

COURSE CODE T3P2 (M) 2010

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

B.A. /B.ED III/IDE

MAIN EXAMINATION PAPER 2010

TITLE OF PAPER: AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

COURSE TITLE: T3P2

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: (1) ANSWER ANY FOUR (4) QUESTIONS  
(2) ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS

TOTAL MARKS:100

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN  
GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR

1. "[African] Religion is the strongest element in the the traditional background and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned" (J.S. Mbiti). Write a critique of the above statement making particular references to the role of indigenous African religion in Swazi society.

2. "Taking Africa as a whole, there are in reality five component elements that go in to the making of African traditional religion" (E.B. Idowu). Discuss Idowu's assertion drawing on specific case studies of any living traditional religions of Southern Africa.

3. Write a critique of John Mbiti's analysis of the traditional African concept of time and explain how, if any, his views shed some light on the key beliefs, practices, and moral teachings of African traditional religions.

4. "According to a general African mode of thought.. serious illness constitutes primarily an indication that the patient has been called to become a healer; the ancestors manifest themselves - through illness - not in order to destroy their descendent but to let him or her, via specific ritual steps, partake of their strength through incarnation" (Wim van Binsbergen). Explain this observation in the context of the call and initiation of a Swazi Sangoma.

5. Discuss the key prescriptive teachings on sexuality and gender roles that are affirmed, fostered and reinforced by indigenous Swazi marriage customs and ceremonies. To what extent, if any, do these traditions protect and promote the rights and freedoms of women as provided for in **The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland**? Give concrete examples to illustrate your views.

6. Critically examine the role of divine kingship in contemporary African society.

7. "It is not extreme to suggest that in Africa, the spread of AIDS among women and children is greatly enhanced by the cultural and economic powerlessness of women" (T. S. Maluleke). Do you agree with the writer? Discuss this issue drawing pertinent examples from current indigenous beliefs and practices.

8. "Most Swazi see the relationship between the Christian God and the ancestors as a very simple one. They pray to both" (M. Russell). Critically examine this claim in the context of interfaith relations between Christianity and indigenous African religions in Swaziland.