CENTRE OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY

– WORKSHOP –
CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITIES IN THE LUSOPHONE WORLD

11th February 2017, 9:30–18:30

SOAS University of London
Thornhaugh St. / Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG
Room: Main Buildings, G3

Organisers:
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WORKSHOP THEME

In the study of modern Christianity, the Lusophone world offers unique perspectives with regard to globalisation, cultural transfer, and historical and religious dynamics, which are not always sufficiently recognised or incorporated into the wider debate. Bringing together scholars with recent or current research in the field, the workshop aims to discuss the notion of Lusophone Christianity and seeks to explore specific characteristics and particular patterns that might emerge.

A main interest of the workshop are responses to globalization, South-South and South-North networking, and new patterns in the internationalization of religious institutions. This also includes the convergence of Lusophone Christian movements with current migration dynamics, new diasporas and emerging patterns of transnational exchange. This is especially relevant as it regards the articulation of multiple identities within and beyond the Lusophone Christian world.

A spatial approach seems especially valid when reflecting on the postcolonial dynamics of Christianity in the Lusophone world, as it allows for analysing the dialectics between the centre and the periphery, the local and the transnational, the rural and the urban, the intimate and the communal living. The case of the postcolonial city is particularly interesting, since it represents a thick combination of religious and a broad range of social practices, public discourses and political activities, that strongly influence contemporary ideologies and imaginations on everyday life.

We especially welcome papers studying individual trajectories and communal expressions in the intersection of political and religious spheres, for example looking at religious influences on the public sphere, or public discourses about the place of Christianity in society and state politics. Papers examining the roots of social, cultural, and political dimensions of Lusophone Christianity in the colonial past would give an interesting insight in historical mediations of its contemporary dynamics.
PROGRAMME

9:30 Welcome/Coffee

10:00 – 11:30 Panel 1: Religion, Politics, Public Sphere and Post-Colonial Legacy

*Statehood and the Manufacture of Religion in Angola*
(Ruy Blanes, CSIC, Madrid)

*Unfolding Veronica’s Veil: Political Change, Identity and Confraternities in Post-Colonial Macao*
(Isabel Morais, University of Saint Joseph, Macau)

*The Making of a Religious Pluralism: Nazarene Protestantism, State and Public Sphere in the Cape Verde Islands*
(Max Ruben Ramos, ICS-UL, Lisbon)

Lunch Break: coffee, tea, sandwiches

12:30 – 14:00 Panel 2: Local Worlds, Foreign Forces

*“The human element is the harder to master”: An Assessment of the Influence of Early Spiritan Institutional Practices in Angolan Christianity*
(João Figueiredo, ICS-UL, Lisbon)

*Pentecostal Magic? Religious Growth and Evolution in Postcolonial Mozambique*
(Eric Morier-Genoud, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast)

*Duality without Dualism: Makhuwa Catholicism in Northern Mozambique*
(Devaka Premawardhana, Colorado College, Colorado Springs)

Break: coffee, tea, biscuits

14:30 – 17:00 Panel 3: City, Transnational Connection, Religious World Making

*Between “Caniço” and “Cidade de Cimento”: the Small Zion Churches and the Heterogeneity of the Urban Space of Maputo, Mozambique*
(Giulia Cavallo, ICS-UL, Lisbon)

*Luso-Pentecostal Urban Connections*
(Linda Van De Kamp, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam)

*Lusophone Christianitities in the Postcolonial City: the Case of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona in Lisbon*
(Ambra Formenti, CRIA-FCSH/NOVA, Lisbon)

*The City at the End of the Universe: Christianity, “Anti-Christianity” and Messianism in Northern Angola*
(Ramon Sarró, University of Oxford, Oxford)

*Transnational Connectivity of Angolan Pentecostal Churches*
(Natalia Zawiejska, Jagiellonian University, Cracow)
Break: coffee, tea, sandwiches

17:30 – 18:30 Final discussion / wine, snacks

Abstracts

PANEL 1: RELIGION, POLITICS, PUBLIC SPHERE AND POST-COLONIAL LEGACY

Ruy Blanes, CSIC, Madrid

*Statehood and the Manufacture of Religion in Angola*

In this paper I approach the religious landscape of Angola from the viewpoint of the entanglements between religious institutions and the Angolan state. Taking as point of departure two seemingly opposite cases in what concerns 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' movements - that of the Tokoist Church and that of the ‘Kalupeteka’ Church -, I will discuss what I am currently calling the process of ‘manufacture’ of the Angolan religious sphere.

Isabel Morais, University of Saint Joseph, Macau

*Unfolding Veronica's Veil: Political Change, Identity and Confraternities in Post-Colonial Macao*

After almost two decades of the transference of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China (PRC), proclaimed on the 20 December 1999, amidst main concerns over the future religious rights and freedoms of local Catholics (partly the result of the ongoing divergences between Beijing and the Vatican), Macau has been a paradox in terms of religious pluralism and diversity management though Catholics are just a small fraction its population (five per cent).

