**ASRSA papers for the Joint Conference**

**Panel 1 Shepherds or Charlatans: Critical Reflections on Leadership in Contemporary Sub-Saharan African Churches**

**Chair: Dr Maria Frahm-Arp** [**mariafa@uj.ac.za**](mailto:mariafa@uj.ac.za)

During 2015, in South Africa, there were a number of public outcries about pastors who made their congregants eat snakes, drink petrol or give their life savings over to their churches’. Towards the end of the year a commission was set up by the government to investigate the theology and practices of a number churches within the larger Pentecostal Charismatic configuration of churches. On social media, on the radio and in television interviews believers reported that they attended churches with an extreme message because they believed that their problems could only be solved through extreme measures. Others said that they left churches which promised happiness and wealth after their family relationships, financial stability and faith had all been shattered. South Africa’s situation is not unique, throughout Sub-Saharan Africa there are regular media reports of ‘questionable practices’ in churches. While much of the more extreme behaviour takes place in African Independent and Pentecostal Charismatic Churches some of their rhetoric and ideas have filtered into ‘mainline’ churches.

These outcries raise a variety of questions about the nature of contemporary Christianities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Amongst these are questions about leadership in churches, ethical practices, power dynamics in Christian communities, gendered and patriarchal relationships that disempower some people and theologies that might be more harmful than helpful.

1. **Game-keepers or Poachers?: Religious Leadership, Holiness, and the ‘Man of God’ Discourse in African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe**

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The study investigated religious leaders, who are also designated as prophets, in African Initiated Churches (Zionist/Apostolic and Pentecostal) in Zimbabwe, with a view to establish how far they provide responsible and accountable leadership as well as exploit people, both insiders and outsiders. A qualitative design was adopted for the study. Media reports and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Data were collected from a purposefully selected sample of religious leaders, congregants, and some non-congregants who sought help from the prophets. Data were qualitatively analysed on the basis of themes that emerged. It emerged that while on the one hand leaders provided responsible leadership by guiding people to get close to God and shun evil; on the other hand they exploited people sexually, economically and psychologically. Congregants generally felt that whatever the ‘man of God’ said was a command because he was representing God. Non-congregants had a generally more mixed perspective on the prophets. It was concluded that the role of prophetic leaders was ambivalent; it was both beneficial and exploitative to the people. Recommendations to conscientise people on beneficial and exploitative prophetic activities as well as for further studies were made.

1. **From Pastor to 'Man of God'; Shifting Theologies of Leadership in the Protestant Tradition in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa**

Hermen Kroesbergen (hermen.kroesbergen@gmail.com)

Justo Mwale University, Lusaka, Zambia

In this paper I will describe the shift in the underlying theology of leadership from a servant-style of leadership in line with Martin Luther's concept of the priesthood of all believers, to a man-of-God-style of leadership present in contemporary Sub-Saharan African churches. Nowadays the focus is not on the equal access of every congregant to God, but on the person of the pastor – often referred to as 'man of God.' He is the one who is linked to God, he is the one who prays to God, he is the one who delivers God's good gifts to the ordinary congregants. I will contrast the two styles of leadership: to what extent does the Luther's critique still apply to the current man-of-God-style of leadership? Can signs and miracles belong to a Protestant theology of leadership? Is it theologically possible for both styles of leadership to exist next to one another in the same church-setup? These are some of the questions from which I will address the shifting theologies of leadership in the Protestant tradition in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa.

1. **Responses from the Eastern Cape of Pentecostals, Charismatics and New Apostolic Formations to Recent "Abusive" Church Leadership Challenges**

Prof Ivin Chetty ([ichetty@ufh.ac.za](mailto:ichetty@ufh.ac.za))

