

Editorial

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In his article titled ‘J.T. van der Kemp’s Link to the British Anti-slavery Network and his Civil Rights Activism on Behalf of the Khoi (1801 – 1803)’ Johannes A. Smit firstly trace Van der Kemp’s link to the British anti-slavery network. Secondly, and following his exposition of Van der Kemp’s anti-slavery advocacy (cf. Smit 2016), he argues that the position and treatment of the Khoi should be seen as similar to that of slaves during the first half of the eighteenth century at the Cape. This provides credence to Van der Kemp’s (and Philip’s) vehement criticism of both government and frontier settler farmers for their treatment of the Khoi. Finally, he provides a link of Van der Kemp’s civil rights activism, to that of the British anti-slave trade network and its discourse on civil rights in Britain at the time. (In this article he does not deal with the significance of Van der Kemp’s post-conversionist views and publications, vis-à-vis his ‘enlightenment’ views and scholarship dating from the pre- and post-deist phases of his life.)

In their ‘Missionary Colonial Mentality and the Expansion of Christianity in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1800 to 1900’, Fidelis Nkomazana Senzokuhle Doreen Setume firstly argues that historical evidence shows that Batswana possessed rich cultural and religious traditions that contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity in Bechuanaland Protectorate (the present Botswana). The Western missionaries chose to reject or marginalize these traditions, which were based on the concept of the Supreme Being from time immemorial. The underlying patterns of these cultural and religious traditions and systems of the Batswana provided a firm foundation upon which Christianity was conceived, understood and received. However, some missionaries gave the impression that no such religious traditions and

heritage existed prior to their arrival on the African continent. This article further argues that the Batswana, had an absolute belief in a Supreme Being, they referred to as *Modimo* and also points out that the cultural context, which the missionaries rejected, provided important conditions that led to the rapid growth of Christianity among the Batswana. Furthermore, the paper demonstrates that through their missionary methods that saw western education, commerce and trade as an important factor of their mission work, the missionaries tried to impose their western cultural values on the Batswana. Through these methods they adopted a western superiority complex, which the Batswana challenged and rejected as unacceptable and undermining their integrity. It must be pointed that through their pre-conceived ideas and desire to see Christianity dominating the Batswana, they supported foreign rule and played a major role in that process.

Joram Tarusarira's 'An Emergent Consciousness of the Role of Christianity on Zimbabwe's Political Field: A Case of Non-doctrinal Religio-political Actors' shows that a distinct phenomenon of religio-political actors that emerged in Zimbabwe as a result of the socio-economic and political crises since 2000, alleged co-option and acquiescence of the mainline churches and the influence of globalisation. This, however, has received no more than fleeting attention in the academic discourse of religion in Zimbabwe's political domain. Much of the available literature and research on religion and politics in Zimbabwe concentrates on the mainline church bodies and denominational histories, such as the Roman Catholic Church, Zimbabwe Council of Churches, or Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa. Non-doctrinal religio-political individuals and groups have been treated either as a marginal phenomenon or lumped together with confessional or 'conversionist' churches under the rubric of religious actors. This consequently obscures the uniqueness of emergent religio-political organizations that have assumed a civil society character in pursuit of broader political objectives such as democratization, without seeking political office. Drawing from fieldwork on three religio-political organizations in Zimbabwe namely the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance, Churches in Manicaland and Grace to Heal, this article argues that Zimbabwe is witnessing a new consciousness of the role of Christianity on the political field. Thus we require a nuanced analysis of religious formations within prevailing discourses on democrati-zation, civil society, and religious freedom.

Although best known for his Christmas opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (which is often asserted to be the most frequently performed music drama of the twentieth century), Gian-Carlo Menotti composed other operas in which he explored the confrontation between religious faith and practice on the one hand and scepticism on the other. In his ‘Stigmatizing Faith? Differing Modes of Sanctification in Gian-Carlo Menotti’s *The Saint of Bleeker Street*’ Frederick Hale focuses his research on the *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (1954), and especially the duality that is manifested in a case of a girl believed by other Catholics to have received the stigmata, while her brother rejects this and attributes the phenomenon to illness. He argues in the article that this work, which received numerous awards after its introduction in New York and within months was being performed internationally, can be interpreted more deeply as an exploration of the evergreen theme of popular religion confronting honest doubt in an evolving social and religious environment. It is also demonstrated that apart from the stigmata the purported “saint” ministered to other Italian-Americans in conventional, non-thaumaturgic ways.

Lovemore Togarasei, Sana Mmolai and Obed Kealotswe’s ‘‘Quinine’, ‘Ditaola’ and the ‘Bible’: Investigating Batswana Health Seeking Practices’ presents some findings from a three year field study conducted to find out more about Batswana health seeking practices. The study triangulated both qualitative and quantitative methods in selected districts of Botswana. Traditional healers, faith healers, modern health practitioners and administrators and users of the different health services participated in the study. The study established that the majority of Batswana first seek modern medical services when they are ill. Be that as it may, the study also established that despite widespread provision of modern/Western/allopathic health services in Botswana, traditional and spiritual/faith health services still attract Batswana. Understanding health holistically, Batswana continue to make use of all systems of health provision. In light of this, the article therefore calls for strong collaboration of the different systems of health within the country.

Lindiwe Mkasi and Auwais Rafudeen’s ‘Debating Virginity-testing Cultural Practices in South Africa: A Taylorian Reflection’ points to the fact that in January 2016, a perennial row over virginity testing was renewed, pitting traditional adherents of Zulu cosmology and cultural practices against human rights advocates. The paper does not position itself within this debate.

Rather, it adopts a meta-perspective in order to understand why the debate arose in the first instance. Using Charles Taylor as a guide, it argues that the pre-modern porous self in the West 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. The paper 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.

In their ‘Reflecting on a Decade of Religion Studies Implementation in the FET Phase: Case Study of Gauteng, South Africa. Johannes A. Smit and Denzil Chetty that *The National Policy on Religion Education* (2003) provided the framework in which the objectives of a multi-religion education found its expression in Life Orientation (Grades R-12) and more fully in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase with Religion Studies as a subject for Grades 10-12. Through this curriculum transformation, the State aimed to conscientize students to the religious diversity and topical issues within the country, and thereby contribute to the transformation of civil society leading to the materialization of ideal citizens within a democratic society. Drawing on a cross-sectional survey using questionnaires as a data collection method, this paper analyses the responses of 19 participants ($n = 19$), comprising Religion Studies educators and Subject Advisors in Gauteng Province. The paper concludes with the following findings: (1) a notable lack of qualifications and experience; (2) a gap in conceptual clarity of the subject; (3) a lack of adequate content and teaching materials; (4) the absence of critical pedagogical, assessment and moderation skills; (5) need for career advocacy; (6) need for national support; and (7) the need for professional development.

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