

UJAMAA NEWS



UJAMAA CENTRE



A belated 'August' Newsletter

We apologize for the delay of sending out this newsletter. It is our aim to send out a newsletter three times a year. However, due to unforeseen events we did not manage to send one in August. A lot has happened since the last newsletter in May and it is hard to keep track of all the different areas of the work that has been done. Nevertheless, this newsletter informs you about our work from the period May - August. One of the events we had to face with, and are still facing with is the #FeesMustFall movement and protest at the universities all over South Africa. During September all work at the university got repeatedly disrupted. In the 'word of our Director', Gerald writes about the University and the protests. In our next newsletter we will write about our latest events, including the CIHA Blog conference which we hosted in October and our second annual Mzwandile Memorial Week.

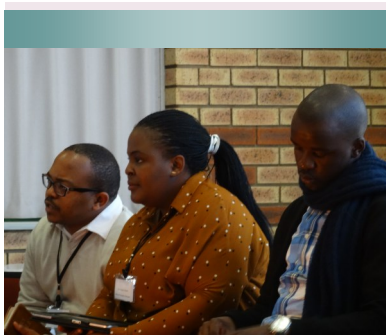
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Photos taken during the workshops on homosexuality and the Bible



New on the website

Thanks to Mote Magomba we now have a section on our website in Swahili. He has translated the most important parts including the manual and some of the Contextual Bible Studies. In December the Ujamaa centre will facilitate a workshop in Tanzania and from previous workshops in Kenya (2014 and 2015) we know that resources in Swahili are much appreciated.

Photo taken during the leadership workshop with Belinda Crawford



Disrupting Conventional Paradigms

By Mote Magomba “Everyone would like their world to remain intact in the transformation. This complicates the process of transformation in our country” says Eusebius McKaiser in his public lecture entitled “Disrupting Conventional Paradigms: Decolonising the Curriculum, Research and Community Outreach for “True Transformation”, delivered at Howard College Theatre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, on 9th June 2016. The Ujamaa Centre team participated in this lecture, which is part of Public Lecture Series on Transformation and Leadership hosted by the College of Humanities and the Maurice Webb Race Relations Unit.

McKaiser, who is a political analyst, broadcaster, facilitator, author and public Speaker, begins his lecture by personal stories that echo racism, educational disparities and poverty. He stylistically uses first person narratives as heuristic devices through which to construct his philosophical arguments. He shares stories of social realities of the ordinary people in their struggles for livelihood. Stories of injustice, poverty, unemployment, inequalities and inequities. Stories drawn from his life experiences and engagement with the people through personal encounters, radio talk shows, newspapers and cartoons. Through this genre of storytelling, McKaiser interrogates experiences of black people and women in corporate institutions and companies. McKaiser makes these points, among others:

McKaiser argues that people’s actual experiences are always different from the narratives of corporate boards and their institutions that claim to value meritocracy.

According to McKaiser transformation is a decolonising process, be it social, political, economic or educational. it does not mean discarding of all one has received; it does not necessarily have to be violent. And if there to be any true

transformation, it has to start with individuals. Transformation starts at the personal level before any seemingly process of true transformation begins. Transformation is a requirement of justice. Justice has to mean inclusivity and diversity.

In McKaiser’s argument, institutional culture can be exclusive particularly when inclusivity and diversity have no significant place. Similarly, educational institutions could be exclusive especially when caught up in academic viciousness, irresponsible to social questions, and which fail to pedagogically connect students to their social realities. Black indigenous knowledge has epistemological validity just as any branch of philosophy; hence, it is pedagogically inexcusable not to expose students to endemic ideas.

Ujamaa Centre embodies these above-mentioned ideas of Eusebius McKaiser by its theory of change and ‘See-Judge-Act’ methodology, which engages with the inequalities found in South Africa, in order to tackle oppressive systems and the power relations that sustain them. Ujamaa centre begins with an understanding of social realities from the perspective of those who are poor, working-class, HIV-positive, unemployed, abused or otherwise oppressed and marginalized.