University of Fort Hare

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, a South African Chapter 9 state institution supporting constitutional democracy has become well-known particularly since its work in 2015. Conveniently called the CRL Rights Commission, it has garnered support in some church circles and hostility among others. The reverberations of this CRL Rights Commission surfaced in the aftermath of public outcries against “abusive” church leaders who, inter alia, made their congregants to eat grass, snakes, rats, drink petrol, pour hot water over their hands, pay for healing or give their life savings. Attention is also given to the “Umtata Cult” of the Angels Ministry Church. Television, radio and social media also played a significant role in highlighting such abuses. Within a qualitative methodology, semi-structured interviews of the perceptions of Theology and Religion Studies students will generate data which will be thematically analysed. This will provide an understanding and offer recommendations concerning leadership, ethics, power dynamics, gender, patriarchy, the role of the media and the forms of theologies which these leaders promote. A unique contribution of this paper is the response from Pentecostal, Charismatic and New Apostolic Reformation formations to these recent leadership challenges.

1. **Men of God and testimonial evidence: The role of the pastor in the production of testimonies**

Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps

Name of University: Justo Mwale University

According to the call for papers, “during 2015, in South Africa, there were a number of public outcries about [neo-Pentecostal] pastors who made their congregants eat snakes, drink petrol or give their life savings over to their churches’.” Neo-Pentecostalism is a transnational movement that exceeds the boundaries of denominations and emphasizes God's direct intervention in matters of healing and prosperity. The other side of the view that God actively and miraculously intervenes in the world and in people's lives, is the perception of an almost equally powerful counterforce of darkness. Through 'spiritual warfare' these forces of evil have to be forced back before the Kingdom of God can materialize in this world. As 'men of God', contemporary neo-Pentecostal pastors have the power to protect and deliver their congregants from evil, and to bestow blessings on them. This authority of the pastor is enforced by testimonies, for example the testimonies of ex-Satanists that speak about a worldwide organization dedicated to evil and headed by Satan himself. There is a reciprocal relationship between the pastor and the person giving the testimony. On the one hand, a testimony that is valued enough to receive a platform in a church service is more readily believed than an unpublicised rumour. On the other hand, the testimony is also important for pastors themselves. It is this aspect that the proposed paper focusses on. Testimonies are evidence for the theology of spiritual warfare in which the pastors operate. They are also proof for the power of the pastor as man of God: they show that he is able to protect from harm and fight evil. Because of this importance of testimonies for the ministry of neo-Pentecostal pastors, they are often closely involved in the production of testimonies – whereby production refers to both the development of the testimony and its staging in a church service. The main question of this paper is: What is the role of the pastor in the production of testimonies? The answer will be sought in a combination of participant observation in deliverance services, a qualitative reading of testimonies delivered in services or on radio programmes, and interviews with both ex-Satanists and pastors. An analysis of the data shows that pastors are involved in the production of testimonies at three different stages:

* The pastor interprets experiences in the framework of spiritual warfare and thus confirms the diagnosis of Satanism.
* The pastor encourages the narration of the experiences in the format of a (staged) testimony.
* When staged, the pastor frames and interprets the testimony, thereby adding meaning to it.

The influence of the pastor on the production of the testimony makes him a co-author of that testimony. In this paper, the three stages will be clarified with examples from my research into the discourse of Satanism and testimonies of ex-Satanists in Zambia.

1. **Charismatic Madness and Chaos: Abusive Leaders in New Pentecostal Movements in Southern Africa**.

Nomatter Sande ([pastornomsande@yahoo.com](mailto:pastornomsande@yahoo.com))

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

The over-emphasis of the Pentecostal movement to access, manipulate and interact with the supernatural has its consequences. Recently, there has been a rampart negative behaviour associated with mental traits such as neuroticism, pathological reflexes, obsessions and psychoticism’s in congregant’s life. Normal believers are reduced to zombies, eating snakes, drinking petrol, sexually abused and loss of valuable properties to these leaders. In the guise of prophetic mandate, trans-migrations to heaven, and manifestations of supra miracles the abusive leaders attack their prey. Such behaviour is most prominent in new Pentecostal movements and African Independent Churches. As a result, pertinent questions asked in this paper are, what are the elements within Pentecostalism that sustains such behaviour? Are these abusive leaders are shepherds, charlatans or business tycoons dressed in white collar? This paper seeks to understand how leaders in new Pentecostal movements, hypnotise and manipulate congregates into such charismatic madness and chaos. This paper utilizes the principle of hermeneutic of suspicion to understand how the leaders interpret, engage and deliver scriptures to these congregates. Data collection is through the sermonic discourses, conferences, seminars, deliverance sessions and tele-evangelism. This paper concludes that the trump card for such gullible behaviour is camouflaged in prophecy, prosperity and health.

