

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



International Conference

“Between Cosmology and Community:
Religion and Sustainable Development “

Abstracts

ADEDIBU, Babatunde Aderemi

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Abstract

Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The Interventionist Approaches of Healthcare Delivery of the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) heralded a new phase in developmental strategies aimed at galvanising all principal stakeholders of various communities to be committed to seventeen developmental objectives across the globe by the United Nations in 2016 which are intentionally crafted to eliminate the perceived inadequacies of the Millennium Development Goals. The SDGs programme since its inception has being lauded for its inclusivity and broad spectrum agenda which is holistic in nature. Interestingly, Nigeria has been declared as the world poverty capital by the Brookings Institution, United States in July 2018 despite having the fastest developing economy in Africa with Gross Domestic Product of \$400 billion. Interestingly, as important as the healthcare sector is, Nigeria healthcare sector seems to be a state of comatose characterised by continued depletion of the human capital of the healthcare professionals to the Global North seeking better conditions of service, professional fulfilment as well as access to various medical infrastructures. Despite the seeming difficulties and inadequacies of Nigerian health sector, various religious organisations have adopted an interventionist approach by embarking on healthcare delivery services to their members and members of the public. This study aims to critically evaluate the SDG number 3 which is to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” in relation to the health care deliveries of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria which is one of several indigenous transnational Pentecostal denominations from Nigeria that have developed various approaches to healthcare challenges in their communities. The methodologies to be utilised include empirical approach through the use of questionnaires, oral interviews and use of secondary sources on the subject matter.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Nigeria, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Healthcare delivery, Poverty.

AKINDOLIE, Akinwumi Ambrose

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Abstract

“HOLY WATER”: THE RITUAL PRAXIS OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATION IN NIGERIA

Water is a vital natural resource to every living organism. People use water for various anthropogenic purposes as drinking, washing and cooking among others. In African and Non-African religions, water is important to both religious practices such as baptism, ablution, cleansing, healing and worship of gods to mention but few. African Independent Churches (AICs) in Nigeria also use water as one of the natural resources, to facilitate the completion of their rituals. Previous academic works shown that the use of water in AICs is laden with symbolic use and these previous works are noticeable on the spiritual dimensions but neglect its socio-economic which brings about human development. By socio-economic importance, the study means economic and social benefits that individual, church and society derive with regards to the economic boost on the part of stakeholders (sellers and users), security, health and social integration. This study concisely argues that water is not only anthropogenic but has elements of sacralization on the ritual and idiosyncrasies of AICs. The data will be gathered through ethnographical methods, interview and observation.

Keywords: Water, African Initiated Churches, Socio-economic development and Nigeria

ANIM, Emmanuel Kwesi

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Abstract

The Gods are Dead and Now We are in Charge! The Hermeneutical Crisis in Africa's New Christianity and Its Effect on the Environment and Sustainable Development

To Have and to Hold: Reflections on Recent African Christians' Attitude to the Environment in the Light of African Traditional Religious Values and Practices

Prior to Western missionary activity, African societies were held together by belief in God, the divinities and ancestors who were regarded as the custodians of the moral and spiritual laws of the land. Creation was seen as sacred because it was put in place by God, who himself is holy.

This traditional belief informed the moral and ethical values that shaped the consciousness of the people in society including their religious, social, political and economic activities. These considerations also underpinned the African concept of sustainable development and wellbeing.

However, a certain belief in God empowering the believer to harness his or her potentials and exploit the natural resources to their benefit without recourse to any moral or ethical obligations to the environment has invariably led to the destruction of many forest and water bodies as people sought for mineral resources such as gold and diamond. Whereas in the past the fear and respect for the gods and ancestors as the moral and spiritual agents who foresaw the preservation of the environment regulated social behavior, a new Pentecostal teaching which "demonize" the gods and the ancestors, and encourage adherents to "make a complete break with the past", succeeded in setting in motion an unintended consequence of a destructive behavior to the environment which now threatens the survival of many African communities. This is particularly so in Ghana, where the problem has since drawn the attention of Government, religious bodies and civil society.

This paper makes the assertion that modern African Christianity presents both opportunities and crisis in the management of the environment and sustainable development. There is therefore the need to revisit the interpretation of biblical texts such as the narratives of Genesis chapters one and two which place stewardship and preservation at the center of God's creation order.

Key Words: Africa, Development, Environment, Christianity, Religious, Values, Practices

AWUDI, Emmanuel

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Abstract

Reading Scripture with African Pentecostal Eyes; Implications for Eco-Care and Eco-Mission

Christian scholars have written extensively on the link between Scripture and ecology. While other Christian groups increasingly are engaged in eco-mission, there is much evidence that African Pentecostals are generally inactive in eco-mission.

This paper hypothesizes that the apparent lack of green theologies and eco-mission in African Pentecostalism is due to inadequate understanding of how Scripture speaks to eco-care and eco-mission. Some Christian ministers even question the use of biblical texts to support Eco theology as misrepresentations of the texts.

This paper explores the responses of 30 seminarians of Pentecost Theological Seminary in Ghana to four biblical texts critical to eco-care and mission: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; Romans 8:19-22; and Revelation 21:1 and examines their understandings on the doctrines of creation, dominion, redemption and eschatology to see what is the nature of their motivation for creation care and eco-mission.

This paper observes and concludes that the understanding of these preachers on the selected doctrines do not motivate eco-care and eco-mission. It is inferable from the results that the “forward march to Zion” understanding of eschatology is a root cause of the apparent lack of interest in ecological mission in African Pentecostalism.

BENYAH, Francis

Abo Akademi University, Finland

Abstract

Lived Religion, Excluded Subjects and Development in Ghana

The utility of religion in the cultural, social and public memory of the Ghanaian forms the basis of this paper. Religion, essentially, has become part of the daily lives of many people in Ghana. In Ghana, several religious traditions are harnessed as resources to enhance one's spiritual life; they are also a means to achieve material ends such as health and healing, good marriage, guidance in life's pursuit, success and protection. In the Ghanaian context, religion often provides a sense of well-being and freedom evidenced from pain and suffering. This pragmatic-oriented outlook of religion makes individuals, in times of crises, such as illness or when certain life dreams become elusive, resort to religious functionaries for assistance. This enchanted worldview, very much dependent on the cosmological views of the people, attribute the cause of illness and difficulties in life to supernatural evil forces. As a result, individuals who suffer from particular illness such as mental diseases seek refuge from prayer camps who have over the years serve as surrogate for mental health services. Similar is the HIV+. The prayer camps have also, sometimes, provided refuge for individuals accused of witchcraft. The rituals on offer at the prayer camps are aimed at making the "sick" person whole, ridding off any negative, evil or demons associated with the illness. From a lived religion approach, this paper seeks to examine how the rituals on offer at the prayer camps contributes to the healing process of the "sick" person; their acceptance and integration in the society; personal development as well as development of the society and the state at large?

BRAUNGART, Clara

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Germany

Abstract

Justice in post-conflict societies: the role of Religious NGOs

Certain scholars investigating the role of religion in post-conflict societies tend to underline the restorative and reconciliatory potential of religious actors (eg. Philpott and Power 2010). Other scholars show that religious actors take on diverse roles in this field of Transitional Justice (TJ) – supporting reconciliation as well as punishment (Boesenecker und Vinjamuri 2011, S. 360–361; Boesenecker and Vinjamury 2014: 42-44). In these debate on religious actors in post-conflict societies, one question is not paid enough attention: How do religious actors reflect their own role during conflict?

