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PRACTICES OF FAITH IN TIMES OF NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CRISES
GENDER UNIT, FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
15–17 MARCH 2021

CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE GENDER UNIT, BEYERS NAUDÉ CENTRE FOR PUBLIC THEOLOGY, DEPARTMENT
OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY & MISSIOLOGY,
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

15-17 MARCH 2021

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

PROGRAMME

MONDAY 15 MARCH 2021

- 13:45 – 14:00 Join MS Teams (*details to be communicated*)
- 14:00 – 14:10 **Welcome and Arrangements**
Cas Wepener & Marileen Steyn
- 14:10 – 14:20 **Word of Welcome by the Dean, Faculty of Theology**
Reggie Nel
- 14:20 – 15:45 **Session 1 (Chair Cas Wepener)**
30 minutes per speaker, 10 minutes breakout groups and 15 minutes Q&A
- Juliana Claassens, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University
Righteous Anger, Prophetic Rage, and Holy Indignation: Contemplating Divine and Human Anger in Jonah 4 in a Context of Injustice
 - Rima Nasrallah, Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon
With water and fire: Armenian farewell to the Dadivank Monastery in Artsakh
- 15:45 – 16:00 **Refreshments**
- 16:00 – 17:30 **Theology Day (Chair Robert Vosloo)**
- Emmanuel Katongole, Reconciliation Matters: A Personal Journey
Panel Discussion
- 17:30 – 17:45 **Refreshments**
- 17:45 – 19:15 **Session 2 (Chair Marileen Steyn)**
15 minutes per paper, 10 minutes break out groups, 20 minutes Q & A
- Jesse Nelson
No Longer Silent: A Practical Theology for Preaching on Racism
 - Anandie Greyling
Disaster Rituals at Court: A ritual-narrative outcry for justice
 - Charlene van der Walt
#RememberEudy: On memory, remembering and agency in (virtual) queer community.
 - Wessel Wessels
Behold the man: Postcolonial preaching and the crisis of gender-based violence

TUESDAY 16 MARCH 2021

- 09:45 – 10:00 Join MS Teams (*details to be communicated*)
- 10:00 – 10:10 **Welcome and Arrangements**
Marileen Steyn & Cas Wepener
- 10:10 – 11:25 **Session 3** (*Chair Nadine Bowers-Du Toit*)
15 minutes per paper, 10 minutes break out groups, 20 minutes Q & A
- Shantelle Weber & Gretchen Schoon-Tanis
Choral music, faith and youth during times of crisis
 - Hilton Scott
Worship in a post-lockdown context
 - Marnus Havenga
Singing amidst suffering: a theological exploration
- 11:25 - 11:40 **Refreshments**
- 11:40 - 12:55 **Session 4** (*Chair Ian Nell*)
15 minutes per paper, 10 minutes break out groups, 20 minutes Q & A
- Wilhelm Grab & Philipp Öhlmann
Lived Religion as a Hermeneutical Lens. New Perspectives on Religion and Development
 - James Ucheoma
Christian Initiatives and Revivalism in Times of Crises in Nigeria
 - Kirsten van der Ham, Marjolein Hekman, Mirella Klomp, Peter-Ben Smit, Thijs Trom
Ritualized food aid. A diaconal meals project in times of the covid-19 crisis as liturgical practice?
- 12:55 – 13:20 **Organ Recital**
- 13:20 – 14:30 **Lunch**
- 14:30 – 15:55 **Session 5** (*Chair Cas Wepener*)
30 minutes per speaker, 10 minutes breakout groups and 15 minutes Q&A
- Hanré Janse van Rensburg, Faculty of Theology & Religion, University of Pretoria
Imaginative participation – Ritual and the New Testament
 - Martin Tel, Princeton Theological Seminary
Hearing the Voices of Others through the Liturgical Psalter
- 15:55 – 17:00 **Refreshments and time to watch the film:** Die Openbaringe van ds Tienie Benade
(The Revelations of Rev. Tienie Benade) Available on Showmax with English subtitles to watch before discussion
- 17:00 – 17:40 **Film discussion by panel:** (*Chair Marileen Steyn*)
Panel Discussion: Dana Snyman, Robert Vosloo, Sipho Mahokoto

WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2021

- 09:45 – 10:00 Join MS Teams (*details to be communicated*)
- 10:00 – 10:10 **Welcome and Arrangements**
Cas Wepener & Marileen Steyn
- 10:10 – 11:35 **Session 6 (Chair Peter White)**
30 minutes per speaker, 10 minutes breakout groups and 15 minutes Q&A
- Ian Nell, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University
Pandemic homiletics? A South African exploration of preaching during the time of the Covid-19 crisis
 - Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana
Plagues, Pestilences and the Promise of Deliverance: African Christian Homiletic Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic
- 11:35 - 13:05 **Session 7 (Chair Juliana Claassens)**
15 minutes per paper, 10 minutes break out groups, 20 minutes Q & A
- Johan van der Merwe
Voices from the past: An analysis of sermons published in Die Kerkbode from October to December during the “pestilence” of 1918
 - Hundzukani Khosa-Nkhatini
Restriction of burial rites during Covid-19 pandemic: an African liturgical challenge
 - Suzanne van der Merwe
Funerals & Covid-19: a micro liturgical audit of funeral rituals in a Dutch Reformed congregation
 - Nicolaas Matthee
Playful Enclaves: Death and Ritual in Spiritfarer
- 13:05 - 13:30 Closing and the Way Forward (Chair Julie Claassens, Cas Wepener & Marileen Steyn)

ABSTRACTS: KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

JULIANA CLAASSENS



Prof Juliana Claassens is Professor in Old Testament and Head of the Gender Unit at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. She is the author of *Writing/Reading to Survive: Biblical and Contemporary Trauma Narratives in Conversation*, (Sheffield Phoenix Press 2020); *Claiming Her Dignity: Female Resistance in the Old Testament* (Liturgical Press, 2016); *Mourner, Mother, Midwife: Reimagining God's Liberating Presence* (Westminster John Knox, 2012) and *The God who Provides: Biblical Images of Divine Nourishment* (Abingdon, 2004). Her research and teaching interests include Trauma Hermeneutics, Feminist and Postcolonial Interpretation of the Old Testament. She particularly enjoys engaging students in terms of the contemporary reception of the biblical texts, challenging harmful interpretations and opening up interpretations that may be life-giving in nature.

Righteous Anger, Prophetic Rage, and Holy Indignation: Contemplating Divine and Human Anger in Jonah 4 in a Context of Injustice

Anger incites people into action.

Anger frustrates the status quo.

Anger motivates people to change.

Xolani Kacela (2005: 202)

In his *Vrye Weekblad* column around the time of Women's Day, August 9, Cas Wepener (2020) writes a fascinating article on the practice of wearing clothes as a form of lament. Citing the example of the Black Sash movement who wore black scarfs to protest the death of the constitution as exemplified in South Africa's unjust pass laws, as well as more recently the WCC movement Thursdays in Black that religiously is preserved in our Faculty, with faculty and staff and students protesting the scourge of gender based violence, Wepener writes that every time that someone wears black, or when someone wearing black passes by, it acts as a memorial. Much like a "duwweltjie" in a sandal, it irritates, it creates discomfort, it reminds us of the thousands of women who are in danger of losing their lives. Wepener ends his column with a poignant poem, "visioen van 'n lessenaar" by Antjie Krog: "die tikmasjien kners sy olivanti-tande / en ek skryf omdat ek woedend is" ["the type writer grinds his olivanti teeth/ and I write because I am furious" in *Otters in Bronslaai*], poetically capturing this link between the practice of wearing clothes, anger and lament: "Patriargie en sy pelle moet pasop, want al hoe meer Suid-Afrikaners haal hul kisklere uit, trek hul lanfer aan as daad van lament, en omdat hulle woedend is – woedend omdat hulle omgee" ["Patriarchy and his friends must be careful, for more and more South Africans are dressing up, putting on their mourning clothes as an act of lament because they are furious – furious because they care"].

