

**6th AASR Conference**  
**Religion, Ecology, and the Environment in Africa and the**  
**African Diaspora**  
**University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business,**  
**Breakwater Lodge, South Africa**  
**July 30 – August 2, 2014**

**Wednesday 30 July**

**14h00 – 18h00 Registration**

Business School Foyer (opposite Breakwater Lodge Reception)

**18h00 – 21h00 Opening / Welcoming Dinner**

Beijing Orchid Restaurant, Shop 216, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town. 021 421 8702

Master of Ceremonies: Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele)

Prof. Sakhela Buhlungu, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town.

Councillor Matthew Kempthorne, the Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Energy and Climate Change, City of Cape Town

**Thursday 31 July**

**Parallel sessions: 8h30 – 10h30**

**Parallel Session TM1**  
**Religious rituals and the environment**  
**Chair: Pratap Kumar**  
**Venue: Exhibition Hall**

Kirimaara and Nyambene: the 'speckled' and the 'masculine' mountains of God among the Ameru of Kenya (Anne Kubai, Uppsala University)

Ritual and Ecology: Examining Irreecha R itual in relation to ecology among the Oromo of Ethiopia (Serawit Bekele Debele, Bayreuth University)

Indigenous Sacred Days in Zimbabwe and Cameroon as Conservation Strategy (Elias

**Parallel Session TM2**  
**Religious texts and emerging ecologies**  
**Chair: Auwais Rafudeen**  
**Venue: Faculty Hall**

From Genesis to Jonah: biblical resources for environmental justice (Gerald West, University of Kwazulu-Natal)

Taught by an Ant? A Holistic African-South African Reading of Proverbs 6:1-11 ( Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), University of South Africa)

Kierkegaard and ecology: Is there a teleological suspension of the ecological? (Herman Kroesbergen, University of Pretoria)

**Parallel Session TM3**  
**Philosophical & psychological perspectives on religion & the environment**  
**Chair: Johan Strijdom**  
**Venue: Executive Hall**

What does religion have to say about ecology? A new appraisal of Naturalism (Jaco Beyers, University of Pretoria)

Rain makers, environmental change and contestation of the Gods amongst the Biali of North West Benin (West Africa) (Papa Sow, University of Bonn)

Dis-possession: Islam, the Spiritscape, and a Changing Ecological Ethos (Adeline Masquelier, Tulane University)

Bongmba, Rice University and  
Collis Machoko, University of  
Sandbury)

Where did the Forest go? (Elias  
Kifon Bongmba, Rice University,  
USA)

Religion and Natural Environment  
Perception (Gabrielle Cappai,  
Bayreuth University)

Affinity between natural milieu and  
Yoruba religious conviction  
(Olatomide Babalola, College of  
Education, Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria)

**10h30 - 11h00 Tea**

### **Plenary Session Exhibition Hall: 11h00 – 12h30**

Keynote Address: Prof Bron Taylor (Professor of Religion and Environmental Ethics at the University of Florida, and Fellow of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, Germany.)

### **Religion, Nature and Environmental Action from Africa to Avatar and Back**

Chair: Elias Bongmba

**Lunch: 12h30 - 14h00**

**Parallel Session: 14h00 - 16h00**

**Parallel Session TA1 Religious  
Ritual and Social Capital  
Formation in South Africa  
Convenor: Cas Wepener  
Venue: Exhibition Hall**

**Parallel Session TA2  
Ecological readings of the Old  
Testament in African contexts  
Convenor: Willie van Heerden  
Venue: Faculty Hall**

**Parallel Session TA3  
Teaching Religion and Ecology:  
Engaging Teaching Methodologies  
and Practices for Embodied  
Learning  
Convenors: Elaine Nogueira-  
Godsey/Nina Hoël  
Venue: Executive Hall**

Orientation to the Research Project  
(Cas Wepener, University of  
Pretoria)

Eating and Drinking in an AIC:  
Measurements and Recipes for  
Social Capital (Cas Wepener,  
University of Pretoria)

Friendship and Fellowships: Ritual  
as Life Forming Source (Henry  
Mbaya, University of Stellenbosch)

Isitisha (Henry Mbaya, University of  
Stellenbosch)

Ritual, Religion and Development  
(Gerrie ter Haar, International  
Institute of Social Studies)

Ritual Beyond the Worship-Setting:  
Pentecostalism and Social Capital

The landscape of ecological biblical  
hermeneutics: An overview and an  
exploration of some of the issues  
(Willie van Heerden, University of  
South Africa)

A cosmological interpretation of the  
Old Testament: ecological  
implications (Peet van Dyk  
(University of South Africa)

An eco-theological interpretation of  
Proverbs 5:15-20 in the light of  
water crises experienced in present-  
day Africa (Jonathan Kavusa)

The Psychology of Animal  
Companionship: Some Modern and  
Ancient Views (Hennie Viviers,  
University of Johannesburg)

