Those involved in promoting and raising funds for the House of Prayer's construction describe it as "realizing" the Zambia's constitutional declaration that it is a "Christian nation." In particular, it promises to make a mark on an urban built environment that they describe as increasingly dominated by mosques. Examining the efforts to promote and construct Zambia's National House of Prayer allows us to both explore a particularly African brand of Christian nationalism, and to discuss whether and how material practices produce religious boundaries.

Jonathan Kangwa: Prayer, Politics and Power in Zambian Democracy: An Anthropological-Theological Perspective

Abstract: President Edgar Lungu of Zambia declared 18th October 2015 as a day of prayer and fasting in response to the economic crisis the country was facing. He sought divine intervention in a declining economy. The following year, President Lungu declared 24th July 2016 as a national day of prayers for peaceful presidential, parliamentary and local government elections. President Lungu has also initiated the construction of a National House of Prayers at the cost of US$10million. These developments have raised questions about the role of prayer in Zambian democracy. This paper employs anthropological methods to assess the place of prayer within relationships of power in Zambian politics. Cultural anthropologists understand prayer as a ritual activity that enacts relationships between individuals and groups. They have recently argued that rituals function as a means through which people negotiate, mediate and enact power within their relationships (Werline 2015). Prayer is a ritualised political action. It occurs in wide range of people's relationships. It can seek to give life or destroy it if it is misused. An investigation of prayer from this perspective shades new light on the role it plays in Zambian politics. This perspective reveals how politicians in Zambia use prayer to make their political claims legitimate and win the support of electorates.

Austin Cheyeka/Chita/Mwale: The Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs and Church-State Relations in Zambia, a Christian Nation

Abstract: In Zambia, the creation of the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs (MNGRA) by President Edgar Chagwa Lungu in 2016 has attracted the media but not academic attention. The paper is a reaction to that academic silence and sought to not only understand why the ministry was established, but also explored how the formation of the ministry had set the tone for church-state relations in present day Zambia. The paper is largely informed by the thematic analysis of the print media discourse on the ministry from 2015 to 2017 and in dialogue with Jenkins (2011) who postulates how churches and clergy play key roles as political leaders resulting in Christian politics in much of Sub-Sahara.

The major findings of the paper were that the mandate of the ministry was to actualize and translate the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation into practical, workable and realistic interventions. In addition, the ministry would provide overall policy and legal framework in all matters pertaining to Zambia as a Christian heritage. The actualization of the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation would be done through interdenominational dialogue; national guidance; national values, principles and ethics; public religious celebrations; preservation of Christian and religious sites; and religious affairs. While the ministry has had its own functions, through its creation, Pentecostals in Zambia found in President Lungu a true custodian of the covenant between the people of Zambia and God, which President Frederick Chiluba entered into in 1991. Pentecostal Christianity was also being used for political mileage by the power that maybe - the Presidency. This in turn created new trends in the church-state relations ignited by Lungu's replay of Chiluba's Pentecostal populism and the consequent formation of political loyalties especially among Pentecostals. We therefore argue that the new church-state relations cemented by the formation of the MNGRA in essence mirrored the politicisation of religion and religionalisation of politics.

Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps: Zambia: a never-secular Christian Nation

Abstract: Contexts like Africa and parts of Asia, that have not been as touched by a secular mindset as the USA and western-Europe have been described as 'never-secular' (cf. Luhrmann 2012). The declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation contributes to this view: it evokes the image of a country so religious and unsecular that religion even permeates the foundations of the state. In this paper I wish to challenge the view of Zambia as a never-secular context. While I concede that being religious, and in many cases being Christian, is generally seen as the default option in Zambia, I argue that this Christianity is not unaffected by secular worldviews. For this argument I draw on my research into narratives about Satanism in Zambia, and on my experiences as a lecturer in Sociology, Anthropology and Religious Studies at Justo

Mwale University in Lusaka. Drawing on the contexts in which stories about the influence of Satanists and other harmful spiritual agents are shared, I propose that these narratives should be viewed as part of a debate about a disenchanted, secular worldview. This position is underscored by similar uses of narratives about witchcraft, Satanism and possession in other contexts. I will mention three of these contexts: the performance of possession narratives in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (cf. Levack 2013); the foes of anti-Satanic literature in the nineteenth and twentieth century (cf. Introvigne 2016); and the rhetorical function of movies such as The Conjuring (2013, 2016). Placing narratives of Satanism in the context of a dispute between conflicting worldviews which is by no means specific for Zambia allows us to understand this context in other terms than the overly exoticizing 'never-secular'.

Panel II: Religion, LGBT Activism and Politics in Africa Chitando/Klinken

Moving beyond a focus on the politicisation of homosexuality and LGBT rights by the state as well as by religious actors, this panel draws attention to the counter-mobilisations of LGBT activists and allies. The papers examine various strategies and methods of LGBT activism and queer politics in various parts of the continent, specifically exploring the ways in which LGBT actors appropriate, negotiate and reclaim religious beliefs, practices and symbols. Papers not only investigate the relationship between African LGBT activism and faith, but also explore the underlying queer political and religious imaginations informing. Hence the panel as a whole seeks to make a twofold intervention: putting the category of religion central in the emerging field of African queer studies, and putting matters of sexual diversity, LGBT activism, and queer politics central in the field of African religious studies.