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**Panel 2 Religion and Religious Education and the Demands of Citizenship**

**Chair: Abdulkader Tayob,** [**Abdulkader.tayob@uct.ac.za**](mailto:Abdulkader.tayob@uct.ac.za)

Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town

The panel will address how Religion and Religious Education relate to the demands of citizenship. It will be a critical reflection on **programmes** that teach religion in the region, and their objectives, visions and realities. Papers in this panel will focus on how religions are taught in the public sphere? What are the values and practices that are nurtured or neglected through these educational practices? Who are the teachers and how have they become popular, inspiring or feared? What are the media used by these teachers and to what effect? From the perspective of religion or religious education, how is the public sphere constructed? Which values are promoted in consistent and systematic manner? How are religious bodies constituted through education in relation to the religious realm on the one hand, and the state on the other?

1. **From “Physical Spaces” to “Virtual Spaces”: A Case Study of how Educators are Integrating “Virtual Spaces” for the Facilitation of Religion Studies in Gauteng, South Africa**

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A decade after its implementation, while Religion Studies (as a FET subject) has found a familiar footing amongst students across the country, the “space” for multi-religion education is still facing many challenges. Two notable challenges are: (1) physical segregation along historically defined communal lines creates the absence of interaction with a diverse pity of religious adherents and leads to the dominant religion flourishing within the curriculum; and (2) many of the educators facilitating Religion Studies are not adequately skilled to facilitate the subject matter. With an increase in affordable access to information and communication technologies in South Africa, many educators are now turning to “virtual space” to address some of these challenges. Through a case study approach, this paper explores how teachers in the Gauteng Province of South Africa are integrating “virtual space” in their teaching to address issues of (a) a more inclusive space representing religious diversity; and (b) an engaged space for dialogue among leaners and educators. This paper highlights the prospects and challenges faced by educators in their integration of “virtual space” in Religion Studies.

1. **Perceptions of Religion Studies at the University of Fort Hare: An old establishment with a new focus**.

Patricia Chetty, [patriciakchetty@gmail.com](mailto:patriciakchetty@gmail.com)

University of Fort Hare

Against the changing faces of Religion Studies (RS) offerings at the tertiary level, a history of theology and religion at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) is detailed. The role of Christian theology, in particular, has played an integral part in the hundred year history of UFH. From the position of a fully-fledged faculty it now occupies a "Cinderella' position as a Centre for Theology and Religion (CTR). It is now a little more endowed than a department but still remains under-resourced and is positioned within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. In 2014 a new structured Bachelor of Theology programme has been implemented with RS offered at the exit level with a vision of an African theology and religion for social transformation. One of the objectives of this offering is to provide suitably qualified educators in RS. A critical evaluation of the outcomes of these modules in RS is provided against the demands of citizenship. Some of the values include respect for various religious traditions and the promotion of human rights in the national project of a democratic state. Through a qualitative study, data will be generated and thematically analysed to provide insight and offer recommendations.

1. **Religion Education and the demands of citizenship and citizenship education in a diverse society for pre-service teacher education**

Dr. René Ferguson (Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za)

School of Education: University of the Witwatersrand.

This paper focuses on religion education and citizenship for pre-service teacher education in a diverse, democratic society. A constant challenge in pre-service teacher education lies with how teachers are enabled to engage with diversity and democratic thinking in order to confront prejudice and discrimination in the classroom. Democratic citizenship is based on numerous secular values including equality, autonomy, respect for rights and freedoms and toleration of difference. Democratic citizenship also demands that citizens reconcile the secular values of citizenship and human rights with the moral teachings of religions. Two questions are grappled with: how do pre-service teachers as citizens acquire knowledge of democratic citizenship, the skills of autonomous and critical thinking, and dispositions of inclusivity for diversity in religion education; what are the enabling tools for pre-service teachers to work with difference and otherness in ways that are affirming yet critical? I argue that theorising diversity in teacher education must be ongoing to confront the demands of democratic citizenship, to contribute to transformation in the classroom. Various theoretical perspectives are shared for their potential to aid understanding the complexities associated with diversity in religion education, to ‘read’ (Steyn 2015) how freedom of religion and belief is enacted in society. Some reflections of pre-service teacher experiences of religion and religious diversity in schools and communities are also shared and commented on.