Presentations by UCT undergraduate  
students:

Kalopsia or Kindness? Why you'll  
never find a Shaman who supports  
Fracking (Jamie Ashton, Yazmine  
Horowitz and Gilad Levanon,  
University of Cape Town)

The Impact of Apartheid on  
Environmentalism and  
(Eco)Feminism (Tammy Wilks,  
University of Cape Town)

Generation in South Africa and Ghana (Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, University of Ghana)

Deuteronomy 22:6-7 and the development of a new paradigm for Christianity (Izak Spangenberg (University of South Africa)

### 16h00 - 16h30 Tea

**Plenary Session (Exhibition Hall): 16h30 -17h30**  
**Stories of Eco-Justice Praxis from Southern Africa, South African Faith Communities'**  
**Environment Institute (SAFCEI)**

Kate Davies, Geoff Davies, Juanita Greyvenstein

**Plenary Session (Exhibition Hall): 18h00 – 19h00**  
**Prof Victor Molobi (University of South Africa):**  
**Tracing the Myths behind Trees and Shrubs in the Bushveld Area of South Africa: The Intersection of Religion and Environmental Care**

Chair: Abel Ugba

Respondent: Esther Acolatse (Duke University)

## Friday 1 August

### Parallel Sessions: 8h30 -10h30

**Parallel Session FM1**  
**Religious Institutions, development and management of the environment**  
**Chair: Michel Clasquin**  
**Venue: Exhibition Hall**

Indigenous Religion and Environmental Challenges:  
Phenomenological Reflections on the role of Environmental Management Agency (EMA) in Zimbabwe (Richard Shadreck Maposa, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University)

Traditional spiritual practices: untapped potential in conservation planning (Diana Quiroz and Tinde van Andel, Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, Leiden)

Assessing the contribution, impact and potential of youth-led faith based organizations towards environmental action in Africa (Allen Ottaro, Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya)

Protecting, Healing and Sustaining the Ukambani Environment: Individual and Community Rituals in Kenya, 2008-2012 (Mickie Mwanzia Koster, University of Texas)

**Parallel Session FM2**  
**“If all the trees on earth were pens...” (Qur. 31: 27):**  
**Intersections between Botanic Knowledge and Writing Practices in West African Islam**  
**Convenor: Andrea Brigaglia**  
**Venue: Faculty Hall**

Faith and conservation in the sokoto caliphate: plants in the medicinal literature of Northern Nigeria (Mukhtar Bunza)

The use of plants in the material culture of writing in northern Nigeria (Michaëlle Biddle, Wesleyan University)

Reflections on the transformation of the practice of 'Islamic' medicine in southern Katsina (Nigeria) (Murray Last, University College London)

Manuscripts de L'institut Ahmed Baba Et La Pharmacopee (Abdoulkadri Idrissa Maiga, Institute des Hautes Etudes et des Recherches Islamiques Ahmed Baba.)

### 10h30 - 11h00 Tea

### Plenary Session (Exhibition Hall): 11h00 – 12h30

## **Panel: Research Methodology for the Study of Religion**

Convenor: Afe Adogame (The University of Edinburgh)  
Rosalind Hackett (University of Tennessee)  
Gabrielle Cappai (University of Bayreuth)

**Lunch: 12h30 – 14h00**

**Parallel sessions: 14h00 – 16h00**

### **Parallel Session FA1**

**Wilderness in / as Sacred Space**

**Venue: Faculty Hall**

**Convenor: Franz Kogelmann / Magnus Ehtler**

**Venue: Venue: Exhibition Hall**

Between the Holy Mountain and the New Jerusalem. Wilderness and the Sacred in the Nazareth Baptist Church, South Africa (Magnus Ehtler, University of Bayreuth)

Terrific Goddesses in the city. Amman worship among Hindus in Durban, South Africa (Ziva Kopecka)

Contiguous Modes of Sacredness in the Matobo Hills of Zimbabwe (Kupakwashe Mtata)

Do Collective Memories Match Individual Experiences in National Parks? A consistency check for models of nature (Michael Hauhs, University of Bayreuth)

Africa's Future Environment: Concepts of Appropriation and Conservation of "Nature" (Georg Klute)

**16h00 - 16h30 Tea**

### **Parallel Session FA1**

**Nature, Religion, Colonial and Postcolonial**

**Modernity in Africa**

**Chair: Elias Bongmba**

**Venue: Faculty Hall**

Harvesting in Nature's Dispensary: Traditional Healers, the muti trade and the intractable relationship with witchcraft in South Africa today (Dale Wallace, UKZN)

Soothing "God's Fight": Ritual Action during the 1968-1974 Sahelian Famine in Mali, West Africa (Dianna Bell, Vanderbilt University)

Displacement and Search for a Green Africa (Isabel Mukonyora, Western Kentucky University, USA)