Masiiwa Ragies Gunda: Re-thinking the Religious Engagement Strategy for LGBTI Activism in Africa-

Abstract: In-roads into faith communities by LGBTI rights activists remains a daunting task across Africa, with faith communities still predominantly led by leaders who are intolerant to sexual minorities' rights and place in the house of God. The predominant strategy by LGBTI activists has been a rights-based approach, which asserts the universality of the UDHR and many other human rights conventions. This approach has not been as helpful, especially among faith communities who are quick to point out the secular origins of the UDHR. Another strategy by LGBTI persons to deal with obvious exclusion and stigma has been to abandon faith communities and create parallel and alternative communities. This paper seeks to propose alternative strategies for engagement with faith communities on the subject of sexual minorities. The alternative strategy must use violence as an entry point to discussing and dialoguing on sexual minorities with faith communities. It is argued in this paper that most, if not all, faith communities abhor violence, the challenge is for sexual minorities to highlight how much violence is directed towards them and whether faith communities consider such violence as justifiable and right. Another strategy is physical presence within faith community spheres to challenge the narrative that sexual minorities do not exist within these communities.

Adriaan Van Klinken: Activism through Storytelling: Narrative Politics and Theologies of Stories of Our Lives

Abstract: This paper addresses a methodological question: How to develop African queer religious studies and theology? Building on feminist, postcolonial and queer scholarship on autobiographic storytelling as a way to reclaim and perform epistemic and political agency, the paper specifically engages with African feminist theological work on storytelling as spiritually empowering and theologically significant. Where African feminist theologians have used her-stories to develop her-theologies (Nadar 2009), this paper suggest that similarly, queer autobiographic storytelling can be a basis for developing queer theologies. It applies this methodology to the Kenyan queer anthology Stories of Our Lives (2015), which is a collection of autobiographical stories narrated by people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex

(LGBTI) or otherwise queer in Kenya, that have been collected and published by Nairobi-based arts collective The Nest. The paper will read this anthology through two hermeneutical lenses, of narrative sexualities (Plummer 2015) and narrative theologies (Katongole 1998), and examines the intersections between sexuality and faith. The key argument is that the stories collected in Stories of Our Lives challenge both the myths of queer sexuality as "un-African" and of Christianity as inherently "homophobic", as they give insight into the strategies of, and resources for Kenyan LGBTI people to narratively negotiate their sexual and religious selves. Hence the paper not only addresses the aforementioned methodological problem, but also underlines the need for African queer studies to acknowledge religion, spirituality and faith as sites of queer agency and politics.

15:45-17:30 Sessions IV

Panel I: Religion and Politics in Zambia Continued

Hermen Kroesbergen: From congregations to ministries; With whom does the government deal? Zambia as case study'

Abstract: Is a church a religious community of believers or a group of customers around a service provider? When a government deals with the plurality of religions, is it dealing with different segments of society and their representatives, or with a collection of spiritual service providers and their clients? Both these perspectives on religion have probably always and everywhere been applicable to the phenomenon of religion, but shifts in emphasis in this regard are clearly traceable and have far-reaching consequences. In this paper I want to clarify the difference between the two perspectives, applying this to the current African context. Ogbu Kalu (2008:113f) describes how the rise of Pentecostalism on the African continent since the 1980s changed the figure of the pastor into a 'powerful man of God'. The pastor is no longer merely a representative of a group of believers, but now he is a 'superhero' 'chosen and anointed by the gods'. Just like traditional religious functionaries in Africa, the pastor has a special connection to the divine realm and uses that to solve the problems of ordinary people. Kalu connects this development to 'the local image and idiom of the big man', and John F. McCauley (2012) applies a similar analysis in his article 'Africa's new big man rule? Pentecostalism and patronage in Ghana.' For Zambia, which will be my focus, Naomi Haynes (2015) describes the tension between egalitarianism and hierarchy, Pentecostal theologian Madalitso Banja (2009) is critical of the 'personality cult' that has developed, whereas the newly appointed Minister of Religious Affairs seems to act like a supervisor for spiritual service providers. Instead of religion consisting in egalitarian communities who worship together, the focal point is now the man of God who as a patron provides spiritual services to his clients. What are the implications of this shift?

Sishuwa Sishuwa: The politics of researching on Alice Lenshina in current day Zambia

Chammah J Kaunda/Marja Hinfelaar: Competing for Caesar': Religion, National Politics and Identity Politics in Zambia

Abstract: The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation has brought identity politics to the fore, and increased religious competition and polarisation of engagement in Zambian politics, as witnessed in 2016 elections. Using 2016 presidential election as a case study, we argue that the public visibility of Pentecostalism with its solitary competitive approach to politics has engendered religious identity politics (perhaps even, religious identity crisis) in which public spheres are increasingly perceived as spaces of contestation for religious power and national legitimacy. Whereas the Roman Catholic Church and mainline Protestant Churches uses Pastoral Letters to engage politics, Pentecostalism utilizes public visibility in quest to endorse Christian nationalism as foundational part of Zambian society. Employing

identity politics theory, this study argues that these the Christian communities have utilized religious identity politics to delegitimize each other in the public spheres. They engage in internal construction of 3homogeneous identities at the expense of mutual collaboration. The result is conflictive and self-interest centered political engagement which are distorting the mission of the Church to promote the common good. The study concludes that identity politics have become a hindrance to progressive religious collaborative engagement in national politics.