4) **Making and Maintaining the ‘Other’ in the 2003 National Policy on Religion and Education: A Classroom Perspective**.

Ms. Tammy Vanessa Wilks (WLKTAM001@myuct.ac.za)

Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town

What happens when the 2003 National Policy on Religion and Education (RE) is constructed through the lexicon of essentialist democratic ideals such as ‘unity’ and ‘diversity’? Fieldwork research shows that the interpretive nature of these ideals are fluxed with power, and that in addition to the lack of pedagogical support to execute a democratic RE, the project of knowing minority religions is performed through categorisations. Minorities are reserved into acceptable identities, including ‘indigenous belief systems’ or ‘ethical traditions’, but never religion. The categorisation develops a socially accepted narrative that is absorbed and reproduced in the classroom. It will be shown that this approach to teaching RE becomes an orthodoxy that not only silences minority religions’ epistemologies and voices in the classroom, thereby preventing a dialogical and cooperative performance of RE, but also expects these minorities to participate in this project. Thus, applauding RE as a project of inclusivity is disturbed by learners of minority religions who feel forced to declare themselves as atheist or agnostic to defer this participation. It will be argued that classroom spaces raises critical concerns regarding the authority and legitimacy of RE in constructing a position for minority religions in its curriculum.

5. **Mediating Religion on Public Broadcast Television in South Africa**

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Department of Religion Studies, University of Cape Town

As the post apartheid broadcaster the South African Broadcasting Coporation (SABC) is expected to “inform, educate and entertain” the South African public. The editorial policies of the institution provide legislatively mandated guidelines for staff who are responsible for the commissioning, production, and dissemination of broadcast material. Through Religious Broadcasting, the SABC supports state aspirations for societal transformation by undertaking to address and correct, “…gender, racial, religious and resource imbalances associated with religious broadcasting in the past” (SABC Editorial Policy 2004, 45). Given the explicit constitutional alignment of the SABC along with the historical and contextual circumstances from which Religious Broadcasting emerges and to which it responds, this paper will discuss how constitutional changes regarding religion have played a defining role in the management and mediation of religious diversity on public broadcast television in the post apartheid context. Consequently, through a comparison of the faith specific and multi-faith programming genres, this paper will argue that religion on public broadcast television in South Africa is less about the representation of religious diversity and more about mediation of constitutional values in the service of nation-building.

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**Panel 3** **Conversations on the Terms and Processes in the Study of Religions that Matter**

**Convenors: Abdulkader Tayob, Johan Strijdom**

University of Cape Town and UNISA

This panel calls for a critical reflection on key terms and processes that constitutes the study of religions and religious traditions. A universal definition for religion might be elusive or unattainable, but scholars of religion work with faith, beliefs, rituals, myths, ethics, sacred texts and narratives, secularisation, institutions and institutionalisation, modernism and modernity, postmodernism, gender, race, and many more. Some terms like magic have lost favour, and other terms like sin and evil are usually avoided. These terms guide the choice of data, the critique, explanations and descriptions offered in Religious Studies. They can and should provide the basis for a shared conversation among scholars working in the field of religion.