The Ujamaa Centre begins with social analysis “from below”; it starts with personal stories and lived experiences of the people. Working collaboratively with local communities and religious groups to promote justice for individual and social transformation. Therefore, it can be argued that through its theory of change and See-Judge-Act method, the work of Ujamaa Centre disrupts conventional paradigms to promote true social transformation.

BREAD THEOLOGY AND UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

By Sthembiso Zwane The Bread Theology program facilitated training workshops for the unemployed youth from Mbutshane and Kwa Nxamalala in Pietermaritzburg. These areas are mostly affected by chronic unemployment. Chronic unemployment in South Africa persist unabated especially among the unemployed youth. The majority of the unemployed youth are Not in Education, Employment or Train-
ing (NEET).

Chronic youth unemployment is a manifestation of the economic atrocities of global capitalism that has severely compromised social development in the developing countries and benefited the industrialized nations. The jobless economic growth of 3.3% in the mining and manufacturing sectors does not address the high rate of youth unemployment and decent work. The immediate need for the majority of the unemployed youth is access to food and education, unemployment deprive young people their dignity if they are unable to access food and free quality education because they are poor. There has been a paradigm shift from a developmental state to a welfare state in the form of social grants. This paradigm shift was created by high rate of unemployment among the youth. The Child Support Grant is being used as a conduit to address abject poverty and huge inequalities created by unemployment.

The creation of decent work and sustainable jobs require the economy to grow at 4% to 5% as projected in the National Development Plan (NDP). This is not likely to be achieved by 2030 with stagnant economic growth and imminent downgrade because of political instability and other contributing factors that continue to undermine economic growth. The reality is that economic stability depends on both internal political stability and global economic and political interests. The political leadership has a duty to accommodate these various interests to ensure economic stability that attracts local and foreign direct investment.



Photo taken during the pre-faith Conference on HIV AIDS where the Ujamaa centre was facilitating a workshop. Here, Sthembiso is presenting.

Word from our director

By Gerald West The Ujamaa Centre

Because the Ujamaa Centre is located within a South African University at this time in our post-liberation struggle we are caught up in the demands by students for the decolonisation of our education system. University education is seen as the product, in part, of colonialism and neo-colonial capitalist globalisation. In some senses this debate is on the periphery of our work, for our primary focus is on communities outside of the university. However, we too yearn for a form of tertiary education that will meet the urgent needs of the communities we work with. Indeed, the Ujamaa Centre is situated within a university precisely to be a part of university education transformation. So we are involved in the struggle for what university education might become in the South African post colony.

Another aspect of our struggle in South Africa at the moment is how to engage with the resurgence of racism. White racism has never disappeared, but what we are finding is that it is becoming more overt. Part of the reason for this is that social media allows us to 'listen in' on white South Africans talking among themselves. And what we hear is racist. As part of our contribution to this struggle the Ujamaa Centre recently hosted a workshop in which Jim Perkinson, a poet, theologian, and activist from the USA shared his analysis of 'whiteness'. Jim is a white American who has worked tirelessly for fifty years to expose the pathology that is white supremacy. Part of his work has been to 'out whiteness' by locating whiteness within 'blackness'. His book *White theology: outing supremacy in modernity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, is a key resource. The workshop was facilitated by the Ujamaa Centre and created a safe place in which to 'do' race talk.

Introducing 4 Nigerian pastors



From left to right

- I am **Dina** Oladimeji Adekunle M.Div, ACIA, Dip.Th, ND.Adim. My life is Christ centered and I am a lover of youth and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thanks.
- My name is **Rhoda** Osiyoye, I am a clergy wife from the southern part of Nigeria. A graduate of Mass Communication. Blessed with 4 children; a boy and three girls.
- I am **Samuel** Adeoluwa Mawuse Akinlawon. Attended archbishop vining college of theology, in Akure Ondo state, Nigeria. Besides theology, I also have a diploma in estate management. I am active in the church ministry, as an ecumenical director and preacher of the gospel. My interests are in church liturgy and worship. Married and blessed with a baby boy.
- I am Adediji **Joshua** Abiodun. A graduate of the Immanuel College of Theology Ibadan and Tai - Solarin University of Education in Ogun State Nigeria. I am interested in Youth ministry and preaching the Gospel of Christ.