For the purpose of this conference, I would like to consider further this link between anger and lament in a context of injustice. With special attention to conceptions of divine and human anger as represented in the book of Jonah, I will reflect in conversation with recent theoretical treatments on the powerful emotion of anger that informs Black liberation and Feminist theology, the notion of a productive nature of anger to, in terms of Kacela's quote at the beginning of this essay, "incite[s] people into action"; "frustrate[s] the status quo," and "motivate[s] people to change" (2005: 202). I propose that Jonah's anger receives new significance when read in a context of injustice as represented on the African continent in the form of the harm done by imperialism, war, gender-based violence, as well as the structural violence of poverty.

RIMA NASRALLAH



Rima Nasrallah is a Lebanese Protestant theologian and ordained minister. She is an assistant professor of practical theology at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut. Nasrallah earned her PhD at the Protestant Theological University, Amsterdam (2015) in the field of liturgical-ritual studies and continues to research practices of faith as encountered in Middle Eastern society.

With water and fire: Armenian farewell to the Dadivank Monastery in Artsakh

Between September and November 2020, war raged in Artsakh, a disputed enclave with an Armenian majority and allegiance located inside Azerbaijan. This ferocious conflict ended to the detriment of the Armenians; many were evicted from their land, houses and most importantly their historical churches and monasteries. In the days preceding the eviction, Armenians chopped down their trees, set their houses on fire and flocked to Dadivank, a monastic complex from the 9th century, in order to perform 'last' rituals. This paper describes the way in which the devastated Armenians expressed their sorrow around this monastery through the performance of 'last' baptisms, the lighting of candles, and the dismantling of historic stones. Through these actions and prayers, the Armenians continued a tradition inherited from their ancestors, who were repeatedly subjected to similar evictions and destruction of religious heritage. This paper argues that these rituals serve as a means of resistance to the obliteration of their religious culture and identity. Through water and fire, they summon their glorious as well as dramatic Christian history in order to redefine catastrophic events.

HANRÉ JANSE VAN RENSBURG



Hanré currently works in the Department of New Testament and Related Literature of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria. She is privileged to teach a variety of New Testament modules on undergraduate and postgraduate level. This ensures that her general New Testament knowledge stays sharp.

She does research in eschatological and apocalyptic literature, the Book of Revelation, social-scientific criticism, reader-response criticism, speech act theory, affective/performance studies, ritual studies, identity and intersectional identity formation, orality, embodiment, ritual-functional analysis, and symbolism. Her focus is on

developing the ideas of her doctoral thesis further. In terms of postgraduate research, Hanré is still getting used to, but enjoying immensely, being the supervisor and not the supervised. She considers it a privilege to share in someone's research journey and creative thought process. When she is not working she is privileged to share her heart and her home with her husband Sarel and their three cat kids. Yes, she is a cat lady.

Imaginative participation – Ritual and the New Testament

The deliberate adoption of a liturgical/functional reading by a New Testament scholar might seem out of character, as this is a technique normally associated more with Practical Theology. But, in maintaining this “traditional” division, we as New Testament scholarship are neglecting a method which could add even more depth and practical value to the exegetical process by drawing our attention to the text’s possible functional and performative uses within the community of faith – then and now. In fact, New Testament texts can be an indispensable resource for helping Christians conceive of their place and the role they are to play in the contemporary world. This is so because, from start to finish, the New Testament is a call to discipleship and a resource for the critical appraisal of the place of Christian witness in society. The New Testament is a form of *anamnesis* or recollection because, in recalling/performing the narrative, the past is made physically present. *Anamnesis* thus invests the present with renewed significance, for the present now carries the past. This wedding of tenses turns New Testament texts into subversive pieces of memory-work, deploying memory to re-create the present through recollection.

MARTIN TEL



Martin Tel is the C. F. Seabrook Director of Music at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. At the seminary Martin conducts the seminary choirs, teaches courses in church music, and administers the music for the daily seminary worship services. He served as senior editor of *Psalms for All Season: A Complete Psalter for Worship* (Faith Alive, 2012). He also served on the editorial committees which produced a new hymnal for the Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church in America denominations, *Lift Up Your Hearts* (Faith Alive, 2013) and the Spanish-English bilingual hymnal, *Santo, Santo, Santo / Holy, Holy, Holy* (GIA, 2019).