1. **Terms to Avoid and Terms to Use – An Important First step in the Study of Religions**

Prof Abdulkader Tayob ([Abdulkader.tayob@uct.ac.za](mailto:Abdulkader.tayob@uct.ac.za))

Department of Religion Studies University of Cape Town

When Prof. Oosthuizen brought together scholars of religion and theology to write about African Initiated Christianity, he was challenged by a young David Chidester who argued that the terms used for analysis in the essays were too theological or too psychological. In its place, Chidester suggested that “interests” should be a key guiding term for analysis, always staying close to the justifications, explanations and strategies employed by religious actors. With his subsequent voluminous oeuvre, Chidester has been consistent in showing how religions are deeply engaged and implicated in the framework of colonialism, resistance, and popular culture. In this paper, I situated this contest between Oosthuizen and Chidester among scholars of religion who follow Kant, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Foucault and others. I argue that while these large theoretical frameworks are useful, even necessary, for understanding religion in society, they can sometimes divert us from a close appreciation of religions themselves. I would like to argue that the terms and processes that emerge from within religious and cultural systems provide a simple but profound ground for sustained conversations and debates in the study of religions.

1. **Religion and Culture: revisiting an old relative**

Jaco Beyers ([jaco.beyers@up.ac.za](mailto:jaco.beyers@up.ac.za))

University of Pretoria

Together with aesthetics and ethics, religion constitutes culture (compare Kierkegaard). Current world events reflect attempts to restore religion to a position of dominance in culture in order to prescribe to what ought to be accepted as being nice (aesthetical) and good (ethical) in culture. This ascending of religion also includes a re-location of religion from the private sphere to the public sphere. The result is a shift in priority of religion within culture. This process of ascending religion in culture results in conflict not only within religions but also among religions. The moment religion becomes a cultural identity marker the borders between religion and culture blur. Religion cannot but be expressed in terms of culture, but now religion usurps the position as custodian of culture. Religion becomes civil religion. Any sign of animosity towards culture is interpreted as opposition towards religion. This necessitates the revisiting of the discourse on the relation between culture and religion. Is it possible to separate religion and culture? Can you belong to the Western culture and still be a Muslim (compare Tariq Ramadan’s quest). Can you be a white Christian in Africa without being labeled a colonist and oppressor? Can you be African without being labeled as primitive and prone to animism and magic? Has religion become a cultural identity marker in a South African context, demarcating the borders between people? Belonging to a particular religion implies belonging to a particular culture. From this position follows a crude generalization that to belong to a particular culture implies belonging to a particular religion. It is clear that religion and culture cannot be separated. In this regard they must be viewed as relatives. This has implications how to study religion. If religion is seen as a segment of culture, studying religion becomes an anthropological and ethnographic exercise.

1. **‘Colonialism’ and ‘material culture’: Key terms for researching and teaching about religion(s) at South African universities**

Prof Johan Strijdom, [strijjm@hotmail.com](mailto:strijjm@hotmail.com), [strijjm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:strijjm@unisa.ac.za)

University of South Africa

Theorizing and applying key concepts in the analysis of case studies across religious traditions have since the turn of the millennium become increasingly salient in the academic study and teaching of religion(s) at universities. In this paper I will engage with two terms, ‘colonialism’ and ‘material culture’, that David Chidester has theoretically elaborated and applied with specific reference to South African contexts. In conceptualizing ‘colonialism’ Chidester has examined not only the use of religion by colonists and the complicity of imperial theorists of religion to justify imperial expansionism and economic exploitation, but also creative responses by the colonized. The challenge of a postcolonial study of religion is to critically deal with this colonial legacy. In conceptualizing ‘material culture’ Chidester focuses on the necessary mediation of religion through objects and the senses. Instead of mere description, Chidester offers a nuanced historical and critical analysis of their political and economic functions and meanings. Of particular relevance to the South African context is his critical investigation of the notion of fetishism and neoshamanism. I will argue in light of the current demands for the decolonization of curricula that these terms need to be foregrounded in rethinking Religious Studies programmes at South African universities, and show how they are facilitating the transformation of the Religious Studies curriculum at the University of South Africa.

1. **The Study of Religion as a Study of Discourse Construction**

Prof Gerhard van den Heever (vdheega@unisa.ac.za)

Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, University of South Africa

The study of religion, of world religions, and indeed the discipline of comparative religion, bear the imprint of the imperial and colonial context which gave rise to these discourses, but also constitute the sites of decolonial revisioning of scholarly discourses on these phenomena.