Critics argue that reconciliatory measures are used in order to avoid measures of accountability. Using the example of Kenya and Uganda, this paper investigates how religious actors pleading for reconciliation reflect upon this accusation. My analysis makes clear that religious actors pleading for reconciliation do not necessarily mean to avoid accountability. Yet, the paper also shows that critically reflecting the own role in conflict is only rarely implemented as a strategy by religious actors. However, in order to install “accountable institutions at all levels“ (SDG 16), I argue that any actor in the field of Transitional Justice must critically reflect on their own role during conflict.

The study is based on empirical data from extensive fieldwork in Uganda and Kenya where I conducted interviews with religious and non-religious actors active in the field of Transitional Justice.

CALLANAN, Joshua

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Abstract

Politics of Reconciliation: National Days, National Mythologies and the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa

In post-Apartheid South Africa, the Afrikaans Reformed Churches have struggled to break away from the legacy of institutionalized racism that preceded the current system. It is difficult to forget that in the 20th century, that it was the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) that provided the theological backbone to Apartheid. Already in the early 1990s, at the behest of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), had the DRC began to succumb to the pressure of welcoming black members as congregants and rejecting the ideology of Apartheid. Today the church seeks to broadcast a more tolerant image, despite this, the church has rejected adopting creed (the Belhar Confession), which renounces the sins of Apartheid and which would have seen the amalgamation of the DRC and the (black/coloured sister) Uniting Reformed Mission Church in Southern Africa (URCSA).

As well as the above-mentioned macro-level fissure in inter-racial Reformed Church relations and the varied approaches to reconciliation by the Afrikaans Reformed Churches, I would like to explore church membership on a micro-level too, exploring personal experiences with church life in South Africa and what changes churches have undergone since the end of Apartheid and whether these changes are making a positive development towards ethnic relations in the country. This research details multiple case studies, investigating national reconciliation through the lenses of several Afrikaans identifying church members from varied Afrikaans churches in settings in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Heidelberg. The aim being to gain a new understanding of South Africans' attitudes towards the role of church in the pursuit of national unity. Questions that will be asked include, what is the role of churches in the realm of national cohesion? How can and how are the Afrikaans Reformed Churches engaging with the issue of race and reconciliation in 21st century South Africa?

CHANG, Han & HLONGWE, Asanda Oscar

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany &

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

The role of women in St John's Apostolic Faith Mission

This paper will look at the role of women in the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission Church in South Africa, which was founded by a woman, Mme Christinah Nku, in 1939 and drew upon precolonial African religious practices and imported Christianity. As a quite rare African Initiated Church (AIC) where normally women are discriminated at various levels, in the history of this church women still put on the margins, whilst men took leading positions, though the membership of the church is predominantly made up of women. The aim of this paper is to give an overview of the role women played and still playing within the church, especially during the church service, and to figure out what's the cultural or spiritual references behind these relations of men and women. In order to illustrate this case, narrative methodology like interviews with Bishops and text analysis for historical backgrounds will be used as primary outcome measure. Our observation during the church service, such as in terms of dress-code, sitting area for women etc., will also be considered as a destructed image of women which could be relevant for our research. In the running of the church in most of the AICs and in the church as whole, the leadership is dominated by men, where women are just being the followers. In our case we intend to answer this questions such as are really women still taking part and play prominent role in this church today and are women being involved in the leadership of this church or only one gender which dominate the other.

DAMBULA, Chrispin

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Abstract

Reimagining religion as a development catalyst: Business startup lessons from African Pentecostal communities

Religious communities are largely ignored in mainstream development, yet religion is part of everyday life especially in the global south where most development efforts are focused. One of the reasons for ignoring religion is the claim that it is a setback to development. Surprisingly, recent studies show that Pentecostal communities are effective in promoting business startups among the poor in Africa where Pentecostalism is growing exponentially. Literature provides further evidence that most Pentecostal converts are experiencing upward social mobility compared to non-Pentecostals who participate in microfinance programs of secular development agencies that are also designed to promote businesses among the poor. The success of Pentecostal converts raises the question: What gives Pentecostal communities an edge over secular microfinance organizations in promoting business startups? In this paper, I will review literature in the field of Pentecostal studies to unlock this puzzle. I will argue that the approach of Pentecostal communities in promoting business startups is not only unique but also more effective than the strategies of secular microfinance organizations. I will argue further that the effectiveness of Pentecostal communities in promoting business startups resides in transforming self-identities of the poor who convert to Pentecostalism. Lessons for secular microfinance organizations will be highlighted and recommendations for further research to draw an in-depth understanding about the effectiveness of Pentecostal communities in promoting business startups will also be made.

DAUENHAUER, Tamara

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Abstract

Structuring Experience - Empowerment in a Charismatic Pentecostal Church

In recent years' religious communities have been spotlighted as development actors. They not only often represent the economically and socially marginalized, they are also deeply involved in community matters and welfare grass root activities. The cooperation with African Initiated Churches is furthermore recommended because it „bears high potential for the transformation of the lives of many individuals and society as a whole“¹. Empowerment is a strategy by which this transformation is realized.

This paper researches how empowerment is (aesthetically) designed and initiated in charismatic Pentecostal churches, who is empowered, what are they empowered to do and why are these churches so successful in enacting individual transformation?

The initial experience causing the transformation process needed for individual (self-) empowerment is an aesthetic one, a moment of self-transcending and self-reflecting, which is then contextualized religiously in the confrontation with the indefinite. By factoring in hope and community charismatic Pentecostal churches not only create the base but stabilize the process.

To understand how the experience of empowerment is constructed in a Pentecostal charismatic church I decided for a participative observation of the African initiated church „Hope Restoration Ministries“ and the internationally operating „Hillsong Church“ in Pretoria. I also conducted client centred, semi-structured Life-World Interviews with members of the churches' leading teams. For an additional comparison I interviewed parishioners of other charismatic churches about their individual experience of empowerment in connection to their belief and their church.

Belief is a subjective matter and empowerment requires a change of the individual mindset-another perspective on your own power. Religious impact can lead to a change of behaviour which adapts certain values and beliefs that can be useful to foster a change of parameters of social reality. In a collective dimension this comes with a high risk of manipulation. This paper therefore aims to understand the underlying mechanisms generating the transformation processes and the construction of their initial experience.

DENNY, Lindie

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

Reimagining Pedagogy of Theological Education at a South-African University: A practical theological approach.

In this paper a research project that enters the current debate and work being done in the area of curriculum transformation in tertiary education will be presented. South Africa has seen the end of apartheid in 1994 and ever since then been on a journey of decolonizing (Pinar 2010). Part of the on-going project of decolonization is the decolonization of curricula at tertiary institutions. Curriculum transformation includes pedagogy. Pedagogy is “the theory and practice of teaching (Alexander 2015:29).” From various sources it can be framed as the total setting where learning takes place. This is the main focus of this study and paper as the pedagogy of theological education is studied and pedagogy reimagined at a South African University.

The presentation will focus on one part of this larger project, namely the empirical research done. Qualitative research methods were utilized to gather data. For 3 months, selected classes from the theological department was attended, and observed in which I truly became a student in the class, after which the pedagogy can be described. To understand the student’s experience and understanding, small focus groups with semi-structured questions were conducted. One on one interviews were conducted with lecturers. Questionnaires also form part of data collecting.

With the huge amount of data gathered, some of the documented data will be presented as well as some preliminary focal themes that came about through working with Atlas ti that was used to assist in coding the data. As this is still part of an on-going larger study, reimagining pedagogy will only be formulated in the future.