Hearing the Voices of Others through the Liturgical Psalter

Cultural emphases on self-expression dramatically shape the liturgical life of the church, including its canon of song. The biblical Psalter, long honored as a resource and model for Christian lyrical prayer, is pressed through a litmus test of self-expression: *Do the words of this psalm reflect and express what I am feeling, or what I wish to feel?* The practical outcome is that most of the Psalter falls to the cutting-room floor. But what if the point of these lyrics is not to reflect the voice of the worshiper, but rather to enable the worshiper to hear the voices of ‘the other’? The Psalter serves as a corrective to the assumption that worship must be ‘about me.’ A broader liturgical use of the Psalter might then uncover the voices of the invisible or the inaudible and, in the end, lead the church into a broader, deeper and more authentic expression of its true self.

IAN NELL

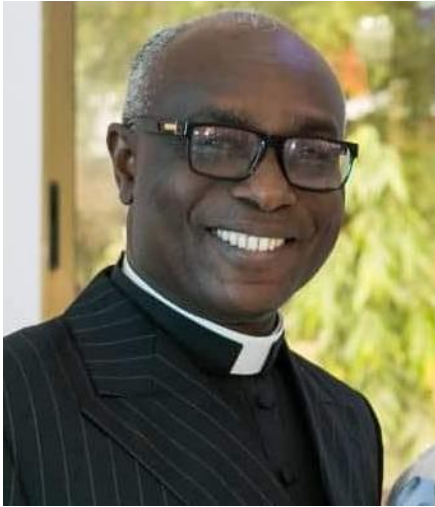


Ian Nell is Professor of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. He studied at the North West University (BA Honns), the University of the Free State (MA and MTh) and University of Pretoria (DD). He teaches practical theology and ministry practice to undergraduate students and coordinates the Master of Divinity program as well as the Post Graduate Diploma in Christian Ministry. His research focuses inter alia on congregational studies and leadership development. He recently received a Teaching Fellowship at the University of Stellenbosch and participated the past two years in a National Research project known as TAU (Teaching Advancement at Universities). He is currently the head of the department of Practical Theology and Missiology. He is specifically interested in developing a competency framework for religious leadership. For his publications, visit his research profile on <https://sun.academia.edu/IanNell>

Pandemic homiletics? A South African exploration of preaching during the time of the Covid-19 crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic confronted the world and South Africans with the challenges of health care and 'Zoomification'. From the 29th of March 2020 it was, because of the restriction and ban on gatherings, expected from ministers and faith leaders in South Africa to use online technology to preach their sermons. Many preachers had to rethink the format and content of their preaching. The question arose as to what sermons may look like during these times, and specifically the content and God images of the sermons. This chapter examines the sermon content of a purposive sample of ministers from the combined Stellenbosch circuit of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. Twenty-four sermons were analyzed, making use of a combination of the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis and grounded theory in order to identify the core themes of their preaching and the God images used at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the sermons, the researcher asked three questions: Which texts did the preachers choose? What themes emerged from the sermons? With which God images did the preachers work? Using ATLAS.ti, the sermons were coded, topics were identified, and God images were discerned.

KWABENA ASAMOAH-GYADU



J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu PhD (Birmingham, UK) is the President of the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana. He holds the Baëta-Grau Professorial Chair of Contemporary African Christianity and Pentecostal Theology at the Seminary. Kwabena has served as visiting scholar to Harvard University (2004); Luther Seminary, Minnesota (2007); Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, USA (2012); visiting professor to Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky, USA (2015) and Yonsei International University in Songdo, South Korea (2016). He is a member of the Lausanne Theology Working Group and is author of *African Charismatics* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005); *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2013); *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit* (Oxford: Regnum

Books, 2015); and co-editor with Frieder Ludwig of *African Christian Presence in the West* (Trenton, NJ: AWP, 2011). He is lead editor of *Between Babel and Pentecost: Migrant Readings from Africa, Europe and Asia* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013) and has also recently published: *Christianity and Faith in the Covid-19 Era: Lockdown Periods from Hosanna to Pentecost* (Accra: Step Publishers, 2020). Kwabena has many other articles in international journals relating to Christianity as a non-Western religion. He is widely travelled as an international scholar.