Despite the gradually increasing political pressure from China on both Macau and the neighboring Hong Kong, the role of the Macau's religious confraternities dynamized by the Macanese (local Eurasians) in the preservation and organization of the large Catholic street processions has remained crucial. This article is inspired by the figure of Veronica who wiped Jesus Christ's face with a veil and who is traditionally performed by a Macanese girl at the Procession of Our Lord celebrated every year round in Macao. It examines the long standing role of religious confraternities in the preservation of Macau's Catholic processions by showing how the creation of the Macanese community is linked to an ethnic identification through ancestral rituals dating back to the origins of the city in the sixteenth century.

Max Ruben Ramos, ICS-UL, Lisbon

*The Making of a Religious Pluralism: Nazarene Protestantism, State and Public Sphere in the Cape Verde Islands*

This paper aims to explore the making of the religious pluralism from the point of view of the historical trajectory and currently discourses of the first Cape Verdean Protestant Church, the Church of the Nazarene. I will show how this church has disputed, claimed and negotiated the access to the State and public sphere, considering the context of the institutional privileges granted to the Catholic Church, the boom of the Pentecostal from Brazil, Nigeria, Gambia, Angola and other African countries, as well as the growth of Islam in the Cape Verde Islands.
João Figueiredo, ICS-UL, Lisbon

“The human element is the harder to master”: An Assessment of the Influence of Early Spiritan Institutional Practices in Angolan Christianity

The year 2016 marked the third jubilee of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost in Angola. For the last 150 years, the Holy Ghost Fathers, or spiritans, have been setting the tone of Catholic proselytism in this former Portuguese colony. During the late colonial stages (c. 1930 – c. 1970), the Congregation had an untroubled or even amicable relation with the imperial administration, sharing with it an anti-protestant, integralist agenda. This quietude and unity of purpose starkly contrasts with the first spiritan efforts to set a foothold in Angola. This paper proposes to focus on these first decades, from the late 1860’s to the 1890s, clearly outlining the future implications for the history of Christianity in Angola of early spiritan institutional choices. Two important aspects will be contextualized, because they provide particularly helpful insights to those interested in studying later prophetic movements and independent African Christian Churches. One will be the spiritan practice of buying resgatados [“rescued” slaves], often accused by their communities of practicing witchcraft; and the other the Holy Ghost Fathers’ strict opposition towards popular/vernacular Christian expressions, when understood as “syncretic”. This paper will take stock of my PhD investigation, as well as my more recent post-doctoral research.

Eric Morier-Genoud, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast

Pentecostal Magic? Religious Growth and Evolution in Postcolonial Mozambique

The study of religion in Mozambique, Angola and Africa has been dominated in the last two decades by works on Pentecostalism and reformed Islam. Scholars have argued that both currents of faith have been exceptional in leading religious conversions and religious growth on the continent, thanks to their transnational networks and use of innovative techniques. While not necessarily contesting this evaluation, the present paper wishes to look at the broader picture of religious growth and evolution in Mozambique to uncover the wider panorama of religious change. While doing so, it will show that religious growth and change have come as a result of socio-economic and political transformation primarily; that religious growth and change have taken place across the board; and that the consequences of such alterations are multiple, multifaceted and often unexpected. As a result, one can say that there is no Islamic and “Pentecostal magic” in Mozambique. What exists is, first, a funnel-effect on these religious currents which distorts the results of their study and, second, an under-study of other religious currents and institutions, a lack of comparison, and an eventual weak understanding of the overall picture of religious change.

Devaka Premawardhana, Colorado College, Colorado Springs

Duality without Dualism: Makhuwa Catholicism in Northern Mozambique

In northern Mozambique, Islam, Roman Catholicism, and (more recently) Pentecostalism have taken turns attracting local Makhuwa-speaking converts. Yet in none of these cases was that which came to be termed “the religion of the ancestors” displaced. It was preserved and brought into interaction with the world religions. The precise nature of that interaction is the topic of this paper. I attend particularly to the multiple religious practices of self-identified Makhuwa Catholics. In broad strokes, one might see the phenomenon of baptized Catholics consulting with diviners, imbibing traditional medicines, and making offerings to ancestors as evidence for the fusion of religious
worlds. But the broad strokes miss what is evident up close: that ancestors are rarely brought into
the churches and that Catholic saints never appear at ancestral shrines. Among the Makhwua,
rather than fusion, one sees an acceptance of disparate zones, though not without a willingness to
tack back and forth between them. Makhwua religiosity is less a matter of hybridity than of duality;
more precisely—as one interlocutor put it—it is a matter of “duality without dualism.”

