

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
&
INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY & RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER, MAY 2010

TITLE OF PAPER : RELIGION AND IDEOLOGY
IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA
COURSE CODE : T4P8/IDE T4P8
DURATION : 3 HOURS

THE PAPER IS DIVIED INTO **TWO SECTIONS**

INSTRUCTIONS : 1. Answer four questions in all.
2. Answer two questions from each Section.
3. Write in clear, grammatically correct sentences.

All questions are worth 25 marks.

**DOT OPEN THIS PAPER UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR GRANTS
YOU PERMISSION TO DO SO**

May 2010 (M) T4P8/ IDE T4P8 Religion and Ideology in Contemporary Africa

SECTION ONE

Question 1

Give a general description of the historical context within which the concept of "Afro-pessimism" emerged in reference to postcolonial African realities.

Question 2

Write a reading reaction on the following article.

What has Africa done to organised religion to deserve this...

***Al-qaeda is not the only threat to our future freedom**

By Patrick K. Johnsson

"The recent declaration made by the Roman Catholic Pope on the use of condoms while on his way to Africa has caused widespread hue and cry against a church that faithfully supports outmoded principles, no matter how harsh the consequences may be. But the Catholic Church is not the only culprit. At a time when Africa is plagued by social injustices, health disasters and governance issues, do we really need religious leaders crusading for ideological prescriptions that could spell enormous setbacks to health and human rights achievements? The Nigerian Anglican Archbishop has also prayed for the brutalisation of other humans to promote his ideology in a backdrop of Islamist extremism." -Patrick K. Johnsson

Since the 5th century (Pope Gelasius I, 492 to 496), Africa has not seen any African elected into the prominent papal office as pope. Africa, - throughout its brutal slave history, condoned by a church that allowed the establishment of incomprehensible symbolisms like building churches atop slave dungeons as well as owning slaves whom they considered soulless, - has much too often bitten the dust to the gloatful anticipation of men who kill in God's name. Recent examples are the Nigerian Anglican Archbishop's loud call for a statutory brutalization other human beings (homosexuals) alongside the Pope's campaign against the use of life saving condoms [1], bring the question of love and hate to the fore. Is the church's universal message of love embedded in hypocrisy? Why would they rather people die or be tortured to promote their message. Is this a return to the dispensation of crusades where religious groups would leave no stone unturned to promote their ideologies no matter how much distress it may cause humanity? What has become of the religions of love and wisdom?

The world has come a long way since the golden era of absolute rule, during which a king's vision of what was right could spell abysmal doom for anyone who did not fit into his defined margins. But times have changed and the quest for civilisation and human rights has paved the way for human development. Black people do not occupy the statutory ranks of animals anymore. Women have joined the rank and file of political leadership. Jews can freely practice their religion. Moslems can live and worship in what was originally considered as Christian nations. The Anglican Church has apologised for

branding its African slaves like animals (Bury the Chains) whilst a part of it has advocated for an end to institutionalised homophobia.

So one would ask why the Catholic Pope would advice millions of Africans with little or no Reproductive Health Education at all to abandon condom use? Could the answer lie in the havoc the Thabo Mbeki denial of HIV/AIDS wrecked on whole populations in the Southern African region? Are his stands on condoms, which have been proven to be an indisputably effective tool against the spread of HIV, meant to further annihilate the African populations? Considering the fact that 67% - of the world's 32.9 million people with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa? As rightly put by the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, "More people (...) died of Aids in the past year (1999-2000, ndr) in Africa than in all the wars on the continent". Could this mean that anti condom campaigns are, in effect, worse than pro-war advocacy? One would think that the Catholic Church has drawn enough lessons from its hard-line advocacies of the past which saw the near annihilation of Indian populations, its involvement in African slavery while insisting that Africans had no soul, its inaction during the holocaust...

