On Analysing New Forms of African Christian Life
Where and Whereto?

Topic:
This international workshop inspects new forms (and the analysis of new forms) of African Christian life, which are the result of interactions between European and African Christianities both “beyond” or “trans” and amidst their specific contexts due to processes of glocalization and transnational migration. While geographically focussing on Africa, there will be an inbuilt attentiveness to the impact of impulses from these interactions in the global North.

Guiding question:
What are the most significant discourses, constellations, and conflicts arising from competing claims for the power of interpretation, with the aim of explaining, interpreting, defining – and even assessing or legitimizing – new forms of Christian life in Africa and the most significant factors shaping them?

Proposition/Thesis:
The analysis of new forms of Christian life can no longer successfully claim the power of interpretation by simply holding on to hitherto established hegemonic discourses emphasizing the advancement of “African” traditions or of plain Africanization processes or of the rejection of “European” ones in combination with a revitalization of “African” religious practices, institutions, beliefs, etc. Rather, this analysis may achieve new power of interpretation by taking into account the impact of new hermeneutic orders as a result of complex transconfigurations whereby new forms of Christian life in Africa are created in the image of a new African vision beyond essentialist and dichotomic cultural discourses.

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Venue:
04.12.
Main Building, Room 325 (left wing, 4th. floor/3. Etage), Universitätsplatz 1, 18055 Rostock
05.12.–06.12.
Beratungsraum, Schwaansche Straße 2, 18055 Rostock

The Power of Interpretation:
Imagined Authenticity – Appropriated Identity
Conflicting Discourses on New Forms of African Christianity

International Workshop of the Guided Research Group
Power of Interpretation [GRK Deutungsmacht]
Religion and Belief Systems in Conflicts of Interpretational Power
04.12. – 06.12.2014
Thursday, 4 December
18:15–19:45
Prof. Dr. Klaus Hock; Prof. Dr. Martina Kumlehn
Welcome and Introduction

Prof. Dr. em. Paul Gifford
Keynote Address/Public Lecture:
A Modern Nigerian Pentecostal Interpretation of the Bible: and Some Issues Arising

Friday, 5 December
I. Genealogical Dispositions: The Power of Interpretation in and of African Christianities in Historical Perspective
09:30 – 10:00
Prof. Dr. Klaus Hock
Conflicting Discourses on New Forms of African Christianity: Rationale and Context of the Workshop

10:15 – 11:15
Dr. Davide Dainese
Oikoumenic as Globalization. Conflicts in Forms of Christian Life in Africa (III–IV century)

11:45 – 12:45
Dr. Silvia Cristofori
Christianity and New Identities in Buganda during the Scramble for Africa: The Clash of Interpretations of a Conflicting Phase of Globalization

| Lunch Break |

15:00 – 16:30
Prof. Dr. Dr. Frieder Ludwig
The West African Christian Elite, the West African Press and the Power of Interpretation, ca. 1880–1930: Contested Public Spheres

Emily Phuti Mogase
The West African Christian Elite, the West African Press and the Power of Interpretation, ca. 1880–1930: Gendered Representation – Gendered Strategies

Saturday, 6 December
II. Transconfigurations: The Power of Interpretation in and of New Forms of African Christianities
09:00 – 10:00
Prof. Dr. Andreas Heuser
“Prisms, Mirrors, and Refractions”: Insiders’ Perceptions of Basel Mission History in Ghana

10:30 – 12:00
Charlotte Eisenberg
German-Ghanaian Encounters in the Church – an Empirical View on Power Structures in Ecumenical Relationships

Christine Gühne
“From Victim to Victor” – New Christian Identities in Africa and Their Effect on Development

| Lunch Break |

14:30 – 15:30
Dr. Afe Adogame

16:00 – 17:00
Prof. Dr. Werner Kahl
Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics – Reclaiming Interpretive Power in Ghana: Miracles and Homosexuality as Case Studies

17:30 – 18:30
Prof. Dr. Klaus Hock
Reflection and Final Discussion; Prospects

Programme

Speakers

Dr. Afe Adogame
Senior Lecturer; World Christianity & Religious Studies/Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh

Dr. Silvia Cristofori
Researcher; Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII, Bologna/International University of Rome

Dr. Davide Dainese
Researcher; Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII, Bologna/University of Bologna

Charlotte Eisenberg
Doctoral Student, Leipzig/University of Rostock

Prof. Dr. Paul Gifford
Emeritus Professor, Department of the Study of Religions, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Christine Gühne
Doctoral Student, Wittlingen/University of Rostock

Prof. Dr. Andreas Heuser
Associate Professor for Extra-European Christianity, Faculty of Theology/Centre for African Studies, University of Basel

Prof. Dr. Klaus Hock
History of Religions – Religion and Society, University of Rostock

Dr. Claudia Jahnel
Director of Studies, Mission One World Neundetselsau/University of Erlangen-Nürnberg

Prof. Dr. Werner Kahl
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