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To generate and disseminate knowledge by conducting basic and applied research of social, economic and political significance to Uganda in particular and Africa in general, so as to influence policy, raise consciousness and improve quality of life.

**Religiosity, Politics and the Economy of Faith:
Interrogating the Nexus in Contemporary Africa**

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1. Introduction

The conference is another milestone in the twelve-year collaboration between the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calentta (CSSSC), International Development Studies, Roskilde University (Denmark) and Centre for Basic Research (CBR), Kampala under Danida funding through a programme called Enhancing Research Capacity (ENRECA).

Since its inauguration, the collaboration has registered tremendous achievements in the academic fraternity. Among them a significant number of Ugandan Researchers have benefited through graduate training. It has also provided enormous opportunities for other researchers outside the collaborating institutions but within the respective countries, to travel and attend conferences and/or workshops time and again.

Internally, the International Cultural Studies Workshops in Uganda have particularly been instrumental to upcoming scholars working on their PhD proposals. Interacting with senior scholars from different parts of the world does not always come easy. These workshops have provided platforms for learning, epistemic understandings, presentations of individual works and publishing as well as being sources for reading materials.

Furthermore, opportunities have been established in networking with researchers from India, Denmark, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Rwanda. Internally, it has enabled researchers and scholars to interact with politicians, policy makers, judges, administrators, practitioners, professionals, members of civil society, etc, and equally important, the collaboration and the linked activities have been influenced in the participants' exposure, out-looks, attitudes towards people from other countries and continents.

The workshop, jointly organized by CBR and Faculty of Social Sciences, Makerere University, attracted participants from Mukono University, Mountains of the Moon University Bugema, South Africa, in addition to the three collaborating Institutions. Also in attendance were a judge, politicians, academicians and scholars from all walks of life. The outcome was therefore nothing short of very stimulating debates.

Session 1

2. Opening Remarks

Chairperson: Prof. Edward Kirumira

He said he was happy to be in Uganda, and welcomed all participants. He commended and encouraged the twelve-year collaboration among the three institutions emphasizing its prospects and importance as a fora for intellectual discussions. He further noted the variety of topics which formed a strong basis for an enlightening workshop, observing that the theme is enriching because of its relevance to many events happening all over the world today.

2.1 Dr. Rajarsti Dasgupta, Representative of the Executive Director, CSSSC, India.

In addition to being happy to be back in Uganda, he too acknowledged the theme as very stimulating and extensive, calling it a theme of the decade. He commended and elaborated the collaboration for its contributions to the growth of research for the last twelve years. He encouraged the individual institutions to continue with the good and productive work.

2.2 Dr. Simon Rutabajuuka Executive Director, CBR.

He expressed happiness for hosting the workshop and joined in welcoming and thanking the participants for coming. He particularly thanked DANIDA for the dedicated support for the last twelve years of the collaboration. He acknowledged it as one of the most successful collaborations with extensive output and opportunity for sharing and contributing to knowledge. He commended the local close cooperation between CBR and Faculty of Social Sciences, in addition to the Faculty of Arts and the Law School. This, he said, should be encouraged further and intensified to promote research in Uganda, a basis which could be used to sustain the collaboration.

2.3 Dr. Ssali Ssimba Kayunga, Ag. Head of Department, Political Science, MUK.

He expressed gratitude for being one of the products of the collaboration through which he acquired his Doctorate. He thanked the three institutions for the support, acknowledging that his Department has immensely gained from the resultant output. He also informed the workshop of similar collaboration between Makerere and Dar-es-Salaam Universities, named Uongozi. He noted that such intellectual cooperation is very beneficial to masters and PhD students. He further said the theme of the workshop was exciting, more coherent and stimulating, challenging participants to investigate the ever emerging alternative forms of faith,

e.g. the candidate effigies during the recent Presidential elections in Uganda. He encouraged the foreign delegates to feel at home.

2.4 Prof. Edward Kirumira, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Makerere University

In his welcome speech, he lamented the rumored impending collapse of the collaboration allegedly due to funding, saying that such an intellectual organization should not be allowed to lose momentum but instead, efforts should be made to diversify and seek alternative funding. All indications, he noted, are that the current level of networking makes the cooperation viable. He called for a strong cooperation among local universities to be able to access funding.

Prof. Kirumira noted that cultural studies have recently become fundamental in the academia due to its focus on South-South and North-South studies. This, he said, has resultantly attracted big funders like Rockefeller Foundation, which has traditionally funded the field of science. However, cultural studies should be seen to be linked with other disciplines to enhance a multi-disciplinary output. There is enough human resource which has been built overtime which should be used to attract research. His department is considering organizing a cultural based research to benefit the many PhD students currently pursuing courses in related disciplines. He added that there are many international research opportunities which must be fully exploited.

He ended by thanking CBR for intellectual productivity and challenged them for more output if they are to remain outstanding, encouraging them to have advantage of the emerging era where universities are now recognizing humanities and social sciences. He presented the apologies of the Vice Chancellor before inviting the Guest of Honour, Justice Patrick Tabaro to officially open the workshop.