DROLL, Anna

Fuller Theological Seminary, USA

Abstract

A Pneumatological Perspective of Missional Collaboration in Ghana

The nature of the cosmology permeating African Pentecostalism(s) has been located as both a theological and pragmatic tension in the relationship between Western missions and African Christianity. The issue has peppered historical accounts and can be located as one of the elements contributing to the emergence of African-initiated churches. This essay demonstrates that, in marked contradiction to past tendencies, the cosmological and philosophical *affinities* grounded in the en-Spirited intuitions of two present-day Pentecostal women (one American and the other Ghanaian) who are establishing the Kairos Ladies and Children's Campus in Ghana have resulted in overcoming the traditional epistemological impasse. The result has been a salient vision for the spiritual and socio-economic transformation of marginalized women and youth-at-risk, one which has rallied various agencies within Ghanaian society to partner with Ghanaian Pentecostals.

This analysis of a contemporary mission will explain the goals of the project to establish the Kairos Ladies and Children's Home and then argue two points. First, that en-Spirited criteria for valid knowledge, when shared across cultural divides, enable the collaboration of agents, and second, that a shared philosophy of missions which emphasizes Spirit empowerment as consecration *toward others*--both in and outside the Church--rather than as purification *from* others, enables for a transcultural, inter-denominational, and inclusive communal approach toward pursuing the welfare of marginalized subcultures. The discussion of Pentecostal notions of valid knowledge will engage the voices of Nigerians Umar Danfulani and Nimi Wariboko, and Ghanaian Opoku Onyinah. The concept of Spirit empowerment toward the world will be drawn from the pneumatological political theology of Amos Yong.

FENGA, Vincent

Zimbabwe

Abstract

Rural Women and Economic Production: Towards Sustainable Livelihoods in Zimbabwe.

The aim of this presentation is to look at the execution of rural women's livelihoods towards economic empowerment of women in Gutu District of Zimbabwe. A drought-ridden and semi-arid region because of climate change, Gutu District obtains very low annual rainfall which effects negatively on food production which is mainly based on agriculture as the key rural women's livelihood among others such as gardening, pottery making, craftwork, cross boarder trading, irrigation farming, buying and selling of second hand items and clothes (*mabhero*), informal employment (*maricho*), and poultry projects. Using an innovation systems approach that triangulates interviews, focus groups and documents, the presentation found out that women are confronted with several challenges. The discoveries of the research exposed that in their pursuit to lessen poverty and economically empower themselves, women come across the lack of access to viable markets, micro-insure rural women's livelihoods, lack of access to credit facilities, lack of innovative education and training, effects of climate change, restricted use of technology to stimulate rural women's livelihoods. The presentation concludes that to attain economic empowerment through rural women's livelihoods, access to viable markets and innovative education braced by sufficient funding is essential.

GOLOLO, Sydney

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

Empowerment in a Pentecostal church body

I reckon it to be of importance to distinguish the key word “Pentecostal” to the other correspondence & significant terms like “Charismatic, and Protestant” which by far the forefront descriptive terms for none-mainline or African Independent Denominations. In simple terms, charismatic denotes the idea of the very less sophisticated liturgy, with no formal outfits which allows the dances to be more vibrant, no hymn books, and even the reading of the bible is very spontaneous.

In this empirical research I will be comparing two Pentecostal churches in accordance to the research topic “empowerment in a Pentecostal church,” and with two subheadings namely: leadership and individual development, this will be based in Gauteng. The four churches are Hope Restoration Ministries, Hillsong Christian Church Wonderboom, G12 Revolt ministries Tuks, and United Congregational. By visiting the churches on a Sunday and noting down the liturgy and the kind of message given to the congregation will be the praxis of this research, and also with the consent of the church elder to interview one of the leaders or congregant.

So in a nut-shell, we will be looking at the status quo of all the churches if they are primarily challenging the members to be more impactful to themselves, to their respective families and communities, and ultimately to the rest of the world. So by comparing the churches, we can do a synopsis of the impacts/programs that are making a difference and the missing links to others, and finally back up some of the programs according to the protestant/Christian Bible.

GREYLING, Anandie

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Abstract

In this paper and presentation, I would like to present my written research proposal in terms of the following theme and research:

Violence in rural-agricultural contexts in South-Africa is something that is mentioned almost daily in the news cycle. One almost immediately assumes that these violent acts on farms, small holdings and nearby towns are racially driven. Political discussions such as land expropriation without compensation, the understandable anger and impact of segregation during the Apartheid regime, as well as the high unemployment rate in South-Africa all contribute to the current climate of racial distrust in our country.

This PHD will focus on an empirical study in a rural-agricultural context in Mpumalanga. This empirical research will include several interviews with victims of violent crimes perpetrated in the above mentioned context. The researcher will attempt to interview perpetrators as well to reflect a broader understanding in terms of the violent acts committed. These interviews will broaden the perspective, understanding and designing of a possible model for other rural-agricultural contexts experiencing racial violence and tension.

Furthermore, the PHD will consist of different theoretical probes including racism, violence, reconciliation, narrative therapy and reconciliation rituals. The aim and thus also the gap in the current research is to provide a narrative model that can be used for racial reconciliation rituals in rural-agricultural settings.

GUKURUME, Simbarashe

Zimbabwe

Abstract

“You are blessed to be a blessing”: New PCCs and the politics of Redistributive Economies in Harare.

Drawing on longitudinal ethnographic research in Zimbabwe, this article examines the ways through which a new Pentecostal Charismatic Church (PCC), Good Life Church (GLC) engages in charity and redistributive activities in Harare. From the mid-2000s there has been a concerted Pentecostal explosion in Zimbabwe. This Pentecostal surge coincided with a protracted socio-economic and political crisis. This multi-layered crisis was marked by deepening poverty, skyrocketing unemployment, hyperinflation and withdrawal of state welfare. This was worsened by rapid emigration which dismembered kinship based social safety nets. In response, new PCCs have emerged as new and alternative spaces of welfare provision, redistribution, and social security. I argue in this article that GLC’s engagement in acts of charity and philanthropy should be understood in the broader discourse of spiritual warfare against Satan and his demons of poverty. By so doing, new PCCs make a holistic contribution to sustainable development by attending to the spiritual and material needs of the people. Indeed, a culture of giving and altruism is cultivated and habituated in everyday life and practice in church. I assert that acts of individual and collective charity provision enable many people to navigate uncertainties and precarities wrought in the postcolonial crisis and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. This article draws on Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and particularly his concepts of field and habitus to unpack the cultivation of a culture of charity and philanthropy among PCC membership in Harare. I show how a specific kind of Pentecostal habitus is produced and reproduced through teachings, rituals, sociality’s and conviviality’s forged within the church.

HASAN, Md Tawhid & POTGIETER, Sariné

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany & University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

Can religion help in fighting against the most pressing environmental problems in South Africa?

Climate change is a much-discussed issue in recent times. Although climate has been changing since its inception, it has taken a sharp turn for the worse since people have started using fossil fuel. Effects that scientists had predicted in the past are now occurring. The range of published evidence indicates that the net damage costs of climate change are likely to be significant and to increase over time. Initiatives have been taken by national and international authorities to mitigate the problem, i.e. UNO's Sustainable Development goals, three out of seventeen are specifically aimed at protecting environment.

Most of the religions have played decisive roles in preserving the environment. Jainism does not allow its followers to kill any living being. To protect the purity of water, Zoroastrians never wash themselves in rivers. While the followers of Abrahamic religions believe that they are the best creatures on earth, recently they have reflected deeply on the commitment and engagement with the ecological quandaries and crisis.