PANEL 3: CITY, TRANSNATIONAL CONNECTION, RELIGIOUS WORLD MAKING

Giulia Cavallo, ICS-UL, Lisbon

Between “Canico” and “Cidade de Cimento”: the Small Zion Churches and the
Heterogeneity of the Urban Space of Maputo, Mozambique

Zion churches are classified as AICs, African Independent Churches and they are part of a
transnational phenomenon that emerged in South Africa in the early twentieth century and were
introduced to Mozambique during the colonial period by the Mozambican miners working in the
South African and Rhodesian mines. Nowadays, Zion churches represent one of the most
widespread religious movements in the south of Mozambique.

Since the colonial period, the city of Maputo has been geographically and economically divided
between two main parts. The central core of “cement”, heart of the bureaucracy and commerce
originally destined for the inhabitants of European and Indian origins, and the "assimilated", and
the “canico”, the part destined to the black populations, without infrastructures, constituted by
precarious dwellings.

In 2010 I worked with four Zion churches, three of which were located in a semi-rural
neighbourhood in Matola city, close to Maputo, and the fourth in the centre of the capital, at the
heart of the Cidade de Cimento.

The present article intends to explore how the small Zion churches are inserted in this
geographical and economic landscape still significant nowadays, and how they interact in the
urban and semirural space of Maputo, in particular through the comparison between two very
different congregations.

Ambra Formenti, CRIA-FCSH/NOVA, Lisbon

Lusophone Christianities in the Postcolonial City: the Case of the Missão Evangélica
Lusófona in Lisbon

This paper will discuss the postcolonial dynamics of Christianity in the Lusophone world by
focusing on the case of the Missão Evangélica Lusófona (MEL), an Evangelical congregation
settled in the outskirts of Lisbon (Portugal) and attended by migrants from Guinea-Bissau, São
Tomé e Príncipe, Angola, Cape-Verde and Brazil. The practices and discourses enacted in MEL
will be analysed as a form of resistance against power relations inherited by Portuguese colonial
past. In contemporary Portugal, the lives of citizens coming from former African colonies continue
to be influenced by the historical legacy of the Portuguese empire, as evident in migrants’ lack of
citizenship rights, in their precarious conditions in terms of housing, labour, health and education,
as well as in the stigmatizing representations expressed by the Portuguese white population. On
the one hand, by providing a set of material and social benefits, the membership in MEL enables
migrant believers to deal with their marginality and improve their condition in everyday life. On the
other hand, by turning the members from foreigners to missionaries in a heathen land, MEL
mission discourses constitute a counter-narrative of moral empowerment, reverting the stigmatizing labels of African migrants pronounced by the established residents.

Linda Van De Kamp, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam

**Luso-Pentecostal Urban Connections**

This paper examines the Luso-Pentecostal connections between cities in Southern Africa, Brazil and in Europe. The transnational urban networks Pentecostals create are not about any global religious flow but are part of particular cross-cultural infrastructures and histories. The cases I will discuss are all part of a religious Lusophone milieu heavily influenced by and also shaping the variety of Portuguese languages and cultures (Sarró and Blanes 2009). Based on my long-term ethnographic research – since 2005 – on transnational Pentecostal movements in Maputo and Amsterdam, I aim to show how specific Luso-Pentecostal concepts and practices play an important role in connecting urban followers across the globe. At the same time, the meaning and appropriation of these Pentecostal transnational connections differ in different cities. In Maputo, Luso-Pentecostal connections are crucial for urban Christians to spur innovations through new entrepreneurial initiatives and alternative family forms. In Amsterdam, the participation in Luso-Pentecostal performances adds to Dutch-Angolan Pentecostals’ self-perception as cosmopolitan, connected world citizens, transposing them from their supposed marginal place as (undocumented) migrants in the city to the center of the world. Yet, in both cities, the art of being a Luso-Pentecostal world citizen also discloses unresolved tensions of living and acting in divergent global, transnational and local spaces.

Ramon Sarró, University of Oxford, Oxford

**The City at the End of the Universe: Christianity, “Anti-Christianity” and Messianism in Northern Angola**

Abstract to follow

Natalia Zawiejska, Jagiellonian University, Cracow

**Transnational Connectivity of Angolan Pentecostal Churches**

This paper will draw attention to transnational dynamics and connectivity of two different Angolan churches: the Assembly of God of Maculusso and the Bom Deus Church. The analysis will concentrate on shifting patterns of functioning: adaptability and sociability in different national and urban contexts, this concerns also appropriation of Pentecostalism and lusophone cultural flow by analyzed churches that are established in different parts of the world. It will also focus on production and flow of meanings as identity and belonging, along the institutional religious networks. The paper will be based on fieldwork conducted in three cities Luanda, Lisbon and London, where analyzed churches set up their congregations.