Session II: Religion and Education

Danika Driesen: Overcoming Professional Alienation in Teaching Religion Studies: A Case Study in Cape Town

Abstract: This paper discusses how Religion Studies teachers overcame their professional experiences of alienation in advancing the 2003 South African National Policy on Religion and Education. This revised policy departs from the apartheid mono-religious system of education, and promotes a programme for religious diversity in the country's schools. While this policy promotes an inclusive and pluralist curriculum, it reflects that there has been no change in the State's structural imposition on the role of Religion Studies teachers. The policy constructs a homogenous pedagogical role that implores teachers to focus more on promoting a multi-religious approach in an impartial manner, and therefore neglects their own outlooks within the profession. My research consequently reveals a gap emerged between the national policy-imagined role and the Religion Studies teachers' perspectives.

This article will expose this gap as an alienating experience for the teachers. I argue that the Religion Studies teachers became alienated in the process of adhering to an educa1onal strategy that foregrounded drastic role changes in the formulation of the new policy. Rahel Jaeggi's concept of alienation is useful to highlight the alienating effects of the policy. Her framework entails critically analysing an individual's social role in terms of how s/he succeeds or fails to appropriate and identify with it. My research is based on interviews from eleven teachers who taught Religion Studies in secondary schools in Cape Town. Their responses confirm that the gap disrupted their roles, and resulted in a 'double' alienation for them. It also reveals that the teachers are not bound by their 'double' alienation as they were able to alleviate it to some extent by integrating their religious identities into their teaching methods. Their methodologies of teaching with religious commitment were open enough to adhere to the policy's mandate to educate learners on a diverse range of religious traditions.

Nelly Mwale/ Melvin Simuchimba/ Maligelita Njobvu:: Religion and Education: Reflecting on the mission of Christian Universities in the Provision of Education in Zambia Today

Abstract: Amid recent acknowledgments of the global growth of both Christianity and higher education, little or no distinct attention has been given to the presence of Christian higher education in Zambia. Premised on the understanding that the church often acts based on signs of the moment, the paper explored the mission of Christian universities to understand what their visions portrayed about the provision of university education in twenty-first century. The inquiry arose out of the observable reality of how religion was being used to promote education – evidenced by the recent church's expansion of their education provision from the lower levels to tertiary education. An interpretive case study was employed to understand the mission of purposively selected Christian universities in Zambia. Interviews and document review were the main methods of data collection. Thematic data analysis supplemented by Geiger's theory (1987) on the role of private higher education institutions helped us make meaning out of the data. Christian universities in Zambia only emerged after the 1990s and were among the earliest to respond to Government's liberalization policies of the sector. The mission of the Christian universities included

providing quality holistic Christian education at tertiary level, fostering holistic formation for men and women, imparting morals and values, and being model institutions in the sector. While the mission statements were related to Geiger's assumptions and roles of Christian universities (the quest to provide more (demand), better (quality) and different (response to specific needs) education), they mirrored the perceived quagmire (access, quality, moral decay among others) in the provision of university education, which the church was responding to. We argue that despite being an antidote to the dilemmas of university education, Christian universities depicted twenty-first century realties of competition and lack of ecumenism to collectively respond to the crisis.

Scholastica Kariuki: Gender Responsive life skills Education and Youths Sexuality Health in Kenya secondary schools.

Abstract: Adolescents' biopsychosocial development disposes them to sexual risks owing to their biological sexual maturity often not accompanied by full understanding of their sexual feelings, orientation, gender roles and sexual scripts. In context, sub-Saharan Africa has seen a rise in early sex debut, multiple sex partners and high risk partners among adolescents and young adults. In Kenya (15-24 year old) contributed 51 per cent in new infections of HIV in the year 2015, the figure rose from 21 percent in 2013 according to Kenya National AIDS Control Council. Though education is largely relied upon to enhance safe adolescent sexuality behaviour and reproductive health comprehensive sexuality education is hampered by multifaceted factors including religions and politics. Multinational orgarnisations recommend a Sexuality Education that empowers young people to be equal members in relationships and protect their health. DiCenso, Guyatt, Willan, & Griffith aver that sexuality education is insufficiently and ineffectively taught, typify inconsistencies and controversy on sexuality curriculum. So unintentional practices of gender insensitiveness and discrimination is likely in schools, yet classroom experiences determine how well girls and boys participate in educational activities, their completion and achievement. It is imperative that quality Life skills based sexuality education is ascertained in schools for enhanced sexuality and reproductive health. So a research study is critical to determine if gender responsive teaching and learning of life skills based sexuality education is going on in school, its quality and relationship with adolescents' reproductive and sexuality health. Hypothesis testing will determine the impact of LSBE on adolescents' sexuality and reproductive health in Nairobi and later wider Kenya. Mixed research design involving both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (descriptive and inferential -correlational and regression analysis) will be employed. Findings will be used to develop guideline for practicing Life skills based Sexuality Education for secondary schools.