Although religious groups believe in climate change, they maintain that it cannot be human made. According to them the creation is god's will and it's beyond our capacity to make changes. There were big disasters in the human history: when people follow wrong path, this is inevitable. Apart from doing some mundane activities, religious leaders ask their followers to come together and pray.

In this paper we would like to ask 'Can religion help in fighting against the most pressing environmental problems in South Africa?' All the data will be collected from churches in SA. Our aim is to find out whether or not religion has the solution to our problem.

HEUSER, Andreas

University of Basel, Switzerland

Abstract

Dominion Theology in Africa: Projections and Limits of a Pentecostal Grand Social Theory

Widely unnoticed in current discourses on Pentecostal social agency is a theological theorem known as Dominion Theology. Dominion Theology crosscuts global Pentecostal discourses, emerging as a preferential theology especially within Pentecostal megachurch networks. Dominion Theology claims to unfold a Pentecostal theory of society and social change. It is shared in megachurch networks as a master-narrative to exert hegemony over diverse “spheres” of society, including the economic sphere. The paper highlights the dominion theological concept of the economic sphere, with allusion made to the notion of “development”. The material base is from Ghana, with a sample of two of the most prominent megachurches in West Africa, Action Chapel International led by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, and International Central Gospel Church, founded by Mensa Otabil. The case-study presents local formats of Dominion Theology with significant international links and global network constructions. In order to bring out the dominion theological claims to transform society and to balance the reality of such claims, two significant social formats will be analysed: a first “Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit”, organised by Duncan-Williams, showing a clear Dominion Theology texture. A Dominion Theology imprint is also visible in a second case-study on Mensa Otabil’s “Greater Works” conferences. His contradictory involvement in the insolvency of a private bank in Ghana triggers a public discourse on Dominion Theology aspirations. Both events, the Africa Summit and the bank collapse, took place at the same time period in mid-2017, with the subsequent public debate on Dominion Theology partly lasting to mid-2018. Thus, the comparative analysis demonstrates the simultaneity of Dominion Theology euphoria, and its limited factuality to “conquer the economic sphere”. The two ambivalent – and even conflicting - sides of Pentecostal social agency remain in place: on the one side, we find the ideal-type notion of spiritual empowerment through divine intervention, allowing for an activist, dynamic subjectivity of believers; and the rather experimental state of providing continuity, or, as it were, sustainable development, on the other side. Consequently, the paper demarcates some Dominion Theology prospects and limitations as a Pentecostal social theory of change.

HOSSAIN, Mehedi

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Abstract

The Role of Faith-Based Organization (FBO) in Trajectories of Sustainable Development: The New-institutionalism of Organization at CARITAS

CARITAS, one of the oldest and biggest Christian Faith-based Organization around the world, has been working in Bangladesh in the different sectors of development since 1967, including with its 208 branches where a large percent of their member are Muslim. Now it is the 21st century, we are envisioning and working for sustainable development around the world announced by United Nation until 2030. There are several multi-dimensional challenges are creating obstacles in the field of economic, religious, political, social transition and modernization process. Now, the question is, as a faith-based organization how 'CARITAS' is working to achieve those sustainable development goals? Are they fully efficient to complete this task as like other conventional secular non-profit organization? How the FBO plays a vital role to transform the society in trajectories of Sustainable Development? How is their inside organizational change happening and making an influence in the society and keep themselves distinctive from different faith-based organization too? To disclose this hidden answer, I am utilizing the documentation phenomenological method and organizational analysis into my research. As a result, I have been seen that the CARITAS has its own institutionalized formation according to their faith and values which makes it distinguished from being like any other secular actors, for example, Grameen, Brac etc. in development actions but simultaneously secular in field work of sustainable development.

Key concepts: Faith-based Organization, Ecumenical Movement in South East Asia, Modernization, Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, New-institutionalism of Organizational Sociology. Micro-Sociology.

IRSHAD, Mohammad

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Abstract

The Minhaj Welfare Foundation (MWF) in Pakistan

Since religion has become a major factor in development aid and development studies so this work takes up the role of Islamic FBOs in general and *the Minhaj Welfare Foundation (MWF)* in Pakistan in particular. The role of the Islamic faith providing ‘theological tools’ for poverty alleviation is also being highlighted. Besides that, the thesis focuses especially on some social and educational works and projects in Pakistan for poverty reduction run by the *MWF* such as the educational network and projects such as the collective marriages, orphanages and future programs of *MWF*. This study also screens the programs on their sustainability and the compability with the *sustainable development goals (SGDs)* set by the UNO. Future projects are also included in this paper. On the basis of this case study I (the intention of the author is to show) that organizations like *MWF* (can) contribute to social and economic uplift of the underprivileged segment of society.

KGATLA, Selaelo Thias

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

‘AND NO ONE POURS NEW WINE INTO AN OLD WINESKIN: CHANGE MUST FIRST OCCUR INTERNALLY BEFORE IT CAN BE EXPORTED TO THE “OTHER”’

It is human to want to help those who are perceived to be in need of help but it is always difficult to start correctly. New initiatives in the development of African people from the ‘mighty’ North have been documented and elicited an enormous amount of criticisms from African scholars. A new fresh start to venture into this old terrain of development needs to begin internally (within one’s soul) before it can be exported to the ‘Other’. The Jewish proverbial saying that ‘new wine is not poured into an old wineskin’ is apt in such a situation. This article assesses the impact of the power of defining and knowing the ‘Other’ by the West with a purpose of determining and molding the what, the how and for whom in the development of African people. It further explores the vulnerability of the new Pentecostalism who can be construed by the invading altruist developers as a successful enterprise. The pitfalls of dependent syndrome inculcated by coloniality and disguised in the web of cosmology of the ‘development actors’ are deconstructed. The decolonization of the mind and enablement of own sustainable projects epitomized by the needs of the community are proposed as ways forward.

Key words: Development, missionary, decolonization, coloniality, Pentecostalism, agenda.

KHANYILE, Samukelisiwe & KRUIJER, Bente

University of Pretoria, South Africa & Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

Abstract

“Where the green of the environment faces the brown of the poverty”

-The challenge of South African environmental issues: a case study of the Green Anglicans

South Africa deals with problematic ecological issues such as water scarcity, pollution and deforestation. Considering its spiritual, moral and ethical mandate to fulfil, the South African church shows to be an important actor in addressing these environmental matters by accounting the stewardship role of Christian faith. At the same time, the idea of nature and how to act upon it are determined by the user of the term itself. In other words, the outcome of the translation from spiritual motivated stewardship into actions of ecological awareness depends on the church’s notion of nature. As a faith based organization, the Green Anglicans movement embodies this intersection of nature conception and stewardship by trying to raise ecological awareness through Christian ministry.

Using semi-structured interviews and project analysis, this study seeks to find out how the South African Green Anglican movement expresses its notion on nature and how this affects its attempt to raise ecological awareness in practice. So far, the outcomes have shown that the organization’s notion of nature places the people in the whole of the cosmos by defining the community as an inseparable part of cosmology. As a result, the projects turn out to “infuse” the pressing issues of creation with “spirituality” (interview Sifelani, 2019). Subsequently, this is very clearly illustrated in the existing “inextricable link between environmental degradation and [...] the well-being of human beings” as also shown by South African theologian Ernst Conradie (2003). With the Green Anglican’s cosmological, spirituality integrating and multi-layered account of nature and its concrete manifestation into the projects, this research tends to point out that the Green Anglicans movement articulate a notion of nature and its pressing problems which is intrinsically intertwined with social and economic issues: “where the green of the environment faces the brown of the poverty” Interview Sifelani, 2019).