Plagues, Pestilences and the Promise of Deliverance: African Christian Homiletic Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic

This paper discusses African Christian responses to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of the year 2020. What started as a Chinese virus soon acquired a global character. The months of March through June saw virtually every country in the world either locking down or imposing restrictions of various kinds to stop the spread of the coronavirus that caused the disease. The world has moved into 2021 and what many preachers have referred to as an evil “plague and pestilence” is still eluding capture and taming. Christians in Africa, which is a context in which religion is often a critical resource for dealing with crisis, resorted to prayer to stem the spread of the disease. In locked down mode Christian preachers, especially those belonging to the independent Pentecostal/charismatic streams, used various media outlets to reach not just their Sunday captive audiences, but also other willing listeners to articulate biblical responses to the pandemic and how God was going to help the world to deal with it. The paper will examine select sermons and messages of prominent African Pentecostal/charismatic leaders to see how they understood and dealt with the virus homiletically. The paper would pay particular attention to the tensions that emerged between the otherwise monolithic approach to preaching in which the key words tend to be prosperity, health, wealth and success and the reality of an evil pandemic that is refusing to go away.

THEOLOGY DAY WITH PROF EMMANUEL KATONGOLE



The annual Theological Day of the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University marks the beginning of the academic year. This year it will be an online event. We are privileged that Prof Emmanuel Katongole agreed to be our guest speaker. He will speak on the topic “Reconciliation Matters: A Personal Journey.” Prof Katongole, a Ugandan Catholic priest and theologian, is currently Professor of Theology and Peace Studies at the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at Notre Dame University.

His books include *Born from Lament: On the Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa* (2017) and *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (2011).

ABSTRACTS: SPEAKERS

JESSE NELSON

No Longer Silent: A Practical Theology for Preaching on Racism

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, an African American, breathed his last breaths with Officer Derek Chauvin's knee on his neck. It was heartbreaking to know three other officers did not intervene to stop Chauvin's illegal and excessive use of force. Floyd died because of their silence. His death erupted into a national crisis, which included Black Lives Matter protests and riots throughout America.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." The sins of racism and injustice perpetuate in American communities because so many Christian leaders are silent and refuse to preach against those evils. Some will say they do not speak up because they do not know what to say or preach. In this paper, I provide a practical theology of preaching on racism by answering the why and how we should preach on racism. I also share a sermon series I preached on racism to demonstrate theology in practice. I hope this paper will provide inspiration and ideas for preaching on racism so that we are *no longer silent* about this sin. The Bible speaks against racism and we should too.

ANANDIE GREYLING

Disaster Rituals at Court: A ritual-narrative outcry for justice

Violence is a reality in South Africa and the level of gratuitousness of the violence is shocking. We read about violence in the news cycles, including violence in rural agricultural contexts. How do communities react to this type of crises?

Disaster rituals are rituals that a community/group of people ritualize (consciously or unconsciously) to react to an unexpected event of human suffering that affects a large group of people. This paper will focus on disaster rituals that took place in Mpumalanga, South-Africa in response to violent acts (racially preserved) in a rural-agricultural context. I will share insights from my empirical research with a specific focus on Disaster Rituals at Court, for instance, gatherings, marches, and protests.

In this paper, I wish to shed light on the different narratives relating to these disaster rituals. The chosen dominant narratives of the media, political parties, and the (alternative) narratives of the participants of these disaster rituals.

CHARLENE VAN DER WALT

#RememberEudy: On memory, remembering and agency in (virtual) queer community.