Samuel Kehinde Fabunmi: The Contributions of Selected Pentecostal Churches to University Education in Nigeria

Abstract: The emergence of Pentecostal strand of Christianity on the global map of religious landscape is historical. Within the Christian fold, this movement has become a power house and a driving force dictating the pace of Christian practices with vigour and creativity, which makes it the fastest growing strand within Christianity with indelible marks. In Nigeria, the tempo of Pentecostal development is growing unabated with innovations and creativity especially from shifting attention on the spiritual to social intervention and practically involving in human and community development, which was the pride of mainline churches in Nigeria. The Pentecostals through their ministry in the urban centres have contributed in various ways to social change. One of the contributions to the nation building by the Pentecostals in Nigeria is the investment in university education which is complementing the efforts of the government in respect of development of higher education. Therefore, this piece considers the inroad of Pentecostal churches to the development of university education with emphasis on what motivate them, the contributions made so far and how to consolidate on their achievement as faith based organisations to the standard of university education in Nigeria. This work makes use of "integral" or "holistic" gospel

theory as the basis for argument in the involvement of these Pentecostals in the social development in regards to university education in Nigeria. This study also adopts bibliographical search for discussion and analysis of findings and draw recommendations from issues generated in the involvement of the Pentecostals in the development of university education in Nigeria.

Session III; Religion, Conflict and Peace

Gosnell Yorke: Religion: The (Somewhat) Missing Piece in Peace and Conflict Studies in Africa.

Abstract: Given the pivotal position which religion occupies in the African worldview and, therefore, in the identity formation of African descendant peoples throughout Global Africa—encompassing both the continent and its diaspora—it is entirely surprising that such insufficient attention is generally paid to the important but ambivalent role which religion plays in peace and conflict studies on the continent. Instead, African peace and conflict scholars have, for the most part, tended to favour such disciplines as international relations, law, political science and the social sciences more broadly. In some sense, such a slighting of religion is but a microcosmic reflection of what, up until recently, has characterized much of the influential peace and conflict studies emanating from the Global North. There, against the backdrop of what might best be perceived as the secularizing forces of a post-Enlightenment-driven modernity and its attendant suspicion of religion, religion has been given short shrift in such studies. Thankfully, some recent studies and/or centres such as the Oxford Handbook on Religion, Conflict and Peace (2016), the peer-reviewed Journal of Religion, Conflict and Peace (2013) and the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at Arizona State University, USA, are but some concrete examples of attempts to address that lacuna in the Global North. Also, in this regard, the works of African scholars like Nigerian scholar, Uzodike (2008), Ugandan scholar, Murindwa-Rutinga (2011) and Ethiopian scholar, Tesemma (2013) are but three examples that can be drawn from the continent. Essentially, our presentation will call for a greater emphasis to be placed on the important but ambivalent role which religion ought to play in peace and conflict studies in Africa—a continent bedeviled by various externally induced and, sometimes, internally generated challenges but one which, nonetheless, seems firmly committed to its own postcolonial peace and development agenda.

Andrea Brigaglia: Global salafism and local jihads: reflections from a debate around the origins of Boko Haram

Abstract: During the last two years, various authors (Kassim 2015; Brigaglia 2015; Thurston 2016) have been engaged in parallel attempts to penetrate the ideological foundations of Boko Haram's political thought. While the above authors disagree on certain issues of interpretation, their contributions constitute attempts at (a) taking the political theology of the Nigerian group seriously; (b) analyzing the ideological references used in its literature; and (3) defining the group's ideology in the light of existing taxonomies borrowed from the growing literature on Islamist movements.

The debate around the definition of Boko Haram in the above literature (as well as in some additional articles that followed up) is inextricably linked to an empirical question related to the history of the Nigerian group: is Boko Haram the development of a cell of al-Qaeda established as early as 2001 in the West African country? If yes, what type of relationship did the "non-Jihadi" Salafi leadership of Nigeria entertain with cell before it declared Jihad against the Nigerian state and "became" Boko Haram?

After briefly summarizing the debate around the origins of Boko Haram, this paper will try to problematize the categories of "violent" and "non-violent", "Jihadi" and "quietist", which most of literature on global Salafism uses as less simplistic—but, in my opinion, still unsatisfying heuristically—synonyms of the

outdated terms "radical" and "moderate." The inherent tension between the static nature of the political categories used by global Salafi actors, and the changing local contexts in which they de facto operate, in fact, renders these categories inevitably elusive, unless the object of the violence and the Jihad advocated or disavowed by specific Salafi actors in specific contexts, is not defined.