KÖHRSEN, Jens

University of Basel, Switzerland

Abstract

Religion(s) Addressing Climate Change: What Roles Can Religion(s) Play in Cities?

Proposal for the Conference: «Between Cosmology and Community: International Conference on Religion and Sustainable Development»

At the international level, religious actors are increasingly participating in climate debates. But does the engagement at the local level reflect this global religious commitment? What are the implementation and participation opportunities for religious actors at the local level (e.g. churches, religious NGOs)? The presentation addresses these questions.

Cities are crucial when it comes to tackling climate change. As the majority of the world population lives today in urban spaces, cities have increasingly undertaken efforts to address climate change and reduce carbon emissions. These efforts are accompanied by rising academic research that highlights the role of actors from a variety of social spheres in promoting low carbon transitions. However, studies about these transformation processes have thus far ignored religion as a potentially important factor. This paper deals with this research gap by theorizing the potentials of religion in urban low carbon transitions and providing empirical insights on its role.

First, the presentation systematizes different forms of religious participation in urban low carbon transitions by reviewing literature from religious studies and sociology of religion. Second, based on this systematization, the presentation will present first empirical insights from the research project “Urban Green Religions”. This research project studies the role of religion in benchmark cities in Germany and Switzerland.

KPALAM, Ebenezer Tetteh

Ghana

Abstract

Child Protection in the Church of Pentecost in Winneba municipality of Ghana

Child abuse is not uncommon in Africa, and Ghana is not an exception. Where child abuse exists, the appropriate response is child protection. Child protection involves policies, structures and practical steps to ensure children are safeguarded. This research paper presents an account of a theological discourse and small-scale empirical research that presents a biblically faithful theory and practice regarding child protection in the ministry of the Church of Pentecost in Winneba Municipality, Ghana. Using an integrated approach to doing theology, insights from biblical, historical, systematic and practical perspectives were gleaned. The systematic perspective correlates the findings of the biblical and historical perspectives with extra-biblical materials, mainly from the human sciences, to formulate the theological perspective. It was observed that children are precious in the sight of God, but are also vulnerable; and God, the chief shepherd, sets the standard for caring for children, and expects his people to protect children and raise them in a loving, caring and nurturing environment. The practical research examines the child protection ministry of the Church of Pentecost in Winneba. Significant gaps were observed in its theology of children, and child protection when correlated with the conclusions of the systematic perspective. Consequently, certain recommendations are made to enable it achieve an operative theology regarding child protection that is faithful to God's will and purposes.

KREBS, Gina & MONTSHO, Phenyo Victor

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany & University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

Zakat: Alms as Arms to Unity

How is development work organized by Muslim communities in the cultural rich area of Laudium, South Africa?

The most important thing for me is modelling character. And religion itself whether being Muslim, Christian or Jew, the religion itself teaches you first humanity before religion itself. There is no purpose of having religion without humanity.

-Amir Adroos, teacher of the Islamic department at Pretoria Muslim Trust Sunni School, Laudium.

In our research, we are concentrating on unity as the primary building block to a progressive sustainable development model, by identifying avenues of unity and common values in religious practices in South Africa.

Reflecting on the global negative view of the Muslim community, we decided to focus on the Islam in post democratic South Africa and the Islamic practice of Zakat. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam and a command in the Holy Quran that compels Muslims to share 2.5% of their annual wealth with those less fortunate, hence becoming an act of charity and cause of social justice.

Our research is a skeletal exploration of Islam as religion, relying greatly on scholars and progress to unpack the practice of Zakat. The essence of this paper is our field research in Laudium, a small community that thrives with cultural and religious diversity. Beginning with highlighting the social makeup and history of the community before tracking the application of Zakat and the impact, progress and ongoing avenues created by Muslim community. Simply, it explores the pillar of Zakat as a pillar to sustainability, where acts of charity are a device of sustainable development and ultimately achieving integration, collapsing Apartheid and paving way for social cohesion. Our theory is that Zakat indeed has the power to be a medium to unity but also being a gateway to achieving a sustainable community, aiding in manifesting the local and even global SDG's.

This will greatly rely on field research engagements with the community members of Laudium, including but not limited to: projects coordinators, leaders and Muslims in the region but still on consultation with the existing data provided by scholars and other relevant sources. We understand our research as a work in progress and plan to continue our work in Berlin.

MACHADO, Kleber

Abstract

Neo-Pentecostal Cosmology and the Afro-Brazilian Communities

The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG),¹ the most important representative of Neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil, presents distinct theological elements that are based on a dualistic cosmology. Its theology is Protestant and it speaks about progress, prosperity, money; terms abundantly used by modern discourse, but at the same time it maintains the beliefs in spiritual forces and a cosmology that resembles Brazilian popular religiosity. The UCKG's theological language's strength is in its ability to articulate these two realms in its discourse. Likewise, it combines the two discourses in a way that Brazilian people do not have to give up their old beliefs in order to become modern. It offers the possibility to be successful in the Modern, Western and Capitalist system with new, resignified and reframed, spiritual weapons. Moreover, the UCKG presents itself as an internationalized and prosperous church, which is socially, spiritually, financially and politically powerful. Thus a church that is able to overcome spiritual and human forces. Due to the strength it gives to its members, it gives them the confidence to be part of a world which they always thought was not theirs. They believed that the modern world was only for more educated and privileged people. Now, mainly through exorcism, the believers are liberated from the spiritual forces that oppressed them and are said to have made them immoral, poor and marginalized people.

The UCKG incorporates the theological perspective and structure of the Afro-Brazilian religions in its own theology. It modifies and inverts some meanings, but it still maintains the basic theological structure. Thus, it offers many Brazilian people the possibility of reconfiguring and reframing their old beliefs in the new and strange context of the big Brazilian cities, empowering them to success and create new communities of self-support.

¹ In Portuguese it is *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (IURD). The abbreviation *Iurd* is being used even for English speaking scholars to refer to this church.

MAPITSA, Cosmo

South Africa

Abstract

Freedom by regulation: A legal assessment of the CRL Rights Commission's Report of the Hearings on the Commercialization of Religion and Abuse of People's Belief Systems.

The South African Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities is established in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Its main purpose is to strengthen democracy through the promotion of rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities. This paper will offer an assessment of the Commission's report on the commercialization of religion and abuse of people's belief systems. The main focus will be on the manner in which the recommendations of the report affect legal protection and promotion of freedom of religion.

MARWECKI, Simon

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Abstract

The concept of development of African Initiated Churches

In the last few years, religion has played a more and more prominent role in the development and foreign policy discourse of Germany. As minister for development Gerd Müller has stated: “Religion plays an integral part in all societies and is the most important source of values for many people. Any development policy that respects people as individuals must also respect their individual world views. For most people, this world view is fundamentally shaped by their religion.”² What Müller writes reflects also a change in academic discourses on development, which have recently given the role of religion much more prominent space. As Afe Adogame says, “everyday lived religious and spiritual dimensions of life is quintessential to the understanding of development in Africa.”³

This abstract and the planned presentation for the conference “Between Cosmology and Community” is strongly oriented towards the work and the results of my master thesis. This thesis is concerned with how those ‘dimensions of life’ relate to African understandings of development. More specifically, it analyses the conceptions of development held by African Initiated Churches (AICs) in South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana. Based on the large-scale interview material undertaken by the research project “Potentials of Cooperation with African Initiated Churches for Sustainable Development”, the thesis concentrates on the descriptive and analytical treatment of the following interview questions: What is a good life? What are the main problems in people’s lives? What is your concept of development? What are the most important development programs in your context?