The life, death and legacy of Eudy Simelane is annually commemorated during the Eudy Simelane memorial lecture hosted by the Ujamaa Centre situated within the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. The memorial lecture annually aims to reflect on the life of Eudy Simelane, a young lesbian Banyana-Banyana football player, and the tragic way in which she died, during a brutal homophobic hate crime in her home town of KwaThema. The lecture offers an energy point every year, to reflect on queer lived realities situated in the intersection of sexuality, culture

and religion in the South African faith landscape. Scholars have noted the compounding effect of Covid19 on LGBTIQ+ people and the resulting vulnerability, isolation and alienation. In order to create a sense of community and solidarity amidst Covid19 realities, the 2020 version of the lecture had to find ways to innovate in order to remember and to celebrate agency and community amidst isolation and social distance. This contribution will reflect on the launch of the hashtag #RememberEudy and the production of a virtual conversation style lecture engaging the queer South African poet Koleka Putuma aimed to offer ritualistic innovation in order to allow for remembering in a (virtual) queer community as part of the 2020 Eudy Simelane Memorial lecture.

WESSEL WESSELS

Behold the man: Postcolonial preaching and the crisis of gender-based violence

Feminist and liberation theologies have showcased how women are neither represented nor treated as equal to men. Conservative forms of preaching, however, have been instrumental in forming homiletic language which claims the superiority of men and subservience of women, especially in intimate relationships. According to the literature, gender-based violence is underscored by such imaginations of toxic masculinity and patriarchy. From a different perspective, postcolonial theorists propose that the polarisation of opposites is not constitutive for human wellbeing and that opposites need each other. In this paper, I will contemplate both feminist theories and male studies with regards to the underlying lack of wellbeing for both the victim and perpetrator in the crisis of gender-based violence. From here, I will consider the relationship between different centres of perspective as an art of preaching in the crisis of gender-based violence towards the wellbeing of both women and men. Finally, I will homiletically contemplate the gendered opposites within Jesus of Nazareth, focussing on the remark of Pontius Pilate in John 19:5, "Behold the man!"

SHANTELE WEBER & GRETCHEN SCHOON-TANIS

Choral music, faith and youth during times of crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for virtual choirs through varying social media platforms. Research has shown that music plays an integral role in alleviating the emotional and psychological toll that varying trauma has on people. This paper is motivated by an interest in youth choirs in South Africa and Norway by specifically investigating the role of faith in the lives of young people participating in these choirs. In this literature review, focus is placed on the Ndlovu Youth Choir and Soul Children's Choirs respectively. Literature is aimed at exploring the origin and purpose of these choirs; whether they have any connection to faith groups and the role they have played during the COVID-19 pandemic. We further explore what, if any, connection choral music has to youth faith formation. Public interaction with social media platforms is included. This paper serves as introduction to a larger qualitative study aimed at engaging with youth participating in these choirs. In this sense, the research seeks to conduct an in-depth study of youth faith formation and their participation in choirs.

HILTON SCOTT

Worship in a post-lockdown context

In an unprecedented time there are many questions and plenty speculation surrounding what life would be like after the South African nationwide lockdown, with the phrase 'the new normal' becoming more familiar. There is a concern over the effects that the lockdown, as a time of crisis, will have on worship services with churches in a position to open their doors to the public once more. As a result of recognising the lockdown as a liminal phase, perspectives are shared when considering how does the church gather again in a post-lockdown context and therefore a post-liminal phase. One prevailing perspective in considering this post-liminal phase involves koinonia and how an indiscriminating virus can remind those to further practice inclusivity and ubuntu, by embracing sameness and difference when 'being church'. Whilst another important perspective focusses on ritualising certain measures in the worship service to prevent the spread of COVID-19, thus allowing a community to come together whilst minimising the spread of a communicable disease. This is concluded by echoing the spirit of ubuntu in 'being church' during and after the crises of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

MARNUS HAVENGA

Singing amidst suffering

Singing does not only occur in the best of times, but also in the worst of times. It is often in response to suffering, that people resort to and find consolation in the power of song. This has again been seen over the past year. Amidst the agony caused by the various crises which afflicted communities all over the world, people (while being *socially distanced* from one another) sang – individually and communally, in unison and in harmony, from balconies and over Zoom, in deserted buildings and on social media. This paper will explore this phenomenon theologically and especially focus on the liturgical dimensions and implications of singing in times of suffering and sorrow. This will be done by turning to voices from the classical theological tradition, principally St. Augustine, and more recent thinkers such as James Cone.