Abdulhakim Aballa Nsobya Jihad-Salafism in East Africa: The Case of Uganda's Allied Democratic Forces

Abstract: *This paper is based on research done for Maters thesis, entitled, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Uganda a Jihad-Salafi Movement or Local Political Movement in Disguise (Nsobya 2017). The purpose of the thesis was to document the history of the earliest jihad movement in the modern sub-Sahara Africa, formerly Salafi Jihad Council (Sajico) but later renamed as Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), as well as locating its position within the three political categories of Salafism based on Quintan Wiktorowicz (2006) model. What do we know about this jihad group? How did it emerge? Is it a global Salafi-jihad movement or local political movement in disguise? Using interviews with former ADF combatants, together with archival research approach, the paper tries to respond to these questions and to understand the ideological roots of this little-known Ugandan Jihad group.*

Faith Gloria Ehiemua: Prosperity Teaching and its Effect in the Migration Crisis in Nigeria: A Socio-Religious Approach

Abstract: *In recent times, the flow of illegal migrants from less developed countries to developed nations have been a cause for concern because undocumented entries denote irregularities in the system and a threat to security of State and lives. Nigerians form a large bulk of people who try to reach foreign countries through illegal means such as land and sea. This work examines the role of religious teaching on prosperity in the migration crisis in Nigeria with the aim of re-directing religious leaders mainly focused on addressing material poverty to a need to build hope in their followers by reassuring them of a better and brighter future in Nigeria. A qualitative method using theological approach, reveals the function of religion in creating hope in a hopeless situation and a willingness to rebuild based on examples of Old Testament Prophets' role in building a strong love for the nation of Israel and a determination to make it work through teachings on messianic salvation. This draws a parallel between the prophets of Old Testament and the new age religious leaders' mission of ushering in a "blissful age". Finding shows an intersection between prosperity teaching, materialism and greed which is an underlying factor in the acceptance to be trafficked. This work holds the view that, the role of religions and religious leaders should not be neglected nor underrated in the construction of good citizenry and nation building.*

9:00-10:30 AM Panel or Sessions

Panel 3: Prophets, Healers and Science: Religion, Faith Healing and the Politics of Healthcare in Kenya

Abstract: Africa continues to grapple with tremendous challenges particularly in the provision of health care. The HIV/Aids pandemic along with the persistence of malaria, communicable diseases, cancers, diabetes, high blood pressure and kidney failure have impacted on the governance of Africa's health systems. To mitigate the provision of healthcare, faith healers, traditional medicine practitioners and other alternative healers have emerged. There is also the proliferation prophets, faith healers and scammers claiming to heal spiritual and non-spiritual ailments. Prophet David Owuor, a medic by profession, of the Ministry of Repentance and Holiness (MRH) church is one such healer who also claims to resurrect the dead. Critically ill patients have ended up dying after discharge from hospitals to go for faith healing prayers by Owuor. Medical doctors who are members of the MRH display, as proof of healing, medical records of such patients. There was a recent claim of resurrection of a woman leading to country wide celebrations by Prophet Owuor's followers. Such cases have created tremendous controversy in the Kenyan social, political and medical scene. This paper examines the intersections between faith, traditional and biomedical healing with a view to teasing out the tensions between religion and science as well as the politics of healthcare in Kenya. Further it examines the varied modes of healthcare services that Kenyans are appropriating in a bid to understand how they navigate this contested terrain as well as how faith based organizations are responding to the health crisis in Kenya. The paper is based on ethnographic research carried out in Kenya over the last five years and is part of the on-going Nagel Institute Research Project titled African Christianity and the Intersection between faith, traditional and biomedical healing in East Africa.

Damaris Parsitau
Geofrey Kinuthia
Bernard Boyo

Session I: Religion and African Worldviews

Kupakwashe Mtata: A Theory of Religion from Africa Proposed

Abstract: *This paper proposes the dialectic of concealment and disclosure, manifest in many cases of religion in Africa, as a theory of religion that has heuristic value beyond Africa and beyond religion. Much abstraction about religion in Africa emphasizes what is different about African religion. Relying on data gathered in western Zimbabwe through protracted periods of participant observation, this paper will demonstrate how the dialectic of concealment and disclosure is central to religion, media and art. It will also be argued that the theory of the dialectic of concealment and disclosure could be found useful beyond Africa.*

Abraham Adebo: Aaroism: a theology of reconstruction, self-reliance, and nation-building for Nigeria

Abstract: This paper focuses on how the traditional concept of cooperation known among the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria as Aaro can function as a theological and ideological platform for national integration, self-reliance, nation-building, and development. It borrows from Jesse Mugambi's theology of reconstruction as a means of refocusing and rebuilding the collapsed social-economic, political and religious structures of Nigeria especially as a result of the problem of corruption which has continued to be an inhibition on the path of building a virile and sustainable nation in Nigeria. Several works have been done with respect to the problem of national development and national integration in Nigeria. Not much attention has been paid however, to how theology can be a platform for national development and integration. This is the gap that this work seeks to address. Nevertheless, the research places emphasis on the interface between culture, tradition, theology and development.*

Edwin Zulu: Can anything good come out of Africa?: Exploring contributions of African World views, Spirituality and values to the Contemporary faith

Abstract: The issue of world views, spirituality and values is a matter that continues to receive much attention in many contexts, more especially in situations where the Gospel is propagated. In Africa, this reality is paramount more than ever before, this is so because Africans have realized that their world views, spirituality and values can in a positive way assist to comprehend the gospel better contrary to some assertions to the contrary. In addition, it can also help to deal with contemporary issues that religion and society faces in Africa today such Gender based violence, Xenophobia, refugees, corruption. The thesis of this presentation is that there is need to appreciate African world views, spirituality and values because they could be used as a vehicle through which the gospel can be better understood, applied and incorporated in daily life to help deal with contemporary issues. This is done by recognizing and appreciating that these world views, spirituality and values have evolved and are dynamic and always getting enlarged with the encounter with other cultures and realities. Methodologically, the article examines various literature (critical analysis of documents) on African world views, spirituality and values, and contemporary issues affecting the African Society so also make a critical analysis.*

