



# UJAMAA NEWS

## UJAMAA CENTRE

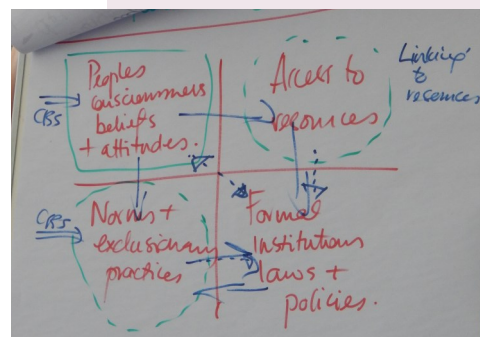


### A society in which religion enables a just and democratic life for all.

As last year, we started the year with a strategic planning in Salt Rock. First of all, it is a meeting to catch up with one another, where are we in our lives and what is our hope for this year. We discussed our work, listening to the representatives of the different 'theologies'. We want to take the outcomes and recommendations of last years evaluation report serious. With the help of Claire Kerry from the Msunduzi Evaluation Consortium we discussed our Theory of Change and juggled with our vision. It has to be one sentence, speaking for itself that one can say out loud in the middle of the night right after waking up. We came up with: "a society in which religion enables a just and democratic life for all." This sentence is a work in progress and we will keep on re-thinking how to describe the essence of our work at the Ujamaa Centre.

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Ujamaa Centre, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics

Postal address: Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

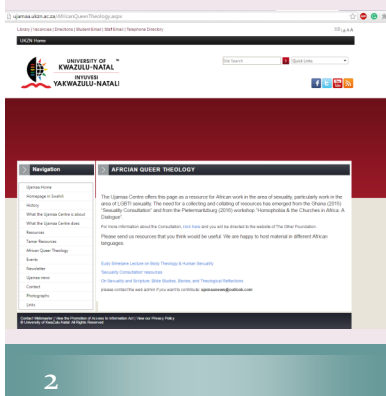
Telephone: +27 (0)33 260 6294 Email: west@ukzn.ac.za Website: ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za



Parents of Eudy Simelane

## New on the website

We do our best to keep the website updated, this includes new features as the subpage for 'African Queer Theology', The Ujamaa Centre offers this page as a resource for African work in the area of sexuality, particularly work in the area of LGBTI sexuality. The need for a collecting and collating of resources has emerged from the Ghana (2015) "Sexuality Consultation" and from the Pietermaritzburg (2016) workshop "Homophobia & the Churches in Africa: A Dialogue".



# A Healing Moment: The Inaugural Eudy Simelane Memorial Lecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

By Mote Magomba "I went to bed on Thursday and realized that my daughter lives within many of us and is resting peacefully. This gave me peace in my heart" said Mally Simelane, mother of Eudy Simelane, after the inaugural lecture that took place on 7th April 2016, at the Colin Webb Hall, in honour of Eudy Simelane. She is a soccer player for the South African national women's team, Banyana Banyana, abducted, raped and murdered because of her sexual orientation, found dead on 28th April 2008 in an open field in KwaThema, Springs, near Johannesburg. The presence, dignity and courage of Mally, Khotso Simelane, the father of Eudy, and her brother Bafana was an inspiration for all and a touching reminder that homophobia has real and painful consequences.

The Eudy Simelane lecture was organized by the Ujamaa Centre in partnership with The Other Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the Arcus Foundation, the Gay and Lesbian Network of Pietermaritzburg, and the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council. This memorial lecture was delivered by Justice Edwin Cameron, an eminent human rights lawyer and Constitutional Court judge, as well as an LGBTI and HIV activist. He emphasized the fact that though generally homosexuals are increasingly being accepted in South Africa, lesbians are still more vulnerable and face difficulties in daily lives despite progressive Constitutional provisions for human rights.

Also, Steve Letsike, a member of the South African National Task Team on LGBTI Hate Crimes, a friend of Eudy Simelane and a gender, sexuality, and HIV activist, gave a poignant address about black lesbian realities. In a welcoming note, Prof Cheryl Potgieter, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, posed a question: 'why would anyone want to be a member of a church in the light of churches' homophobic practices?' The same question has been heard from most LGBTI and allies who have become victims of homophobia, rejection and violence, and have been forced to leave churches. In the convening on Homophobia and Churches in Africa (April 7-8), of which this lecture was a part, it was clearly pointed out that since most Africans are people of faith, the question might as well be asked: how could LGBTI people reclaim and assert their space in the Church? This first Eudy Simelane lecture brought together LGBTI community and religious leaders, and provided additional spaces for dialogue within the intersections of religion and sexuality. Eudy Simelane Lecture has, and will continue to be, a catalyst for change.