WILHELM GRAB & PHILIPP ÖHLMANN

Lived Religion as a Hermeneutical Lens. New Perspectives on Religion and Development

There has been a steeply increasing interest in the interrelation of religion and development in development research, policy and practice, leading to the emergence of a new, transdisciplinary research field. A multitude of books, articles and reports has begun to explore the manifold relationships and interactions of religious beliefs, religious practices and religious communities with the economic, social, ecological, political and cultural dimensions of development. Nonetheless, in much of the literature a secular view persists which follows a functional paradigm by investigating the contribution that religion can make to the implementation of secular development agendas. There is hardly any question about what specifically characterises religious practices. It has not been clarified what actually makes practices religious practices or practices of faith. It therefore remains unclear why and how religious practices specifically gain the power to contribute to development and therefore the solution of national and global crises. Against this background, this paper proposes "lived religion" as a hermeneutical approach for the religion and development research field in view of the multiple global crises. Lived religion refers to the

fact that religion has a decisive influence on the way people live their lives, what empowers them to become the subject of their life by giving them confidence in a meaningful life-perspective. Lived religion is religion as cultural practice in all the dimensions in which individual, social and societal life takes place in a respective context. The articulation of lived religion is performing culture and performed by culture. A hermeneutics of lived religion opens the dialogue of religious ideas and images, of symbols and rituals, of religious agents and communities within the broader social context of the various dimension of development. The paper outlines a conceptual framework that includes the individual, social and institutional level of religion. It thereby serves to broaden the scope and precision of the religion and development debate.

JAMES UCHEOMA

Christian Initiatives and Revivalism in Times of Crises in Nigeria

Religion has always provided humankind solace and hope in times of crises—be it personal, social or global. Often, it has also been enriched or moulded in such times. Life's challenges would always be there and the resourcefulness of religion has been evident. This paper investigates the faith practices and initiatives of the church and Christians in Nigeria during national and global crises. The crises that were selected for the study are the Nigeria Civil War (1967–1970) and the First World War and Influenza Epidemics of 1918. These incidents created so much fear and insecurity and a sense of helplessness that only religion might assuage. Christianity provided a prop for the Biafrans during the Civil War, and they thought they were fighting to preserve it. The resultant was upsurge and dynamism in religious activities. Although the national and the international crises are ages apart, they both contributed to the blossoming of a charismatic form of Christianity that focused on prayer meetings, faith healing, prophecy, and well adapted to the local context. The radicalized Christianity that emerged during or immediately after the crises helped in fostering local initiatives in liturgy, theology, and church polity as well as sectarianism.

KIRSTEN VAN DER HAM, MARJOLEIN HEKMAN, MIRELLA KLOMP, PETER-BEN SMIT, THIJS TROM

Ritualized food aid. A diaconal meals project in times of the covid-19 crisis as liturgical practice?

Shortly after the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020, three faith-based organizations initiated a meals project in Amsterdam (NL), in a highly multicultural city district. They started delivering free meals to people in need. Care organizations enlisted clients whom they thought could benefit from this service. Volunteers delivered the meals at home and established relationships with recipients. The project provided relief to a growing number of people, offering free food and social support to recipients with different needs (e.g., older adults, afraid to leave their homes; impaired people unable to prepare meals; people in financial troubles, migrant workers made redundant by the crisis, etc.).

This paper presents the following key findings of research on this meals project: a) it outlines both how (marginalized) people were enabled to developed agency by the project and how they experienced 'inversed sacramentality'; b) it illustrates how, thus, the meals project was a food practice enabling agency, charged with symbolic meaning, experiences of 'sacramental inversion' and with eschatological traits (based on a vision of God's world). Accordingly, the paper argues that the project had a liturgical, even sacramental character: a performance of 'being in Christ' in which active participation leads to a deeper initiation into the Christ mystery.