Victor Chilenje: The ugly face of our religion in the 21st century: a case of Christianity – Zambia

Abstract: This article investigates the ugly face that of our religion portrays in the 21st Century. In the context of this essay, religion refers to the Protestant Christian faith. The article will focus on the features that contribute to the ugly face of our religion. The aim of the article is to explain how our religion has become so ugly in the 21st century, even though Christianity is still attracting a large following. At the moment, when Christianity is analysed critically you will find most of its members hold the form of religion but deny the power of it (II Timothy 3:1-5). In addition, it is marred with denominationalism instead of focusing on Jesus Christ the source of life. There is also envy and jealousy and hate in the Christian church because people seek power rather than modeling servant leadership. Instead of being "salt and light of the world" (Mathew 5:13-16), it has become a stumbling block to many who would like to follow Jesus. As if this is not enough, the Christian Church has become a center of controversy on how to worship God properly. The article will argue that at times during worship, sermon and hymns the power and works of the devil are given more credence that the power and works and love of Jesus Christ. Another ugly feature is the religious economy- the buying and selling of salvation in the church today. If this is true then a way forward needs to be found before the church completely loses her saltiness.

Chewe Mulenga: The place of the elderly in the Zambian Christian context

Abstract: Globally, elderly people have occupied a special place in society. They have often been respected and valued. In Zambia, as in many African societies, they were formerly regarded highly as custodians of

tradition and values of life. They were greatly respected for their level of acumen and skilfulness. What is more, elderly persons worked as agents of peace building and reconciliation in the community. Whenever people had differences or disputes, the elderly would be invited to assist in settling their disputes and resolving the conflicts. In recent years, we have seen a rise in the number of elderly people being abused psychologically, mentally, economically and socially. Elderly people have been accused of practicing witchcraft. Others have ended up being killed or neglected by their family. In light of this situation, the researcher undertook a research in order to establish the place of the elderly in the Zambian Christian context. The researcher used the concept of Richard Osmar on the four tasks of practical theology (descriptive empirical task, interpretive task, Normative task and Pragmatic task). The research relied mainly on secondary data; hence literature analysis was main source of data. Questionnaires were also prepared and sent to ministers within Reformed church in Zambia. In this research, it was established that senior citizens have not been accorded a place even in the church. Most of the church programmes are designed mainly for the able bodied persons. The social and cultural perceptions which people have towards the senior citizens exist in the church too.

Session II: Religion, Rights and Law

Josephine Soboyejo: Legal foundations for the promotion of sustainable peace and religious tolerance in Nigeria

Abstract: The overlay of ethnicity and politics on religion causes contradictions in geopolitical and legal systems in Nigeria. Inaugurating the rule of law in any society fractured by violent conflicts is a priority for sustainable peace. In the African continent, a multi-dimensional approach is often required to maintain order. The scope of violence in Nigeria crystallizes the opinion that the government is culpable when it should lay solid legal foundations for the promotion of religious tolerance but fails to prevent the violations and safeguard the constitutional or civil rights of the citizens. The traditional politics of the people has a strong linkage to the belief in theocracy, and the country will not enjoy sustainable peace until the proper legal foundation is laid. Islamic Canon Law (Sharia) was inserted (not enacted) in the Nigerian Constitution in Sections 200, 260-264; therefore there is a dire need for a panacea for Christian security in Nigeria. This paper used philosophical inquiry, critical, rational/logical analysis, participatory political research, and sociological methodology to scrutinize the establishment of Canon Laws in the constitution of secular Nigeria and its consequences. It examined the challenges emanating from necessities in establishing legal systems, the building of national institutions, and identifies the roles of stakeholders. This paper advocates a firm legal foundation for democratic governance in secular Nigeria and suggests ways to strengthen the constitution, security systems, national institutions, and uphold the rule of law.

Godfrey Msiska: Human rights and Religion in Africa: Past and Present Challenges to human rights

Abstract: The paper investigates the human rights discourse and religious discourse in Africa. Whereas the literature has acknowledged the role of human rights and religion in Africa and its use for promoting human dignity, the growing use of human rights and religion has remained unexamined. The inquiry thus qualitatively explored how human rights and religion has been used in Africa using the legal perspective and religious perspective. The research observes that human rights abuses and religious rights abuses were increasingly in Africa. This was established by largely using cases of human rights and cases of religious freedom in Zambia. This paper therefore advances that there is a misconception of human rights and religious rights in Africa. This is because of the idea of human rights is perceived as foreign concept .although the idea of human rights is good. The human rights are perceived not rights for Africans because the idea was not initiated by Africans. The paper concludes with recommendations on how to rediscover human rights and religious rights in a multi-religious society.