Utilizing the sociological toolset of Pierre Bourdieu, the thesis scrutinized which ideas of development we can discern in the transcendental language of AIC’s, or, vice versa, in which ways ‘development’ is conceived of in transcendental terms. With Bourdieu terminology the leading question presents itself as how and why can AICs be seen as development agencies of economic, social and cultural capital formation for their constituents.

The presentation will be structured as follows. Firstly, I will provide an historical overview of the development of AIC’s and trace how religion became part of present-day development

² German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (PP), 2016 “Voices from Religions on Sustainable Development”, p. 4.

³ Adogame, A., 2016, ‘African Christianities and the politics of development from below’, HTS Theologese Studies/ Theological Studies 72(4), a4065. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.4065>, p. 1.

discourse. The second part presents the case and the research design, outlining how the material was retrieved and assessed analytically and methodologically. The third section presents the analysis and results. It will be ordered in two parts. In a first step, I will present the findings in a descriptive sense, staying very close to how respondents have themselves conceptualized 'development' in all its facets and sub-categories. In a second step, I will go beyond the material to some degree in order to offer a more analytical interpretation. The conclusion will wrap up the presentation, indicate possible policy advice and also present a concept of development based on how AIC's conceive of the term.

MAYER, Theresa

Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Germany

Abstract

AICs in Ghana as postcolonial movements?

In the last decades, in Ghana one can observe the exponential arising of new Christian Churches as well as the shifting of members from “mainline churches” to new African Initiated Churches (AICs) like Pentecostals or Charismatic Churches. Especially in the 1920’s, 1960’s and 1980’s foundation waves of new Christian Churches can be observed in Ghana. This Master’s Thesis aims to discover to what extent a set of criteria can be established by dint of the upcoming colonial studies for explaining the emergence and rapid growth of AICs in Ghana and whether these criteria allow a better understanding of their theological self--conception.

Moreover, these criteria should uncover aspects which have to be considered in order to decolonize European theological thinking and which can lead to a new conception of Christianity which is not any longer dominated by a western way of thinking.

Methodologically, postcolonial theories are going to be used to establish a list of criteria. The second part addresses the development of AICs in Ghana, followed by an exemplary analysis of three selected Ghanaian AICs concerning their development in Ghana as well as their theological self--conception. Furthermore, for explaining the emergence of AICs both European and African perspectives are considered. Additionally, empirical research results of conducted interviews with church leaders and their self--characterization are taken into consideration to serve the previously mentioned purpose. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the set of postcolonial criteria and the self--concept of selected AICs for the Catholic Church and its new way of doing theology.

This research work is not only relevant for those interested in actual developments of African Christianity but especially for catholic theologians who are hopefully going to be encouraged by this work to rethink their own doing of theology.

MEMELA, Thamsanqa

University of Pretoria

Abstract

This research paper is a literary analysis of inter-religious projects in South Africa with the purpose of providing a suggestion for NICSA. The paper is based on the hypothesis that NICSA is dysfunctional in its supposed purpose, considering its lack of publication such as articles and videos on its website. To ground the hypothesis, I investigate what various challenges are encountered by NICSA as the body of all interfaith organizations by stating the supposed role of NICSA and point out the dysfunctional aspects. I analyse possibilities of limitation and good examples, to draw a pattern from successful and unsuccessful projects. As a conclusion, I suggest a guideline of a successful interreligious project that fits the goal of NICSA.

MOFOKENG, Elvis Mokete

University of Pretoria

Abstract

Belhar Confession and the liturgy of life. A hymnological study

In this study the focus will be on the role of liturgy as a drama that includes or exclude some members of the society. The study will give a theological point of view in terms of how a broken society can live according to Belhar confession's principles. The hypothesis of the study is that, liturgy has been perceived as a ritual that last for one or two hours (may be three in African context) during a Christian worship. The study will argue that Liturgy should just be a rehearsal for the real worship performance, which takes place in public life from Monday to Saturday. A Sunday service should inspire, equip and mobilize the congregants to work for the coming kingdom of God. Liturgy should take all that is happening in church buildings to continue and flow into the society during the week, particularly by working for compassion, Unity, justice and reconciliation amongst the people. This creed will be used in this research as a methodological approach that can be employed in mending a broken society. Lastly the study will give a diaconal method in terms of attempting to resolve the issue of a broken Society and hymns will be a form of communication in echoing the conveyed ecological messages from the sermon preached in church during the liturgy.

MWAURA, Philomena

Kenyatta University, Kenya

Abstract

‘Rise up and Walk!’ The Role of African Pentecostal Churches in Economic Development and Poverty Reduction

This paper argues that despite the fact that some African countries have witnessed widening of democratic space, infrastructural development and growth of GDP, for most countries, there are still glaring economic iniquities and inequalities among the populace. Unemployment is still rife and poverty levels are still high with sometimes 60% of populations living below one US Dollar a day. This situation continues to fuel crime, lack of food security and rural urban migration and out migration to countries of the Northern hemisphere in search of better livelihoods.

Pentecostal churches whether classical, indigenous/independent or Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic are providing safe spaces for their adherents and equipping them with spiritual, social and economic resources to enable them face life and transform their individual and communal circumstances. The paper will draw examples from different Pentecostal churches in Africa. It argues that the Pentecostal ethos is such that it spurs economic growth of a country, individuals and communities because of its promotion of the values of thrift, hard work, mutual caring, strict moral codes (avoidance of alcohol, drugs smoking, sexual immorality etc.). These and other values are necessary for sustainable development and it is therefore important for those involved in development initiatives to understand a people’s beliefs, values, fears and worldview in order to provide long lasting and sustainable processes. Some Pentecostal churches today run explicit development projects but others are very small congregations of the poor, and have a different approach to existential problems.

The paper will also focus on Pentecostal transformation of the person and communities (church) and show that the greatest contribution to development by Pentecostals is not necessarily through consciously defined development activities, but rather, through the very nature of Pentecostal beliefs and practices themselves. This is what some scholars call social and spiritual capital. Pentecostals maintain a holistic world-view that does not separate the secular from the sacred. The whole of life to them, is subject to God’s judgement. I argue that, Pentecostalism does in deed shift peoples’ belief’s, values and morality in such a way that, when other factors are favourable, very often leads these people to make quite radical social and economic changes which then lead them in the direction of development.

NOVIETO, Ernestina

Abstract

Religion, Postmodernity and Sustainable Development in Africa: A Case of the Neo-Pentecostal Economy

Certain developments inhibiting features of religion has made modernist thought to perceive religion as anti-developmental. Admittedly, the relationship between religions and development is ambivalent as it is “at once instrumental and yet problematic” (Hoffstaedter, 2011:5). Thus, we contend that the peripheralization of religion in development discourse is as result of a faulty and fractured understanding of religion. The history of how development was part of missionary activity in most African and Asian countries, such as those of health and educational infrastructure has been widely acknowledged. Further, the potentials of a positive relationship between religion and development in contemporary society has been underscored. In this paper, we argue that sustainable development, if attainable in contemporary Africa, would require that organised religious institutions in Africa as well as the religious cosmologies, convictions and orientations of Africans feature and remain integral to such processes. With reference to the neo-Pentecostal economy in Africa, we intend to discuss why and how religion – religious cosmologies and institutions – is indispensable in attaining sustainable development in Africa. Specifically, using the conceptual framework of religious and/or spiritual capital and keeping in focus the human dimensions of development, we intend to argue that neo-Pentecostal churches’ cosmologies and teachings on human well-being and progress, such as prosperity and wealth creation and which has seen them emerge on the socio-economic scene, indicate their potentials to contribute immensely to sustainable development. This is not to gloss over some of the challenges they potentially pose to development, not least those of irresponsible consumption and negative climate change, that will require close attention.