The introductory course provides an overview of the history, methodology and praxis of liberation theology articulated by Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research community programmes. The Ujamaa Centre programmes reflect the ideological and theological commitment to social justice. The purpose of this course is to introduce participants to Ujamaa Centre's methodology and theories of social justice across its programmes particularly the role of religion in economics, politics, environment and human sexuality.

The course is driven by questions of economic justice, prophetic public theology, environmental justice and religion and human sexuality. The central issue will be on religion and human sexuality. Critical questions about the relationship between religion and sexuality will be addressed. Does the 'Bible say' anything about 'homosexuality'? Did homosexuality exist in Africa? Is homosexuality an 'illness' that needs to be 'cured' or is it a 'sexual preference'/or orientation?

The course is divided into 11 class sessions and a focused dialogue outside class with a wide range of stakeholders, namely LGBTI community, religious leaders and community activists.

Revd. Dr. Malachie Munyaneza on sabbatical leave

By Malachie Munyaneza This year I have a sabbatical leave. Being a member of the Faith and Order Committee, having participated in the discussion on the future of the United Reformed Church focussing on the theme of 'What is the Spirit saying to Churches', and as a member of Black and Minority Ethnic Ministers Association within the United Reformed Church, I thought it would be a good idea to spend my sabbatical leave at The School of Theology at the University of Kwazulu Natal to learn more and familiarise myself with its Programme of Contextual Biblical Interpretation through Ujamaa Centre. I have used and appreciated books written or edited by Professor Gerald West, and I have always wished to meet and listen to his lectures. Being here is a unique opportunity and I am thankful that he has graciously invited me to come and fulfil my dream. I am benefitting from the Socio-Scientific Hermeneutical Approach with its multidisciplinary methodologies and theologies. This is the strength of the School and Ujamaa Centre and I believe that it can make a huge contribution to the wider world on issues of politics, economy, gender, human sexuality etc., learning from the past, present contexts, and leave a legacy for future generations. Public issues are the same in the North and South, East and West and therefore the 'Prophetic Theology' and 'Public Theology' based on Sound Contextual Biblical Interpretation owned by both 'ordinary readers' and 'trained scholars' will become an engine to power forward a successful 'liberation theology' aiming at justice, peace, harmony and the just sharing of resources. Giving back the Bible to the communities is to help them to be transformed by the Gospel coming from different voices in it and to bring change into these communities.



Photo taken the last day the Nigerian pastors stayed with us and presented the knowledge they gained during their time in South Africa.



Revd Dr Malachie MUNYANEZA (B.D. M.A, PhD)

Minister of The United Reformed Church in UK serving the joint pastorate of Gloucester and Brockworth, West Midlands Synod.

Born in Rwanda in 1950, studied Theology at the St Paul's United Theological College, Limuru, Kenya, Universities of Goettingen and Mainz (Germany), and Surrey-Roehampton (UK).

He was visiting lecturer at the former London College of Theology in Old Testament and Boiblical Hebrew.

His PhD Thesis: A Comparative Study of the Book of Proverbs and Rwandan Proverbial Wisdom (2007 Surrey-Roehampton, UK).

Sugar Daddy report

By Gerald West The Ujamaa Centre works within the praxis cycle of See-Judge-Act. The movement is not linear; it is cyclical, moving constantly from Act to a new cycle of See-Judge-Act. It is important to note this, for this is how our work within the Ujamaa Centre develops. As we work with a particular community on a particular contextual issue we note changes to their context and this leads us to a new cycle of See-Judge-Act.

This has been the case in our engagement over more than 20 years with HIV and AIDS. Communities of those living positively with HIV have taught us to regular review their reality. When we began our work, most of those we worked with would die, and so their reality was shaped by their deep desire to be accepted by their families and their churches before they died. Our Contextual Bible Study work with them was shaped by this reality.

And then antiretroviral treatment became available. New realities now emerged. Living rather than dying allowed for time to deal with the deep theological questions of stigmatisation driven by theologies of retribution. Living also posed new questions: what about marriage and children for those living with HIV? Again, our Contextual Bible Study work was shaped by these realities.