Contemporary theorizing of religion embodies explicit critiques of the Western imperial project. The golden thread that ties their work together is the concept of discourse. Thus I propose a discourse approach that translates all the most prominent terminologies in the study of religion, like ritual, belief, faith, etc. into redescriptive moves. But simultaneously, all these terms, e.g., faith, beliefs, theologies, rituals, myths, ethics, sacred texts and narratives, secularisation, institutions and institutionalisation, modernism and modernity, postmodernism, gender, race -- and nowadays one could add space and spatiality, also appear in more critical and interdisciplinary oriented theological studies. This brings about a most extraordinary situation where the outsider perspective and the insider perspective 'speak about' and 'speak with' the same set of vocabularies, and yet are practised either in isolation from each other as distinct theoretical and disciplinary bounded/defined study fields, or -- the other and almost direct opposite -- religious studies being performed in the context of theological study, situated in and offered by theological faculties.

This contribution, then, aims at a kind of metatheoretical reflection on the study of religion and theology both as discourses that serve mythmaking, identity formation, culturally strategic purposes.

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**Panel 4 Open Panel: Human Rights, Ancestors and Religion Education**

1. **Gender Asymmetry and Mutual Sexual Relations in Online Legal Interpretation- Beyond the Dissonance through the Fatwas of askimam.org**.

Mrs Farhana Ismail (Farhana\_joy@hotmail.com)

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

This paper forms part of a larger research project which argues that within the interlocutory space of online fatwas, there is a co-construction by muftis and petitioners of an Islamic discourse of jurisprudence on sexuality in marriage that moves away from the prominent legal discourse of male sexual right and female responsibility to fulfil this right towards a discourse located at the intersect of the ethics of both marriage and health. This paper focuses on the former ethical space of marriage, centred on ideas of mutuality.

Combining a methodology of feminist post-structural discourse analysis with a legal interpretive framework located in classical texts, the first part of the paper analyses a fatwa by South African-based Deoband Mufti Ebrahim Desai on his online fatwa platform askimam.org. Assessed alongside ancillary fatwas on his website, the analysis reveals how petitioners and muftis remain committed to the legal rules governing Muslim marriage, yet also articulate views based on expectations of mutuality in sexual relations prevalent in contemporary marriage.

Building on these findings, the second half of this paper examines the effect of the online space on petitioners and mufti’s alike in terms of sexuality and sexual health. Consistent with Korts claim that the internet gradually alters “past notions of the ummah, ulema and ijtihad ” (2006: 367) I argue that the cyber context of the fatwas of askimam.org creates a potential slippage in the legal discourse of male sexual right and female responsibility to fulfil. It does this also through a gradual reformulation of these past notions, thus contributing towards new prospects for gradually reconfiguring gender relations in marriage.

1. **Virginity testing in South Africa: A Taylorian reflection**

Dr Auwais Rafudeen (rafudma@unisa.ac.za)

Ms Lindiwe Mkasi (mkasilp@unisa.ac.za)

Department of Religious Studies and Arabic, University of South Africa

In January 2016, a row over virginity testing was renewed when the uThukela district in Kwazulu-Natal instituted a program that would provide scholarships to girls who maintained their virginity during the course of their tertiary studies. To ensure that they had maintained their virginity, the girls would be periodically tested in accordance with Zulu cultural practices. While the stated justification of the program was practical- the girls would be able to focus on their studies and not be diverted by potential pregnancy etc.- the practice of virginity testing has profound cosmological roots in Zulu culture that is tied to the appeasement of the spiritual entity, Nomkhubulwane, or Mother Nature. The program caused an outcry among human rights activists who saw it as an assault on choice, science, equality and ethics.

The aim of this presentation is not to take sides in this debate. Rather, it is to reflect on why these sides arose in the way they did. In this regard, we find the work of Charles Taylor illuminating. Taylor reflects on the Western pre-modern porous self which was innately tied to a cosmology. The self was porous precisely because it saw itself as part of that cosmology. But with the onset of modernity, the self becomes increasing “buffered”, as a self that does not belong to that cosmology but is self-owned and self-regulated. This essay contends that the practice of virginity testing has to be seen in the light of the porous conception of the self and opposition to the practice in the light of the buffered conception. And as such, the opposition at base is seeking to preserve its specific view of the world against a practice it sees as undermining its implicit “theological” perspective.