2.5 Justice Patrick Tabaro - Guest of Honour.

Representing His Excellency the Ambassador of India as Guest of Honour, Justice Tabaro thanked the organizers of the workshop, but was particularly glad to continue associating with the academic fraternity. He acknowledged that constructive ideas are usually generated through such intellectual interactions where issues are addressed scientifically and objectively without using emotions. He called for interdisciplinary cooperation because in essence, disciplines are not independent. He is for example aware that law largely depends on social sciences. He observed that this promotes harmony in society, adding that even religions are engaging each other to find where they have a commonality.

He finally thanked the collaborating institutions for encouraging such intellectual fora, calling upon the workshop to promote the culture of tolerance especially in religion related matters. He noted with appreciation the support of Denmark in almost all aspects of life. He officially opened the workshop.

3. Presentations

3.1 The Globalization of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity:

Dr. J.J. Barya

The paper traces the history and origin of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity which has its roots in Europe but mainly in America. This form of Christianity which emphasizes faith healing, ecstatic experiences like speaking in tongues, enthusiastic worshipping has its origin – Protestantism. It is driven by prosperity gospel (wealth) and is growing very rapidly year by year. Many factors like poverty and deprivation, equality before God, nature of entertainment, are attributes to the growth rate.

The paper addresses the effects on different categories of society like youth and women and why it appeals to them. Generally, the faith emphasizes evangelization as the solution to all human ills.

Reactions

Many questions raised and observations made examined the possible reasons why women seemed to get attracted most – is it based on their numbers being more than men; is it their emotions; are they making efforts to break away from their more involvement with traditional doctors or are they trying to find their space in society? They also looked at the political origin of the movement and their current involvement in politics; the accountability aspect in these churches, the hierarchy and how it emerges; the funding and why it seems to target Africa. It was observed that the movement seems to provide solutions to the contemporary breakdown in traditional support systems. Members called for a look at the broader aspects of the movement and as to whether it really promotes development, harmony, etc., and the efforts of the criticism of other religions.

3.2 Muslim representations of Unity and Difference in the African Discourse:

Dr. Abbas Kiyimba

The paper addresses the strong sense of unity among Muslims in the whole world despite some sharp disagreements. It emphasizes that this can be seen through the selected languages they use. It implies Islam as a major factor in world politics, and in consonance with this trend, African Muslims have ‘merely’ turned to Islam to resolve their social and political problems. The presentation ploughed through many events in Africa that have occurred as a result of Islamic beliefs and actions.

Many changes have occurred on the world scene that has promoted Islamic influence in world politics. They include: collapse of the Berlin Wall, Oslo talks, trail and sentencing of Lockerbie suspects, the disintegration of Somali society, among others.

Reactions

There was an effort to explore the development of a connection between religion and culture in the context of Islam and Christianity. That religion has ceased to be just a belief but also a tool for social, political and economic gains. The discussions observed the emergency of liberal Muslims who seem to be gaining ground, *vis-a-vis* the fundamentalists who are playing a big role in keeping Muslims world-wide together.

3.3 Religion and Social Culture: The Impact on the African Scene (Political, Security and Economic Perspective): *Idris Mohamud.*

The paper observes that one of the factors that hinder the spread of co-existence of cultures is the absence of mutual understanding, dialogue and interconnection amongst the communities. This has failed to make firm incursions on political, religious and cultural ground that constitutes unity in diversity, which has been exploited by selfish leadership and resultantly affected the African pride. All African tribal and ethnic conflicts have leaned toward disguised leaders other than ordinary masses. The presentation looks at science *vis-a-vis* religion in solving human dreams of freedom and justice. It also looked at the consequences of ethnic religious wars in Africa. It points at colonialism and personal mentality of African leaders as the root causes of these conflicts. It then explores the expected role of Africa and Africans in resolving them.

Reactions

The divergence in which we live and the coexistence between Christians and Moslems should be appreciated because religion offers a fundamental forum for cooperation. The paper though seemed to emphasize on religion as a solution to all human problems which raised disagreements. The argument however, is that religion and culture shape life and have great impact on the characteristics of personalities and societies in all aspects. Though another observation was that many wrong actions are disguised behind religion which is sometimes really innocent.

3.4 Colonialism and Religion: A study in African Literature: *Abdullahi Kadar Ayinde*

The presentation re-echoes the voices of re-known African writers on the topic. That Christianity and religion in general brought about social forces that swept away the traditional norms, values and religions, in addition to cultural disruptions. It delivers on the legacy of imperialism where colonial annexation of vast African territories affected culture and economy. It does also recognize the positive aspects as religion seems to have facilitated integration into the global economy. It does acknowledge trust and faith in institutions/organizations in delivering of services to

the common man, and are influential in conflict resolutions and peace making. Religious leaders through preaching marital fidelity have contributed to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The paper concludes that whereas colonialism opened the black continent to new ideas, new values and new opportunities, the advent of modern religion created a dislocation of African value system.