And now while HIV infections are decreasing in many population groups, the age-group of young women between 15-24 years of age shows increasing infections. How are we to explain this reality? Social and medical science research show clearly that one of the primary drivers of these HIV infections is age-disparate sex. Older men are infecting younger women. This is the reality we are currently grappling with, and so we have devised a Contextual Bible Study using the biblical story of Ruth so that we can, together with these vulnerable younger women, engage the reality of 'sugar daddy' and 'blesser' sexual relationships.

The workshop the Ujamaa Centre facilitated at the Interfaith Pre-Conference 2016: "Faith on the Fast Track: Reducing Stigma and Discrimination, increasing Access; and Defending Human Rights NOW!" on the 16th July, together with our colleagues from CHART (Collaborative for HIV and AIDS Research, Religion & Theology), used this Contextual Bible Study. The workshop gave all participants an opportunity to experience components of the Contextual Bible Study. The Ujamaa Centre then shared stories from communities where we had done this Contextual Bible Study, sharing the realities of young African women who engage in 'sugar daddy' sex. The workshop then offered an analysis of the social and medical science research, demonstrating the need for religious engagement with the phenomenon of 'sugar daddies' and 'blessers'. Finally, the workshop offered participants a chance to comment on the workshop and to ask questions.

It was clear that many of the participants were aware of age-disparate sex in their various contexts. What was new to them was our use of religious resource – Contextual Bible Study – to engage with this contextual reality. While some were shocked by our use of the story of the biblical Ruth, re-reading this story alongside the realities of age-disparate sexual transmission of HIV enabled both the Bible and the context to be interpreted more carefully.

Photo taken during a workshop at African Enterprise with stakeholders of all our groups.



Body Theology: Contextual Bible Study methodology in Re-reading the text with People with Disabilities

By Bongi Zengele On the 20th of July, Ujamaa had a powerful encounter with the disabled community, engaging with them in a contextual Bible study. This was a very sensitive session, for it unearthed a wide range of emotions. The Bible is often used to explain the origins of disability, especially when the families are faced with a situation that is not regarded as normal and there are no means of handling sad news of facing and dealing with disability of any form. This is experienced more in circumstances where there are no means of eradicating the physical condition that presents disability. In search for answers and a way of coping, people with disabilities look for explanations within the means of their reach such as the cultural explanation or religious interpretation. Genesis 1:26-28 focused on the story of creation and how we are wonderfully made in the image of God. The content of a Bible study sustained the human dignity and affirmed that we are all created in the image of God regardless of limitations that we

may face in reality in a face of unpredicted circumstances that may present themselves in a form of a disability. The participants came very strongly in sharing their dilemma and a sense of shame and anger that is often labelled towards people who are disabled, often leaving stigma and discrimination. It was very therapeutic to create a safe space for a group of people with disabilities and allow them space to share their own personal experiences and how these circumstances had shaped their lives. The SEE JUDGE ACT methodology assisted in leading a therapeutic and healing session.

A spontaneous response from a group was to form 'action committee' that was to start taking issues affecting the disabled community seriously in collaboration with the government and the office of the premier. They agreed to meet fortnightly as a team. In evaluating the session, the participants who were meeting for the first time wanted to meet again and start working for the community.

See

1. What is the issue?
2. Who is affected by the issue?

Judge

3. Why is the issue important?
4. What role can Culture, Religion, Theology and the Bible play in addressing the issue?

Act

5. When are you planning to deal with the issue?
6. Where are you planning to have your activities to deal with the issue?

Photo taken after a planning meeting with the group leaders from different groups in our Bread Theology program



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

16 days of Activism against violence against Women and Children.

"Count me in: together moving a non-violent South Africa forward." The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children is an international awareness-raising campaign. It takes place every year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). The period includes Universal Children's Day and World AIDS Day.

South Africa adopted the campaign in 1998 as one of the intervention strategies towards creating a society free of violence. The campaign continues to raise awareness amongst South Africans about the negative impact of violence against women and children (VAW&C) on all members of the community. (source: <http://www.gov.za/speeches/16-days-activism-2016-22-dec-2015-1000>)

Throughout these days we are invited by the different support groups in the communities we work with, together we organize many workshops and Contextual Bible studies.

23rd November: Shembe seminar watch our website for more information



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