Digging the dagger deeper, Franco Moretti, director of a periodical on Christian missions in Africa, was quoted by the Financial Times this month as saying that the Pope outlines "ideals" but "the principles have to be adapted to context! With a higher educational level and freedom from outmoded traditional practices, Europeans, to a large extent, have understood the benefits of informing the youth and less sexually experienced persons on protective measures rather than abstinence. Because whatever the case, people will have sex and the better they are equipped, for surprises that could affect their lives as well as others, the better. In fact, the February 14, 2009, edition of the economist pointed out that, "a research from the University of Washington suggests that teens who receive comprehensive sex education have a 50% lower risk (...) than those enrolled in abstinence-only courses. According to a health professional at the Global Fund in Geneva, "abstinence is not a prevention tool per se as it is only a partial or total suppression of sexual relations. Besides, in tradition based societies, like Africa, where men are, usually, to be obeyed and not expected to be accountable to their wives, suggesting faithfulness as an alternative to condom use is condemning millions of women to death, especially in countries where getting access to treatments can be very harsh". Mr. Moretti might want to pay a visit to an African village to find out how people would intellectualise and "adapt" the anti-condom position "to context". Jon O'Brien, President of Catholics for Choice, is quoted as saying; "This is a myopic view of sexuality and a nonsense-based approach to public health (...) We know that for many people, abstinence does not work. In order to be free from HIV we have got to give people in developing countries the choices that we enjoy in the North."

Considered among the most knowledgeable men since time immemorial, the Catholic priesthood certainly has access to the numerous Western research analysis that prove that condom use has curtailed the spread of HIV/AIDS, especially in Europe.

As for the Nigerian Anglican Archbishop, Peter Akinola, it only takes a look at his appeal made at the Nigerian Senate to see through him: a robe wearing Bishop asking for fellow

human beings to be mercilessly brutalised, without remorse. Gone are the days when the display of tolerance and love to further God's message was the order of the day. The bible's golden rule of love thy neighbour as thyself has become hate thy neighbour as thou 'despiseth' no other. Priests are gallivanting the face of the earth, advocating for mass deaths and torture while we stand on the sidelines and watch... . If only Africans would recognise organised religion's incessant battle to crush their beliefs to the benefit of a religious culture that was carefully put together in Rome, the same culture that politically promoted sexual and racial intolerance while making Africans believe that the homosexuality was imported whilst Christianity is African. If only we had the slightest clue of the ongoing process of the redefinition of our hard earned civilisation and freedom. Al-Qaeda is not the only threat to our future freedom.

According to journalists present, he originally said the Aids problem "cannot be overcome with the distribution of condoms which, on the contrary, increase the problem". But in the Vatican's version, his words became: "The scourge cannot be resolved with the distribution of prophylactics; on the contrary, the risk is of increasing the problem."

Question 3

Explain the inadequacies which have been observed by several critics of the Marxian definition of ideology.

Question 4

Analyse Kwame Nkrumah's political motto, "Seek ye first the political kingdom" and assess his strategies for implementing it during his presidency.

Question 5

Interpret the political actions of Mwalimu Nyerere as noted underneath. In your interpretation, highlight their significance and benefit to the Tanzanian nation.

In 1962 the late President Julius Nyerere initiated drafting and subsequent enactment of a law that compelled missionary schools to admit all students of all denominations and faiths in the same way he had formulated the articles on religion for inclusion in the constitution.

Question 6

As pointed out in our discussion of the Ethiopian case in this course, the religious plurality of Ethiopia has always been marked by relative peaceful co-existence amongst members of the various religious traditions in that country (Traditional Religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Ras-Tafari). Only in May 2007 did this peace begin to fray somewhat when a clash between Muslims and Christians in the city of Des led to the death of about 19 people. This incident was quickly addressed jointly by the mayor and leaders from the Muslim and Christian communities who resolved that they would not let any differences in religious identity divide them. Two years later in 2009, this resolution

was followed by a symbolic proclamation of April 5th in Ethiopia as the Golden Rule Day.

Read about the Golden Rule Day below and answer the question that follows.

Ethiopia: Golden Rule Day Proclaimed in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa — On the occasion of the celebration of the United Nations International Day of Peace and International Year of Reconciliation, Ethiopian religious groups proclaimed April 5th the Day of Golden Rule.