OJO JOSEPH RAPHEAL

Abstract

One of the major environmental challenges facing most of the African nations, and Nigeria in particular which is a bane to sustainable development is the lack of proper waste management. Despite many attempts to arrest the menace, the problem remains on the upward swing. As a result of rapid growth of urban centres and religious activities in Nigeria, with its consequential increase in demand for its use, Nigerians and religious communities have also joined the league of scrambling for electronic devices from different parts of the globe. Through the use of interview and sociological approach in data gathering and analysing, with the bid to understanding some of the prevailing factors that promote increased e-waste and its impacts on the cosmos and eco-harmony in Nigeria, it was observed that, e-waste is now on the increase due to the overriding personal interest against the public good, porosity of the nation's borders, weak institutions for the implementation of environmental policies, among others. The work argued that the constant inflow of substandard, abandoned, or used electronic devices has made Nigeria a dumping ground with little or no effective way of handling the final stage of such products with respect to their disposal, and thereby resulting in environmental pollution in many instances, and distortion of the eco-harmony. This has in turn portends health challenges to the masses and increased mortality rate, especially in the urban centres. The work recommended that, given the weight of followers religious communities in Nigeria command, such platform can become a veritable tool for mass enlightenment and also for recycling of such waste products for meaningful sustainable development and employment generation for many individuals. The work therefore concludes that, the vulnerability of the Nigerian society can be addressed through effective environmental management and e-waste disposal.

PERRY, Michael

Abstract

Human Development Through Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination: The Case of Ghana.

Pentecostalism has become one of the significant religious features of Christianity since the latter part of the 1970s in Ghana. This religious expression now holds the biggest representation among the Christian communities in the nation. Pentecostalism in Africa, generally, has a potent way by which it influences other Christian groups. Pentecostal-charismatic churches seem to imbibe the African religio-cultural realities naturally by their pneumatic emphasis, as such, have strong appeal to millions of Africans who define life in multi-dimensional way. Contemporary Pentecostalism in Ghana therefore has been seen in using its share numbers and beliefs to embark on an agenda of human development. A development that is congruent within the African concept of the human and its needs, encompassing dimensions of the supersensible and the natural scope. This presentation therefore focuses on approaches by which Pentecostal-charismatic churches in Ghana promote aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as marked out by the United Nation Development Programme.

RAMOSHABA, Thabang & VEHLING, Nora-Milena

Abstract

Gilgal Bible Church in Tembisa, South Africa - African Independent Churches (AICs) in Townships of South Africa: social entities forming development in South Africa?

The interdisciplinary field research on Gilgal Bible Church, an AIC (African Indigenous/Independent Church) located in the township Tembisa in South Africa, has shown to be a living example of many theories of theologians, culture studies and development research. The way the church interacts with its diverse community and the policy-makers in this area, shows, that Gilgal Bible church acts as a social entity for development. Therefore, Gilgal Bible Church illustrates problems and chances on development in South Africa on many levels.

Gilgal Bible Church demonstrates with two different kinds of services – one Zion-like and another one Pentecostal – the flexibility of a church according to its community. Communities in general are very diverse in Tembisa, even more in South Africa as whole. The levels of identity for one single person in South Africa can be classified into 6 to 7 different layers that might influence one person's culture, behavior, beliefs and understandings.

Therefore, it occurs necessary to look at each of these levels to fully understand the meaning of a sustainable development in such heterogeneous contexts as South Africa's. Jaco Beyers claims a "silencing of the colonized", Baloyi Magezi Elijah speaks about problems of normalization of life in shacks, Nina van de Puje argues spirituality as a tool of transformation and many other sources claim that development is depending on equity. So where to find this equity on such a wide range of opportunities and different kinds of knowledge?

Gilgal Bible Church with its very international community is a perfect location for research on various meanings and views on development in South Africa. At the conference we will present the variety of these understandings, meanings and knowledge(s) and furthermore show the impact of an AIC like this at the society.

Nevertheless, we highly recommend to invite Apostle Ngobese and Thabang Rambosha to the conference in Germany, as they will be a great addition for our understandings of culture, religion and development, in order not to repeat the mistakes of the history. The defined western scientific debates can greatly extend by listening to the ones, who been silenced. As knowledge can only be transferred by communication with them, not above them, we would be pleased if you find possibilities for them attending the conference.

RAU, Vanessa

Abstract

“Seeing and being seen” or Transformations of Religious Practice in Urban Space? Towards an understanding of the Religious Scene.

Contemporary urban realities are thoroughly characterized by migration, movement and mobilities. As a consequence, transient forms of life and settlement are increasingly shaping social life and urban organization. These transformations have not only left their mark on the organization of urban social realities and everyday life but also on the organization and practice of religion. While Tönnies’ concepts of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* can no longer explain post-modern and post-secular urban constellations, terms like *religious community*, *congregation* or *parish* can no longer hold for contemporary organization of (migrant) religious practice: communal ritual, prayer, service or study groups are increasingly organized around ‘events’. These are open and flexible gatherings which do not require permanent membership and long-term commitment but instead, they are cherished for offering open occasions and the opportunity to ‘seeing and being seen’ or to ‘drop in and pray’ or ‘spirituality of sorts’. Drawing on my ethnography of a newly emerging Hebrew-Jewish scene in Berlin and its determining characteristics of migration and conversion processes of its inhabitants, this paper argues for a radical re-thinking of contemporary religious practice in urban cosmopolitan spaces. In dialogue with existing research and discussions on urban scenes (Hitzler, Kosnick, Blum and Kahn-Harris), I take the case of Jewish-Hebrew constellations to conceptualize new developments in urban religion as a case of an urban cultural and migrant scenes. Not only does this reflect new developments in urban realities but also radically transforms the concept and practice of religion and community as we know it. Against this backdrop, I argue that the study of religion as scenes allows for thinking and researching religion intersectionally: in the context of the cities and urban socio-economic diversities, gender and sexuality as well as migration, ethnicity and belonging.

SAKUPAPA; Teddy Chalwe

University of the Western Cape

Abstract

Religious social capital and development in Africa's changing religious landscapes: A decolonial analysis of contemporary ecumenical discourse on development

This paper builds on previous work on the insufficient attention placed on local epistemologies of development in African ecumenical discourse on development (Sakupapa 2018). It specifically explores the implications of Africa's changing religious landscapes for ecumenical discourse on development within the African context. Focussing on the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) as a case study, the paper will interrogate the AACC's socio-economic justice approach to sustainable development through an appraisal of its development discourse on the one hand and the burgeoning literature on African Pentecostalism and development on the other. The latter is crucial given recent analyses that illumine the pentecostalisation of Christianity as a salient feature of the changing religious and ecumenical landscapes in Africa. Theoretically, I will deploy the concept of religious social capital as a category of analysis and will argue for decoloniality as one way of addressing the unwitting epistemological commitment to modernity embedded in contemporary African ecumenical discourse on development.