1. **When Ancestors Speak! Conversations with Dr VVO Mkhize: Ancestral calling in the 21st Century**

Dr Sibusiso Masondo (masondosi@ukzn.ac.za)

School of Religion Philosophy and Classics, UKZN

The paper will detail Dr Mkhize’s journey as he responded to the ancestral calling by looking at the different stages of his calling, the communication that he had with the ancestors in the form of dreams and visions, revelations of what he needed to do to progress to the next level. At the centre of his work is what he calls UMSAMO philosophy. He has written five books where he deals with UMSAMO and how it relates to African forms of healing. He refers to himself as uhlanya (literally a madman), (ukuhlanya best describes the experience of being possessed and used by the ancestors). Through Mkhize’s experience we will explore the following issues about the role of the ancestors in an individual’s call. First, ancestors make demands on people so that they can advance to the next level of spiritual awakening. Some of the demands include ukuhlaba (slaughtering or sacrificing animals), ukugeza ngemithi ethile (washing with certain herbal mixtures), ukungadli izinto ezithile (avoidance of certain foods). Second, it has been confirmed by a number of traditional healers that ancestors always give instructions about what needs to be done for ithwasa (initiate) to advance to the next level of their training. Third, ancestors caution against inappropriate behaviour on the part of the individual initiate as this could lead to failure become a traditional healer. Fourth, ancestral visitation through dreams and visions is a recognised form of communication.

1. **The interface between religious education and human rights education: Confronting the citizenry**

Prof Cornelia Roux ([cornelia.roux@gmail.com](mailto:cornelia.roux@gmail.com))

University of the North West

Religion and human rights may have different meanings and applications in society, especially in education. The aims and applications of these two disciplines differ and in many instances are regarded as opposites of different worldviews. Human Rights education is a recognised discipline in education and in itself reflects in many ways on different types of stories, values and engagements within the social construct of a society that supports citizenship education. The binary between these two disciplines can easily be confronted with a superficial understanding of the underlined principles of what the aim of religious education and human rights education and its values entail. It is sometimes viewed that religious education can easily adopt human rights issues as part of the hermeneutical interpretation of the contexts. The complexities of religion and human rights and the applied notion that it will promote a just citizenry have become part of the post-modern world, especially in the complex and diverse contexts. I argue that there is a need for a re-assessment of educational thought of religious education that can also problematize the outcome of human rights education and the issues confronting the citizenry.

This paper will explore the interpretations, engagements and understanding of these complexities of religion and human rights that interfaces human rights education. The theoretical position will be supported by data and analyses of an international research project on Human Rights Literacies: Quest for meaning involving students at tertiary institutions in five 5 countries (Roux, 2012-2016).

1. **The Pedagogical Consequences of using Technology in the Teaching of Religion Studies**

Dr Maria Frahm- Arp ([mariafa@uj.ac.za](mailto:mariafa@uj.ac.za))

Department of Religion Studies, Univesity of Johannesburg

This study is part of a larger DHET funded project examining the use of handheld device and technology more generally in teaching at five Universities in South Africa. My research is based on four months of qualititative research with two different groups of students. The first were a group of 2nd year students studying Eastern Religions and the second were Honours students doing a degree in Religion Studies. In both groups students were given handheld tablets for the whole academic year. This paper examines how teaching methods, assessment and the pedagogy of the lecture space were both positively and negatively affected when the use of different forms of technology was for-grounded in a lecturer’s approach to teaching. It was found that through the use of technology three important shifts took place. First the students experienced the subject matter differently. Second different assessment criteria were used which required a new pedagogical approach. Third using technology changed the content of what was taught. The paper concludes that the use of technology is not a simple add on to teaching world religions and far more investigation needs to be done on the pedagogical affects of technology in the teaching of religion studies.