Femi J Kolapo: Nigeria's Pentecostal Churches and the tribunal of the social media

Abstract: Texting and blogging about Nigeria's Pentecostal churches is one of the ubiquitous features of Nigeria's social media landscape. This paper argues that the social media, taking off from the same political and socio-economic conditions of the country, as the more academic study of the movement, brings Nigeria's Pentecostal churches under a more critical scrutiny. Much of recent literature of Nigeria's (and Africa's) Pentecostalism has highlighted the modernizing, economic savvy, and social-psychologically advantageous aspects of the organizations to adherents. It has advertised their increasing political significance to national quests for transformation to democratic politics in Africa. This presentation argue that the social media has subjected Nigeria's Pentecostalism itself to a tribunal of non-faith, opposing faiths, rival/non Pentecostal people who are outside of the boundaries of Pentecostal's theological-philosophical self appreciation. I explore the implications of this social media critique to the discussions about the progressive and democratizing credentials of these organizations in Nigeria.

Abel Ugba: Mediating Public Religion in Africa – What Role for Journalism?

Abstract: *Much of Africa is awash with religion. Run-of-the-mill activities in most African cities are suffused with religion. Believers openly proclaim religious ideologies and actively seek to recruit members on the streets, trains, buses and in supermarkets. Lorries and mass transit buses are emblazoned with religious slogans while amplifiers mounted on shop buildings, cars or in street corners blare out sermons, songs or the call to prayer. An encounter with many African cities inevitably amounts to a vicarious religion experience. Religion's grip on Africa is equally reflected in the strong attachment of individuals to religious institutions and authorities and in the influence that religious leaders wield over many aspects of public life, including politics. Although a clear majority of states in Africa are secular, religious ideas and leaders exercise tremendous influence on policies and governance, sometimes to the detriment of badly-needed development. Given that religion and the mass media are both ubiquitous and influential in Africa, the presentation examines the relationship between them. It focuses on specific religious phenomena and assesses whether media interpretation furthered clearer understanding and a critical appreciation of their significance. Data in the presentation will be sourced mostly through content analysis.*

Njoki Wane: Spirituality/Religion as the source of Inspiration for Black women in Leadership positions

Abstract: The past is not only a position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to say…Our relationship to the past is quite a complex one; we can't pluck it up out of where it was and simply restore it to ourselves (Hall, 1989: 19). The purpose of this presentation is to unearth the centrality of spirituality/religion in the lives of Black women in leadership positions. The paper is based on narratives of five Black Women in leadership positions who referred to their career in the academy as: "… a spiritual journey to their past that has enabled them to navigate the spaces in the academy as leaders". This presentation wrestles with the following questions: What is the role of spirituality/religion in leadership? Is there a difference between African religions and spirituality and how women leaders evoke them in their daily practices in their leadership position? Is there tension between African spiritualties and other spiritualties that are based on particular religions? How do we ensure that spiritual practices are inclusive and not alienating despite the differences in religious practices? Is it possible to share a spirituality that does not contravene the faith beliefs of staff and students? Are there any drawbacks to spiritual leadership? How may those in school leadership evoke their spirituality, if at all, in everyday practice for transformative purposes? How do you evoke your spirituality as a leader for healing relationships in the office; for creating good working environment? Drawing on Houston and Sokolow (2006) eight principles of spiritual leadership (Intention; Attention; gifts and Talents; Gratitude; uniqueness of life lessons; Connectedness; Openness & Trust), I reflect on their impact on individuals in a place of work. The goal of this paper is to show how the women's spiritual journeys have informed the way

they are today in positions of leadership in Canadian Academies. They have made their spirituality an essential tool of their work.

Panel 4: African Christianity and the Intersection Between Faith, Traditional and Biomedical Healing

Abstract: Diseases are a perennial problem in Africa and their impact has devastated millions of people across the continent. Consequently, Africa has witnessed an increase of faith leaders who propagate faith healing with little appreciation for modern medicine. Unfortunately, faith healers take advantage of these desperate Christians by extorting money from them. Available data shows that substantial transformations are taking place in Africa in the practice of traditional medicine and many educated African Christian now supplement modern medicine with traditional medicine. Further, literature available shows that most curricula in theological and Bible schools is silent on these interactions among the three aspects of faith healing, traditional medicine and modern medicine. Consequently, religious leaders from the various theological colleges have little or no source of reference on how to reconcile them. The research will seek to answer the following question "How do African religious leaders reconcile the three competing claims of healing?". This question will be achieved through review of the existing curriculum to provide evidence-based insights enabling development of a framework that clarifies the role and interactions of faith, traditional and biomedical healing. The framework will provide guidance among the theological schools on how best to integrate these concepts and deliver them to their students in order to create an environment that promotes holistic health. The study will employ a mixed methods research design to answer the key research question. Purposive sampling will be used to identify theological institutions from Mainline Churches, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic. The sample will be drawn from the East African countries including Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The outcome will be to achieve an integrated curriculum in the context of traditional, faith and biomedical healing.