For more outcomes of the convening, please visit:  
<http://theotherfoundation.org/htcia/>







## DOCUMENTARY ABOUT EUDY SIMELANE

With the permission and support of the Simelane family, the Eudy Simelane Lecture has been inaugurated by the Ujamaa Centre as a forum to engage with the religious community about sexuality. The Ujamaa Centre stands in solidarity with the LGBTI community, working from their experiences of religion in order resist forms of religion that bring discrimination and death and to nurture forms of religion that bring redemption and life. The Ujamaa Centre recognizes that in South African communities religious change is central to social change. Those who raped and murdered Eudy Simelane would have justified their criminal actions on religio-cultural grounds. The Ujamaa Centre contests these religio-cultural grounds, collaborating with the LGBTI community, faith-based organizations, and civil society so that religion becomes a redemptive and life-giving, not death-dealing, resource.

We are thankful for the support of The Other Foundation, with their contribution we were able to make a documentary about Eudy Simelane, working closely with the Simelane family. The video was shown at the beginning of the lecture. You can find the documentary on YouTube: 'Ujamaa's Inaugural Eudy Simelane lecture' made by Doti productions.



## Word of our director

By **Gerald West** The Ujamaa Centre believes that social change requires religious change. We often say that 'religion is a site of struggle', that 'the Bible is a site of struggle', that 'the church is a site of struggle'. What we mean when we say such things is that religion can bring life and religion can bring death; in the words of a Latin American theologian, we live in a world in which there is a struggle between the God of life and the idols of death. The Ujamaa Centre has chosen to stand with the God of life against the idols of death.

Those who raped and murdered Eudy Simelane would have justified or at least rationalised their actions on the basis of their culture and religion. They would have claimed to be Christian. The Ujamaa Centre believes that we cannot neglect the religious dimension of life if we are to bring transformation to our world. Each of the reports in this issue of Ujamaa News speaks about religious change. This is our work.



## Public Theology workshop

**By Rogers Ndawula** What is the role of the Church in public life? – This was the key question dealt with by Prof. Kumalo and Mr. Sibonelo Zuma during the Public Theology workshop that took place on 28th – 29th April 2016 at African Enterprise Christian Conference centre.

The objectivity of this workshop was to try to build prophetic theological capacity among Church leaders. In trying to achieve the above, the two facilitators laboured and spent time unpacking the two topics, i.e. “Ethics of leadership and moral responsibility in the electoral process from a theological perspective”, and this was talked by Prof. Kumalo. The second topic was “Voter education training”, which was talked by Mr. Sibonelo Zuma.

First of all, the primary focus public theology is mainly to assist African communities to critically analyse the role which the church is playing in the development of democracy and good governance, and in public life at large.

The majority of the delegates in this workshop were pastors or clergy. Church leaders are the most targeted group for this programmed simply because the Church is considered as a tool in the hand of God to turn a secular culture back to God, therefore the Church must exercise vocal and active support for candidates, issues and laws which will put the government and culture in line with the biblical values.

Drawing from the evaluations on this particular workshop, some of the participants came with a vague understanding of their position as church leaders in politics. However by the time the workshop came to an end, they had a clear understanding of their position in the public domain.

In summary, in his address to the Church leaders participating in this workshop, Prof. Kumalo high-



*Photos taken during the Public*

lighted the aspect of public theology as the discipline that concerns itself with the addressing of practical questions often in the secular language of human rights, justice and peace. He continued to say that public theology provides resources for people to make connections between their faith and the practical issues facing society, in other words it is concerned with the well-being of society. On this note he called upon the church leaders not to be “separatists” meaning to drastically say that we are church people and thus we have nothing to do with politics. He therefore encouraged them to actively and fully participate in the structures and systems in place that are necessary for the building of democracy and good governance, and also through them as leaders, the participation of their denominations should be promoted. “Election” is one of the structures for example, add, Mr. Sibonelo Zuma. He went on to say “Election” is the only peaceful way whereby the citizens can easily vote out or remove unwanted representatives from office and then elect or vote for those candidates who share their interests and top concerns. He therefore encouraged the participants to fully and actively take part in the election process towards a nation building where democracy and good governance will prevail.

I must say in conclusion that with this information that was instilled in the pastors and the appeal to spread it, we are optimistic that the number of church leaders taking part in this forth coming election will rise, to the past, compared. More effort and arrangements are underway to workshop the church leaders more on the subject this month of May 2016, but in a CBS format.