SARTORIUS, Raphael

Abstract

Ubuntu and Development

In the last two decades, the critique of an understanding of development as a merely materialistic process has reached the mainstream discourse of development. In the search for alternatives, predominantly western practitioners and theorists have been investigating the religious and spiritual dimensions of development and its potentials. A look into “indigenous” cosmologies, such as the Andean “Buen Vivir” or the African “Ubuntu”, has inspired researchers, particularly from the global North. If ideas sparked from these cosmologies leave their footprint on development theory and practice, this could mark shifting patterns within development discourse, since in the past development theory has notoriously disregarded ideas from the global South.

The paper aims to research the predominantly South African “Ubuntu”, often categorized as an “indigenous cosmology” and its implication for development discourse. How can Ubuntu affect development practitioners and researchers from the global North? Where are its boundaries? In what way can Ubuntu criticize predominant development ideas with a main focus on material aspects? Are the Sustainable Development Goals compatible to Ubuntu? Can Ubuntu contribute to post-development ideas and to post-colonial theory? In what way can Ubuntu or parts of its elements serve as a (contextual) inspiration for development theory?

SERVICE, Jaqueline

Alphacrucis College, Sydney, Australia

Abstract

Christianity has been instrumental in fashioning the contemporary paradigm of humanitarian aid and development. However, as a secular agenda increasingly defines this space, the question of what difference a religious cosmology makes to Christian faith-based development organisations (FBDO's) becomes significant. While faith convictions initiated early humanitarian efforts, Christian FBDO's have arguably acquiesced to secular pragmatic rationales for their work, rather than allow theology to have explanatory and regulatory influence. In many ways, therefore, FBDOs are devoid of the influence of 'faith', or more specifically, the influence of a robust theological foundation. To address this deficit, a critique of the philosophical moorings of Western international development is mounted with consideration given to nascent trajectories for an alternative paradigm for Christian rationale and praxis. In particular, the paper posits that the ontological ground for the contours of human well-being is divine well-being, where the dynamic characteristic inherent to the actualisation of divine well-being is tri-hypostatic kenosis (self-giving). This concept is identified as kenotic-enrichment; where divine self-giving and divine well-being are symbiotically constituted. Such an ontology of divine well-being provides the context to articulate principles for actualizing human well-being as a reiteration of the divine archetype. Such a theological concept provides the foundation for the doctrine of God to be pivotal in the Christian articulation and praxis of sustainable development.

SPITZECK, Hans

Abstract

Sierra Leone and the Legacy of Bishop Crowther

Formative Elements of African Indigenous Churches in West Africa - An historical perspective -

The Website of the Church of Nigeria pays tribute to the legacy of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first African Bishop of the Anglican Church. He had received his formation in Sierra Leone in the first half of the 19th Century and shaped the Anglican Church in Nigeria. Ironically, his eviction as bishop in 1890 motivated the foundation of African Initiated Churches (AIC).

The starting point of the paper is the observation that in Africa has emerged an African Christianity (ASAMOA-H-GYADU). The look into Church history reveals the decisive formative elements which AICs owe to the contribution of Africans like Bishop Crowther. Since 1792, they coined Christianity in West Africa by respecting African cosmology (Weltanschauung), language and culture.

The paper will analyse the history of Christianity in West Africa from 1792 to 1890. In 1792, African returnees founded in Freetown, Sierra Leone, the first Churches in tropical Africa, which have uninterrupted history till this days. Methodological it will look upon internal (African) and external (European missions) factors. This allows recognizing Henry VENN's (1796 – 1873) approach of sustainable development of indigenous churches (3-selfs approach). VENN served as secretary of the Anglican Church Mission Society from 1841 to 1872.

The paper will rely on African and European sources and give an overview on the West African Church history focussing on Sierra Leone and Nigeria. It will mark changes and transitions in the development of early African Christianity (transformation of Christianity in a Non-Western context). In this perspective it will reconstruct the early steps of the Africanisation of Christianity, instead of choosing a traditional mission centred perspective which recounts the Christianisation of Africa as spread of an unchanging Christianity.

STORRAR, William

Abstract

Planetary Thinking: Towards a New Cosmology of Equality

Can the new scientific field of astrobiology help us reframe the relationship between the local and the global in public theology and so offer a new cosmology of equality?

This lecture will address that question from the perspective of life as a planetary phenomenon, drawing on the recent interdisciplinary work of the Center of Theological Inquiry on this theme.

THOMSEN, Jørgen

Abstract

Religious actors' role in pro-gender-equality – SDG 5, by Jørgen Thomsen, DanChurchAid/ACT

Based on the practical experience by development agencies in the 'Side-by-Side' movement (see below) the paper will discuss how faith actors very often play a decisive role in the formation of values, concepts and beliefs that determines how women and men see themselves and each other and how they thus practice gender equality – or the contrary. In both cases (and all in between), faith actors are key partners in pursuit of the transformation of ideas and practices towards achieving the gender equality/SDG 5.

The 'Side-by-Side Faith Movement for Gender Justice' <http://sidebysidegender.org/> was initiated in March 2015 in response to what was observed to be a gradual dominance by restrictive faith actors' voice in the international debate on gender equality (as played out in for example the UN yearly 'Commission on the Status of Women'). Development agencies therefore teamed up with local faith actors already involved in pro-gender-equality practice and began building national chapters of S-b-S – now in some 12 countries – to mobilize, organize and strategize their work and have it reflected in international advocacy – for a change of policy that would better include the important role of religious actors. This has been pursued e.g. in the CSW 62 ('Concluding Agreement' included for the first time a positive reference to the role of FBOs - §46) and in the PaRD Workstream on Gender Equality and Empowerment.

The paper will present the experience in the practical realm of Community whilst the progress made here can only be understood with its intimate link to the realm of Cosmology. It is because of what we believe as faith actors that we do what we do. And interventions for change (Agenda 2030) must be rooted in peoples' values, convictions and beliefs if the change is to be sustainable.

WEPENER, Cas & SWART, Ignatius

University of Pretoria; University of the Western Cape

Abstract

Between cosmology and community: A South African exploration of the practice of sacrifice in the context of religion and development

In this paper, the practise of sacrifice will function as heuristic concept in order to explore the main theme of the conference, entitled “Between cosmology and community”. The importance of taking cosmology seriously in reflections on development will firstly be unpacked in the light of the nascent debate regarding the role of religion in development. Thereafter parts of the well-known theory of René Girard on sacrifice will be presented, as well as African theories pertaining to sacrifice and modern ways in which sacrifice/offering enters language. The following section will present three case studies pertaining to sacrifice from South Africa: one from fiction, one from fieldwork done in an AIC and also a description of a recent sacrifice conducted on a beach in Cape Town. In the fourth part, the data presented in the empirical section will be interpreted in the light of the preceding theories. This will lead to the final, concluding section in which a thesis will be advanced about the meaning and significance of sacrifice for an African understanding of development. However, the authors will argue that this insight can only be obtained if cosmology is taken seriously in development thinking.

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Abstract

Examining South-African population policies at the intersection of the sustainable development goals of gender equality and climate action: Perspectives from ecofeminist spirituality and theology

This paper will examine and evaluate the way in which South-African population policies aid or hamper the achievement of two of the UN's sustainable development goals: gender equality (no. 5) and climate action (no.13). The departure point for the investigation is the ongoing emphasis in religious and cultural spheres on women's so-called natural roles as mothers and nurturers (the woman-nature nexus). It will be investigated how this assumption factors into the formulation of the population policy, and what the possible effects are on the environment. This will be done by making use of some of the strategies and methods of ecofeminist spirituality and – theology, which itself in certain cases utilizes the woman-nature nexus. Ultimately, it is investigated if population policies can aid the realisation of the UN'S sustainable development goals.