The discussion, however, observed that the paper emphasizes the negative side of the topic for all the authors quoted were advocates of anti-colonial nationalism. That whereas it highlights very important effects of colonialism and religion, it should not down-play the fact that the world is now a global village because of the effects of this adventure.

Reactions

It was noted that in order to understand and internalize African culture properly, it should be looked at beyond colonialism, because Africa is blessed with a variety of languages and characteristics. Different African societies received colonialism and religion differently. A significant number of Africans still go to shrines because they were not ready for modern religion since it was just imposed on them. They never fully accepted it-some societies physically resisted it. It therefore becomes debatable to argue that religion caused disruptions to Africans socially, economically, culturally and politically.

3.5 Religiosity of the Communist Subject in India: *Rajarshi Dasgupta*

The paper puts it explicitly clear that religiosity as a belief and practice is alien to communists, not only in India but the world over. They believe in liberal and secular values as opposed to religious identities. The presentation goes on to look at different experiences, concepts, the history of communism and its role in politics. It also introduces the concept of “becoming declassed” as a product of modern radical politics which address classification in society.

Reactions

Comments from the participants rotated around the complex relationship between communism and religion. When a communist reverts to religion, does he denounce communism? What point does communism break off from religion? Is it possible for one to be a communist and a Hindu at the same time? Communists in India support liberal ideas but how do the two relate? Is it possible for people to have a religion without God? These are some of the questions that directed the debates. It was observed that to make such a presentation more solid, some renowned relevant intellectuals needed to be mentioned. The concept of declassing was found to be not well articulated.

3.6 Religion and Politics: The Impact on Human Intellectual Thought:

Edris Othman

Right from the onset, the paper observes that man's life is dependent on two important factors - religion and politics. This is regardless of whether it is at individual or community level, irrespective of race, colour or tribe. The concept of religion and politics right from their development, evolution, their role in the history of civilization and culture are well articulated. It attempts to argue how the development and understanding of the two factors have impacted lives amongst continents. This has also resulted in rapid scientific development and ideological intellectualism. On the contrary, it is also responsible for religious extremism across the world. In addition to quoting various definitions of religion, it looks at its general historical perception and outlines the different versions. The aspect of how religion and politics got inter-wired in the development of many societies is well argued.

Reactions

The discussant observed that the presentation needed to look at other disciplines too, like science, in the development of mankind other than through religion alone. Regardless of many arguments advanced on the origin of mankind, he argued that humanity started through the black race. Jews and Arabs trace their ancestry from Africa. He however warns that Islam tends to disrespect these findings which tend to promote religious antagonism.

The participants however largely agreed that indeed human race originates from Africa. Many similarities in language were drawn between Africa on one hand and India and Japan on the other. It was however observed that the misinterpretation of the word "race" has caused devastating effects between communities. The Rwanda scenario and the Israelites vs Palestine were pointed out.

3.7 The role of the media in the Religious Experiences of students in Makerere

University: D.r Sr. Dominic Dipio

The paper illustrates how the co-existence between the media and religion in contemporary culture cultivates a sense of belonging especially how the former is used to promote the latter. The media has greatly influenced the art of preaching, shaping the content, focus and emphasis of religious message. The religious character of Makerere University is largely determined by the idealistic zealous and independent nature of the students, especially when it comes to the decision to move away from the traditional institutional denominations of Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. However, the aggressive nature of the Pentecostal campaign through the media is the biggest factor. Many are attracted to the music, the social and entertainment aspects of these break-away groups.

The media has literary liberalized religion. The dramatic crusades of the Pentecostal churches have breathed a new life to the traditional churches who have also stepped up activities in their respective churches. The paper illustrates very well

how the media has played a central role in energizing activities of various churches. However, it also reveals that it does not necessarily influence defection to another denomination, but plays a key role in helping students sustain and develop their faiths, more personal decisions and take responsibility for their religious growth.

Reactions

The discussant observed that Africans were largely influenced by materialism to accept modern religion. The paper successfully relates culture, religion and the media. He noted the liberalization of the air waves that subsequently led to the liberalization of religion. The media empowers students to listen to different messages to be able to make independent decisions.

Participants noted that the media offered a much desired wake-up call to the traditional churches which had lost vigour. The vibrancy of Pentecostal churches may not be the solution to the moral question of the largely young University population but it has promoted religious faith among many.

3.8 The Christian Rights Discourse on Gender and the Bible: *Dr. Josephine Alikire*

The fundamental question centered on gender and the bible, attempting to legitimize gender equality along Christian lives. Masculine domination is still rampant but the spirit of complementation between the sexes should be promoted. The impact of women advancement in churches is addressed and feminine researchers are called upon to investigate further why the trend should not change. The aspect of equalitarianism is discussed whereby despite positive developments between men and women in responsibility, the issue of rights remains controversial. Though in America it is being addressed through Pentecostalism, in Africa there is no significant development.

Reactions

What is the difference between Christian fundamentalism and evangelical Christianity? What is the relevance of the paper in the African setting? Should pastors be promoted, and why? How is the aspect of feminism presented in the bible?