*Photos taken during the workshop*



## SEE - Bread Theology

**By Belinda Crawford** On the 17th March 2016 a workshop was held at African Enterprise for a new group of 30 unemployed youth, the workshop mainly focused on the "SEE" part of CBS, which focuses on socio-economic development that address the systemic structures behind unemployment and poverty in South Africa. A follow up workshop was held on the 13-14 April that focused on CBS with the bible text on Matthew 20 on the laborers in the vineyard and evaluation. One of the participants noted that this text is not focused so much on socialism but rather on capitalism as the vineyard owner focused on employing more people so that he could gain more profit. By employing more workers the job would be done faster, while he kept paying the workers the same salary.



*Photos of the Bread Theology workshop with unemployed youth*

### Webinars: The Art of Contextual Bible Study

**From the Center and Library for the Bible and Social Justice by Mark Johnson.** The St. Ambrose University Bible & Justice Conference hosted a series of webinar. This three-part webinar series trains faith leaders, activists, and organizers in the art of Contextual Bible Studies (CBS). Led by CBS leaders from Brazil, South Africa, and the United States. Engaging biblical texts from the perspective of the marginalized, so as to create effective tools for confronting systems of oppression in our communities.

You can find the link to those webinars on our website under resources.

## Paraná Church on Parenting Workshop

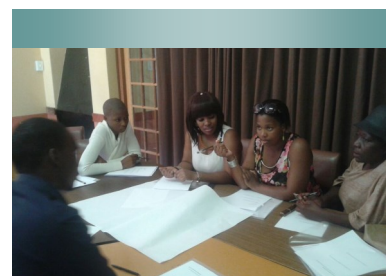
**By Bongzi Zengele** The workshop on parenting was directed to parents of the Parana Church. It was a follow up from a previous meeting, when we did a mapping exercise to discover the needs of the group. Both parents and children participated. The children stipulated clearly that they were not satisfied by the way their parents are raising them. They expressed fear resulting in children feeling less accepted by parents who often do not approve of the South African culture but their children are exposed at school. Some children have no recollection of the original culture of where their parents are coming from. This situation creates distrust and suspicion. Since this is a church it was important to look from a Biblical perspective which is the central source of teaching. A contextual Bible Study method was followed as a reflection on what the children have said as well as what parental skills were modelled by the parents from the Bible. Hence the text about the Prodigal Son was chosen and read by the parents participating in the workshop.

## LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING FOR SUPPORT GROUPS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV & AIDS

**By Bongzi Zengele** Participants came from Pietermaritzburg and the surroundings. Some participants have never met before and this was their personal encounter as survivors. The sessions begin by prayer and personal introduction of each participant sharing something about themselves and what interests them. In doing the introduction they start to share about their personal experiences with regards to sexual violence, living with HIV this is often very emotional and it is a heavy session. The group progresses and have a life of its own as members are enabled to listen and offer moral support to each other and there is a positive spirit of caring, empathy and encouragement.

The session allowed the participants to brainstorm and envision on how and whether there is a need for a cohort of leadership for organized groups for both Survivors of Sexual Violence and People Living with HIV and AIDS. The participants were interested and following are suggestions from the session:

- 'We will support a movement that is interested in us'
- 'When can we start this is a great idea'
- 'This idea reminds me that I am not alone as a person living with HIV'
- 'I am worried about lack of funding I like the idea its brilliant'
- 'I am afraid of sharing my life and hear about it in the township'
- 'I am happy to be part of the movement'
- 'I want to suggest that all who are members to be survivors themselves'
- 'We need to fundraise so as to secure our future'
- 'Thank you Ujamaa for this idea I have never heard about a Leadership Cohort for PLWHA.'
- 'It is really needed and I am supporting it and would like to be part of it'
- 'I can't wait to reach out to other Survivors who may be in great need'
- 'This Leadership Cohort will be an emotional home for us'

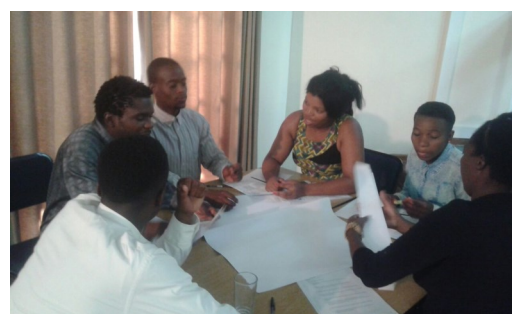


*Photos taken during the workshop*

## THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE FOR LAND

**By Sthembiso Zwane** On the 10th of May the People's Theology Programme organized and facilitated a training workshop in Estcourt with Pastors from the African Initiated Churches (AICs) on the theme: Church and Land in South Africa.