JOHAN VAN DER MERWE

Voices from the past: An analysis of sermons published in *Die Kerkbode* from October to December during the “pestilence” of 1918

The paper will start with a historical overview of the flu epidemic of 1918 which caused havoc and many deaths in society in South Africa. Unlike the current situation in South Africa, churches did not close their doors and church services continued where possible. Sermons, prayers and hymns sung during church services is therefore an important primary historical source of information of theological thinking and practice in congregations of the time. The paper will therefore secondly give a concise overview of the content of sermons published in the official news paper of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Die Kerkbode* during peak of pandemic in the months of October to December 1918. These sermons are chosen because they were used by many ministers of the church in congregations during the specific time and will therefore give important information of biblical use, theological thinking and the role of the church during the pandemic. The overview will lead to an analysis of the sermons in order to discover common trends in the different sermons. In conclusion the analysis will be compared to current trends.

HUNDZUKANI KHOSA-NKHATINI

Restriction of burial rites during Covid-19 pandemic: an African liturgical challenge

African burial rites are very common in Africa, burials are not the end of life but rather the beginning of another life in the land of the ancestors. The president of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. President Cyril Ramaphosa, announced lockdown in March 2020 as a response to the global pandemic: COVID-19. The lockdown came with many restrictions as a respond to decrease the spread of the virus, these restrictions included the closing of place of worship, number of people allowed to attend gatherings, etc. In the African context, it is believed that funeral and bereavement rituals are meant to help purify the mourners. This might be considered to be a myth or strange in Western society .In the Western part of the world, a funeral following a death is a private family matter, but in most part of Africa funerals, especially of an elder, is a major social event and is attended by lots of people. There are burial rites that takes place leading to the day of the funeral, some of these rituals requires the corpse to present a day before the funeral. However lockdown restrictions made it impossible for such rituals to take place especially if someone had passed on due to Covis-19 related illness. This has challenged African burial rites and rituals, this paper aim to look at these challenges and what it means for those who were buried without these African rituals and what this mean to the remaining members of the family. For most, if not all, Africans, funerals are a big event and the attendance of many people and burial rites are extremely important.

SUZANNE VAN DER MERWE

Funerals & Covid-19: a micro liturgical audit of funeral rituals in a Dutch Reformed congregation

Liturgical theology is ecclesial ritual action in which the church, realized in local assemblies, manifests and shapes its identity. This paper will solely focus on funeral ritual actions in a Dutch Reformed Church in the Free State during the Covid-19 pandemic. The presence of Covid-19 in our world has radically altered the liturgical life of funerals. The South African government declared funerals, amongst other social gatherings, as super spreader events. Funerals were held with the strictest health and safety protocols in

place, as well as significant other restrictions. These safety precautions include that funeral attendees must wear facial masks and be separated from one another by a safe distance. Human touch and bodily interaction are not allowed in any manner. No form of social gathering is allowed after the funeral service. Mutual presence, embodied interactions, moving together, singing and praying, even sharing a meal together, which are constitutive elements in the creation of liturgy, are not allowed under these strict regulations. This paper aims to undertake a micro liturgical audit of funeral rituals and congregants' experiences thereof in a Dutch Reformed congregation in the Free State to provide insight into the altered funeral liturgical landscape caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

NICOLAAS MATTHEE

Playful Enclaves: Death and Ritual in Spiritfarer

This paper offers the case study of a contemporary digital game (Spiritfarer, 2020), and player experience after playing the game. Spiritfarer places players in the shoes of Stella, who is in charge of a ferry taking the recently deceased to the Everdoor. During gameplay, players are engaged in heavily ritualised actions (preparing food, visiting sacred sites, building memorials, etc.) while tending to the souls of those crossing over. This study uses a mixed-method approach to reflect on player experience by using data from Steam reviews (N=5069) to categorise and explore death, grief, and bereavement at the nexus of online-offline living. Because of the current global pandemic, the digital aspect of the "life-world" is speeding up and a greater understanding of the praxis of lived religion is important from a practical theological perspective. Ritual performance in Spiritfarer opens a ludic and playful enclave where players experience and engage with death, grief, and bereavement in ways that provide new insights into digital religion.