Scholastica Kariuki
Michael Bowen
Geofrey Kinuthia
James Kombo

Panel 5: Alternative social and political visions – Christianity as politics in Africa

Hans Olsson: Cultivating dry lands and restoring parched nations: Christian Farming as a political vision in Zimbabwe

Abstract: In present-day Zimbabwe, decades of political turmoil have in combination with perils of a changing climate made the ability of producing food and feed a rapidly growing population an increasing social and political concern. In response to such contemporary challenges an evangelical/charismatic Christian non-governmental organization, Foundation for Farming (FFF), today advocates an agricultural revolution based on biblical principles. With methods inspired by how God created nature FFF advocates an approach named "Farming God's Way" which includes no-till farming, the use of top mulch (referred to as God's blanket) and crop rotation as a sustainable method of increasing yields in an ecologically and socially sustainable way. Through workshops and training programs mainly targeting poor subsistence farmers (e.g. I was Hungry) FFF aims to change/transform Zimbabwe and nations across the world. With their approach currently spreading and gaining ground across Africa and beyond (US) the question is what wider socio-political ramifications FFF produces in the Zimbabwean context, where agriculture in the past and in the present, has been contested and disputed.

With FFF's conservative evangelical Christian background (a position often seen to be both anti-environment and anti-political) this paper aims to investigate how contemporary environmental concerned Christian approaches to farming produce an alternative political vision. As a pre-study for a forthcoming ethnographic study this paper analyzing Christian farming as a form of public culture. Here dwell the ways in which the promotion of a distinct Christian way of farming affect wider socio-political values related to self-reliance, social and ecological sustainability, and ideas of what the good life contains.

Mika Vahangas: Nkamba as a location of anti-colonial reconciliation – Kimbanguist politics of just peace

Abstract: The Kimbanguist church is a result of a multifaceted interaction between Bakongo traditions, western Christianity and colonial oppression. Its roots are found in Bakongo prophetic traditions, especially in the ministry of Simon Kimbangu in 1921 whose home village, Nkamba, has become the centre of this global movement as well as a notable pilgrimage site. Nkamba incarnates many of Kimbanguist political-theological ideals, and one can analyze Kimbanguist ideas of ideal process of reconciliation through the spatial features, rituals and narratives related to Nkamba. The historical dimension of Nkamba as a seat of Kimbanguist collective memory (including a massive Simon Kimbangu-museum under construction) emphasizes the torments of the Bakongo and especially the Kimbanguists in the hands of Belgian colonialists, creating thus the backdrop to the need of reconciliation. Even western missionaries are viewed as an integral part of the oppression, albeit with grades of difference. An antithesis of this colonial oppression is found in the multi-layered Kimbanguist (inter)nationalism where Bakongo ethnic nationalism, Congolese (DRC) nationalism, Pan-Africanism and universal visions are interwoven into an ideological texture that allows for Bakongo and African special roles as a response to colonial oppression but opening up for global reconciliatory visions.

Karen Lauterbach: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana as a site of moral and social critique

Abstract: In this paper, I discuss charismatic pastors in Ghana as public figures and their (sometimes ambiguous) role as both holders of authority and as challenging existing moral norms and social hierarchies. In Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, pastors are highly visible in public space, both as a way to promote their churches and the religious services they offer, but also as commentators on various moral and social issues of national concern. The paper draws on my work on pastors' careers as a way to escape subordination, and as a form of social and moral critique that often touches upon the accumulation and use of wealth, and ideas around age, wisdom and knowledge. A particular focus is on moral discussions on wealth within charismatic Christianity and reading these in a socio-historical perspective. With this perspective, I wish to nuance the debate on charismatic Christianity (and the prosperity gospel) and read these discussions as expressions of moral and social critique, and hence move beyond a more instrumental approach to charismatic Christianity that tends to understand the moral practices of pastors in relation to an overall concern of economic and social development. This paper seeks to draw out the long-term moral debates around the accumulation and use of wealth that charismatic pastors relate to, and hence see their moral practices as providing a critique of existing moralities and social hierarchies. Mawerenga

Mickie Mwanzia Koster: "We want Churches or Schools Built Where the Shrines Stood": The Politics of Shrines in Kenya

Abstract: On February 10, 2017, Kenya's Standard Newspaper reported that about 3,000 youth were responsible for burning and destroying shrines to contest the decisions of elders in the Meru area.1 The attack was directed at the body of elders because the youth disagreed with their leadership appointments

in the area, but it was also a move for the youth to show their disdain for some traditions. This recent shrine attack in Meru is not an isolated situation. In other parts of Kenya, shrines, especially rain shrines, are targeted. The destruction is not only killing the sacred spaces of usually forest of trees, it is also destroying the ceremonies, the orders of ancestors, and the history associated with the spaces. There are many religious and political reasons for the burning of shrines; sometimes spearheaded by local Christian churches and government leaders. To add to the complexity, while, some traditionalists in various parts of Kenya cling to the belief that fires in the forest irritate the Gods in their shrines forcing them to send rain, other traditionalist hold the exact opposite, that the burning of the shrines and the stoppage of prayers bring drought. Do we really understand the impacts and stakes of the burning of shrines and what these new developments mean in modern Kenya? The activities and ordeals at the rain shrines have become a battle ground, where Western beliefs and tradition clash. This study examines the history of rain shrines, the various symbols and rituals associated with the spaces, and the ordeals at the shrines. The study argues that the destruction of rain shrines and replacement with other structures/institutions; is a direct attack on Kenyan tradition, history and culture which will be difficult to restore once these sites vanish. This study is based on field analysis, reports, surveys, and interviews collected from 2016-2018 from rural South Central Kenya; a community confronting the politics of shrine ritual continuity and discontinuity.