The AICs are predominantly working class and have struggled to access land from the government because they are not an organized structure. This is not the case with historical churches who have access to church land. This creates polarization among the churches and contributes to the erosion of the spirit of ecumenism in the process. The majority of AICs members who previously lost their land to the Apartheid government, are planning a litigation with the aim of being compensated.



The training focused on 1 Kings 21 and highlighted the negative impact of political hegemony against the poor in the community. Naboth's resistance to give Ahab his ancestral land was an act of protest against the abuse of power by the political elites. Prophetic People's theology is a theology of protest against the social and political injustices. It is not a passive and submissive theology of hopelessness, but resistance. The people's agency is an important instrument that can be used to deconstruct dominant paradigms that are used to oppress the poor in the community.



## Story of a teenage mother, survivor of sexual violence.

By **Bongi Zengele** Noluthando (not her real name), is in her early twenties and dropped out of university because of teenage pregnancy. Her mother passed away at an early age and she was raised by her father. She is the last born in her family and is regarded as the baby of the family, nevertheless she had to go through difficult times as a teenager and now as a single mother of two children. She was raped coming back from the library within her University Campus. This has really hurt her and the case was not handled well by the Justice System, because her case docket disappeared so there could not be dealt with. This situation has forced her to drop the charges and the perpetrator is free, resulting in facing the perpetrator on a daily basis in her community. Noluthando is struggling to get care and support in terms of her trauma and the challenge of raising her

two boys as a young single mother. She has the dream of studying engineering so that she can improve her life and built a successful future for her children. She has shared the idea with two of her friends who are also survivors of sexual violence. They would like to come on board and work with Noluthando. We brainstormed about practical things they would like to do with children. These were ranging from supervising homework, playing hockey, adopting child headed families to proving moral support to children growing up without parents providing motherly love.

Needs assessment questionnaire to the children in community

1. What are three important needs for you and other children in your community?
2. How can these needs be met? be specific and clear
3. Who is the person you look up to (your hero, your role model) from your community and why?
4. What is it that you like and dislike about your parents or adults in your life and why?
5. What additional information you would like to share (about you or other children) in your community?

Noluthando is one of the many young girls in South Africa today who often find themselves trapped in a web of multi-faceted challenges brought by insufficient and coordinated support from the justice system to enable survivors of sexual violence to be granted justice. Ujamaa's Body Theology Program will support the Church to play an important part in enabling advocacy role and assist in breaking the vicious circle by speaking out against Gender Based Violence. A woman like Noluthando's vision will make a difference in the lives of more children growing up in a similar environment and can ensure that their painful experiences becomes a thing of the past.



*Photo taken after meeting with the group at the church*



## UJAMAA CENTRE

The Ujamaa Centre was initiated in 1985 as part of the School of Theology at the then University of Natal (currently known as UKZN). It is a non-partisan, non-denominational, Centre for Community Development and Research which supports capacity building on development, good governance on church and civil society levels through theological education to ensure rigorous participation of all citizens in social transformation.

The Ujamaa Centre is the ideological-theological product of various strands of liberation theology, particularly South African Black Theology and South African Contextual Theology. More specifically, the Ujamaa Centre is committed to working with communities of the poor, the working-class, and the marginalized, using the biblical and theological resources for social and individual transformation.

At the heart of the Ujamaa Centre is the concept and practice of praxis. Praxis involves an ongoing commitment to the cycle-spiral of action-and-reflection. This is central to our work. It is praxis that has enabled the Ujamaa Centre to respond to the ongoing and changing realities of South African and Southern African context. We try to respond faithfully to our context, using biblical and theological resources, and then we carefully (and formally) reflect on what we have done and how we have done it. It is praxis that keep us connected both to the community and the academy.

## Upcoming events

Throughout the year we organize many workshops and Contextual Bible studies. The dates may change.

May 30th Lectures and Seminars for Biblical Scholars and Bible translators given by Gerald West in Italy

June 6th Meeting of the leaders of the support groups for people living with HIV AIDS

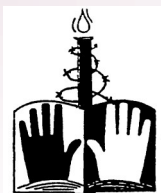
June 14th Trauma and healing training for refugee women in Pietermaritzburg

June 24th A social analysis training for people living with disabilities

July 14th A CBS on life skills for children living with HIV AIDS

July 16th participating in the faith based pre-conference of the AIDS conference in Durban

July – September CBS training for Nigerian and Zimbabwean church leaders



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Private Bag X01  
Scottsville 3209  
Pietermaritzburg  
South Africa

Phone: +27 (0)33 260 6294  
E-mail: [west@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:west@ukzn.ac.za)  
Website: [ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za](http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za)