The cross-cultural and cross-religious resilience of rain prayers in southern African history (Retief Muller, University of Stellenbosch)

**Business Meeting: 16h30 – 18h30**

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## Saturday 2 August

### Parallel sessions: 8h30 – 10h30

#### Parallel Session SM1

**Food, agriculture and religion**

**Chair: Garth Mason**

**Venue: Exhibition Hall**

Prophetic Critiques of Agricultural Development Schemes: The Case of Alinesitoue Diatta in French Senegal (Robert Baum, Dartmouth College, Hanover)

Environment and African Indigenous Religion: Reflections on Food Security among the Ndaou People of North-East Chipinge (Elishah Mutigwe, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University)

A Ghanaian Reflection on Pentecostal Ethics and Genetically Modified Foods (Dela Quampah, Pentecost University College, Ghana)

#### Parallel Session SM2

**Politics, education and religion in Africa**

**Chair: Jan Platvoet**

**Venue: Faculty Hall**

Changing face of Christianity, change face of Zambian politics? (Marja Hinfelaar, SAIPAR, Lusaka)

"The God factor in the Construction of Leadership in Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo's Political Rhetoric" (Ngozi-Ugo Emeka-Nwobia, Ebonyi State University, Nigeria)

'Environmental education (EE) in Nigeria: Content analysis of secondary schools' Christian religious studies textbooks' (Omoyele Francis Falako, University of Lagos, Nigeria)

### 10h30 - 11h00 Tea

#### Plenary Session (Exhibition Hall): 11h00 – 12h00

**Prof Ernst Conradie (The University of the Western Cape)**

**Penultimate reflections on the root causes of environmental destruction in Africa**

Chair: Johan Strijdom

Respondent: Nina Hoël

#### Plenary Session (Exhibition Hall): 12h00 – 13h30

**Publish or Perish? The Politics of Academic/Scholarly Publishing, Grant Writing and Job Market Realities**

Convenor: Afe Adogame (The University of Edinburgh)

Robert Baum, Dartmouth College, Hanover, USA)

Gerrie Ter Haar (Institute of Social Studies, Den Haag, The Netherlands)

Oyeronke Olademo (University of Ilorin, Nigeria)

### Lunch 13h30 -14h30

## Parallel Sessions: 14h30 - 16h30

### Parallel Session SA1

**Women religious scholars and activists in dialogue on Southern African women's ecological wisdom**

**Convenor: Annalet van Schalkwyk (UNISA)**

**Venue: Exhibition Hall**

The work of the Circle of Concerned African Woman Theologians on gender, ecology and religion: Taking stock and exploring the way forward (Annalet van Schalkwyk (UNISA)

Sustaining the Wild Coast: the relationship between the ecology and the people (Nobuntu Mazeka, Sustainable Pondoland Forum Eastern Cape)

Navigating Indigenous Resources that can be Utilized in Constructing a Karanga Eco-Feminist Theology: A Case study of Karanga women within the ZIRRCOON ecological project in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. (Sophie Chirongoma, Midlands State University)

Unearthing the essence of nature and the perception of the natural landscape among the amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape: An exploratory study (Lydia Mogano, Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute)

Siwila Lilian Cheelo (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal)

### Parallel Session SA2

**Public Religion and Issues of Homosexuality in Contemporary Africa**

**Convenors: Adriaan van Klinken (University of Leeds, UK) & Ezra Chitando (University of Zimbabwe)**

**Venue: Faculty Hall**

"I Was On Fire": The Challenge of Counter-intimacies Within Zimbabwean Christianity (Nathanael Homewood, Rice University)

Chanting Down Same-Sex Relations: Reflections on Rastafari Communities in Postcolonial Zimbabwe (Sibanda Fortune, Great Zimbabwe University)

Homosexual debate in Nigeria: A critique of responses of public religions (Danoye Oguntola-Laguda, Lagos State University)

### Parallel Session SA3

**God, gods, ancestors and the environment**

**Chair: Collis Machoko**

**Venue: Executive Hall**

Gods in Nature, Gods at Home: Domesticating the Divine in Akan Religion (Gold Coast/Ghana) in Late Pre-Colonial Time (Jan Platvoet, Leiden University)

The Ancestors and the Groves in Iuleha: Interrogating the Role of the Ancestors in Preserving Contemporary Environment (Benson Ohihon Igboin, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria)

Of God, environmental disasters and punishments – A critical analysis of selected media discourses (Abel Ugba, University of East London, United Kingdom)

The Dead in the Practice of Environmental Ethics: A Comparative Study of the Care and Maintenance of Religious and Public Cemeteries in a Nigerian City of Ile-Ife (David Olugbenga Ogungbile, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria)

## 16h30 - 17h00 Tea

## 17h00 – 18h00 Concluding Plenary Reflections

Panelists: Bron Taylor, Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele), Elias Bongmba

African Association

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For the Study of Religions



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