

## Call for Papers (CFP): New Histories of Southern African Christianity/ Newtown Mobility Grant Funded Project

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As part of a research grant on New Histories of Christianity in Southern Africa, funded through a Newton Mobility Grant/ British Academy, we invite you to submit abstracts/ papers for the following two day workshop on 6-7 April 2017.

Building on a first workshop held in Cambridge, UK in September, 2016, this Johannesburg-based workshop seeks to break new ground in the historical study of Christianity in Southern Africa by proposing an ambitious range of innovative research questions. We welcome contributions dealing with any aspect of Christian history in Southern Africa in any period, including the present-day. The workshop will be held at the University of Johannesburg on Thursday 6 April and Friday 7 April 2017. The workshop is free of charge, though you will need to cover your own travel costs. There are a limited number of bursaries for postgraduate students to attend. Please apply directly to the conference organisers if you would like financial assistance.

Format of the workshop: Our aim is to promote both research and further debate, so we will follow a workshop format which allows discussion across the two days. Please note that graduate students are particularly welcome. One of the workshop sessions will deal with forums and suggestions for graduation students aspiring to publish their work.

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Much historical scholarship on Christianity in Southern Africa is still shaped by a typology from the 40s, when Lutheran scholar Bengt Sundkler published *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (1948). Sundkler, whose model gained pan-African traction, argued that Christianity in South Africa was divided in two categories: (i) those expressions of faith contiguous with a Western tradition and (ii) 'independent' churches exemplifying a more African Christianity. Examples of the former included Methodists, Anglicans, and Catholics. The second 'African' group was identified by Sundkler as the faith-healing Zionist churches of South Africa, and the category was broadened by later scholars to include Nigerian Aladura churches and Kenyan Spirit churches. The rapidly emerging Pentecostal churches now form a third category, said to exemplify a more global, transnational consciousness than either the 'Western' or 'African' churches.

Our key objective in holding this workshop is to nuance this typology through new historical research, showing that its continued use risks obscuring the lived reality of Christian practice in Southern Africa. In its place, we seek to inaugurate a bottom-up, less theoretically-loaded approach. We welcome contributions from historians, religious studies scholars, theologians, anthropologists, missiologists and scholars from other disciplines that revisit the Western versus indigenized distinction in the history of Christianity in Southern Africa as well as critically explore the emergence of these categories in the historiography of the topic. While

much recent scholarship focuses on the newer category of supposedly globalized Pentecostalism, we also seek contributions that continue to focus on the still salient (in numerical terms and broader influence) older Christian denominations, many with transnational scope of their own. We are also open to approaches that emphasize believers' fluid movement between Pentecostal and other Christian organizations, a phenomenon largely unrecognized in contemporary studies. Finally, our workshop will seek to challenge the widely accepted chronology of church development in Southern Africa, which clings to the above-mentioned typology by suggesting that Pentecostal churches chronologically succeeded indigenous churches, which themselves succeeded Western mission churches. In sidestepping this linear narrative, we seek contributions that attend to complex, overlapping chronologies, and to the persistence of older forms of religious life in the present-day, as well as the foreshadowing of 'new' Pentecostal denominations in earlier periods.

We particularly welcome contributions related to the following set of questions, but welcome papers outside of this remit as well:

- How can we push beyond stale dichotomies of 'Western' vs. 'African' Christianity, as well as complicate the distinction between 'local' vs. 'global' Christianity?
- What role did Christian denominations play in the apartheid state's creation of ethnic homelands in the 50s-60s?
- How did a range of churches – not only Western mission denominations as commonly thought – supply adherents with practical benefits, including medical provision?
- How did South African churches straddle urban and rural existences?
- How did churches (and Christians) insert themselves into transnational networks, both within the regional Southern African migrant labour economy and also across the Atlantic to the USA?
- What roles have women religious leaders performed in the history of Southern Africa. How does a focus on women as leaders nuance scholarly typologies which had typically focused on male-led institutions?