It is in answering to the call of the Interfaith Peace-building Initiative (IPI) that the Religious Leaders of Ethiopia proclaim April 5th as the Golden Rule Day. They also proclaimed September 21 as International Day of Peace under the coordination of Interfaith Peace-building Initiative to express their commitment to peace, reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. They asserted that the quest for peace, justice, reconciliation, conflict resolution, and the need to overcome violence, binds religions, governments and the United Nations together. Their partnership is appropriate since they are major stakeholders in the creation of a better world for all.

'The Golden Rule' "treat others the way you want to be treated" is a pathway to peace, said Ambassador Mussie Hailu, Board Chairman of Interfaith Peace-building Initiative and Representative of United Religions Initiative to the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa.

This has been affirmed in many religions, traditions, indigenous cultures and secular philosophies as a fundamental principle of life and the foundation upon which the global ethic is founded. The message of the Golden Rule is simple, universal and powerful and is the most prevalent moral principle in human history, the Ambassador said, and went on to add, if humankind truly wants to see a culture of peace and justice prevail on Earth, it is high time the Golden Rule was promoted throughout the world as it is a fundamental principle that addresses critical issues such as democracy, human rights, respect for one another, gender equity, social development, interfaith harmony, constructive dialogue among nations, conflict prevention and amicable human relationships.

Ambassador Mussie further said "It is with this in mind that in 2007 IPI declared April 5 as 'Golden Rule Day' and called upon all citizens of the world, religious leaders Mayors, Youth and Women Associations, Civil Societies and member States of the United Nations, African Union, European Union and the League of Arab Nations to join Interfaith Peace-building Initiative in proclaiming the Golden Rule Day and to live accordingly to make this world a better place for all the coming generations." It is to be recalled that last year Interfaith Peace-building Initiative brought the different religions in Ethiopia together and established National Interfaith Peace Council in the country to emphasize their efforts in promoting a culture of peace, the Golden Rule, to build more trust, co-existence and interfaith cooperation at national level.

The religious institutions that came together to proclaim the Day include the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, Ethiopian Catholic Church, Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus, Evangelical Church Fellowship of Ethiopia and The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Ethiopia.

Interfaith is a member of United Religions Initiative, an international interfaith peace organization which is working for global peace and cooperation and has Consultative Status at the United Nations. It is a registered peace organization working to promote interfaith cooperation, a culture of peace, harmony, constructive dialogue and the Golden Rule, the Ambassador said.

Q. Taken together - the resolution by Muslims and Christians in Des to live above their religious differences and the proclamation of the Golden Rule Day – these initiatives reflect something about the religious situation in Ethiopia. Identify and discuss some important issues that the two initiatives tell us about regarding Ethiopia’s religious situation.

SECTION TWO

Question 7

Analyse former President Frederick Chiluba’s declaration of Zambia a Christian nation stating your own view of this. In your analysis, point out any merits and/or demerits of Chiluba’s political action.

Question 8

The involvement of the Roman Catholic Christian community in the Rwandan genocide has been well documented. What is your opinion on this matter and what do you think are its implications for the study of religion in Africa?

Question 9

“...efforts to promote civil and democratic rights and institutions in Nigeria are facing significant challenges and generating social and political conflict. Amongst the numerous social, political and economic crises undermining Nigeria’s nascent democracy, a key issue has been the recent implementation of the Sharia Criminal Penal Code in northern Nigeria” (Akiyode-Afolabi 2009).

Discuss the reasons why the introduction of Sharia law in Nigeria’s 12 states in the north is causing frustration, conflict and generally threatens the unity of the nation.

Question 10

Discuss the combination of causes of the civil as outlined in the findings of the study by Michelle Domke titled *Civil War in the Sudan: Resources or Religion?*

Question 11

Conduct a brief analysis of the South African Policy on Religious Education. Would you recommend a similar policy for Swaziland? Support your answer.

Question 12

The Draft Constitution of Swaziland contained a clause which provided the “Christianity shall be the official religion of the country”. After much public debate and the parliamentary process of adoption of the Constitution which commenced in 2005, this clause was eventually dropped. In your opinion, was this a good decision or not? Explain your answer.
