



Proselytization to Polarization: The Danger(s) of (Christian) Religious Education in South Africa

Jonas Sello Thinane¹  & Chitja Twala² 

¹ Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR), University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa.

² Department of Cultural and Political Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

In most African nations, including South Africa, the history of religious education is closely linked to the nation's experience of colonization and later racial segregation under apartheid. Christian religious education in particular came to be used as a proselytizing tool through the advocacy of early Christian missionaries. In addition to such proselytization, early Christian missionaries became very instrumental in the creation and perpetuation of secular polarized higher education curricula which continue to exhibit complete submission to Euro-centric thought. The purpose of this article was thus to draw a link between historical proselytization and contemporary religious polarization visible in the religious curricula of these institutions. Methodologically, this was demonstrated, first by looking at how the spread of Christianity suppressed, marginalized, and undermined native African religious education. Second, the history of Christian religious education was presented not only as an enrichment of the Christian proselytizing program but also as a missionary tool that consolidated the polarized education that continues to shape the curriculum design of higher education systems in the countries of southern Africa. Drawing largely from secondary sources, both in history and in religious studies, the article argued that in South Africa, religious education has been used to serve the colonial and oppressive apartheid systems. The main conclusion of this article is that many curricula in South Africa's higher education systems still reflect or are characterized by a polarized type of Euro-centric education, which is a legacy of earlier Christian proselytization initiatives.

Correspondence

Chitja Twala
Email: Chitja.twala@ul.ac.za

Publication History

Received: 5th July, 2024
Accepted: 22nd October, 2024
Published online:
28th November, 2024

Keywords: *Religious Education, Colonization, European Missionaries, Christianity, Proselytization*

INTRODUCTION

Religion can be defined as a social-cultural phenomenon that encompasses moral precepts, rituals, practices, and beliefs about the existence of a supernatural or divine being, even though defining it still defies intellectual coherence.¹ Throughout human history, most societies have embraced religion as a

¹ Stewart Elliott Guthrie, "Religion: What Is It?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1996, 412–19; Alar Kilp, "Religion in the Construction of the Cultural'self and'other'," *KVÜÖA Toimetised*, no. 14 (2011): 197–222.

framework for comprehending the cosmos and the significance of human life in relation to divinity.² This led to the emergence and spread of various forms of religions around the world,³ some of which grew into major world religions. The major religions of the world can be divided into two groups: Indian religions, which include Sikhism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and many others, and Abrahamic religions, which include Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.⁴ Among these great religions, Christianity has been the most widespread for several years, with over two billion adherents worldwide.⁵ In the fifteenth through twentieth centuries of European colonialism, these two millennia-old religions spread throughout the world, including but not limited to continents such as Africa. Missionaries have played a major role in this religion's success, especially in Africa where it is the most prevalent.⁶

When Christianity arrived in most ancient African nations, African traditional religions were widely practiced, despite encountering a range of indigenous polytheistic practices that varied depending on the receiving region or culture.⁷ Despite the complexity and diversity of this encounter, Christianity was able to incorporate aspects of native beliefs, which helped it spread throughout most African communities. Conversely, there have been instances of conflict or opposition between Christianity and African faiths, whereby certain African communities have opposed the encroachment of Christian doctrine.⁸ These communities saw Christianity as a grave danger to their traditional religious practices and sense of indigenous cultural identity. As intriguing as it may seem or sound, these rejections in some way boosted missionary attempts to find innovative means of converting more Africans to Christianity. One of these creative strategies was the founding of schools, which also served to accomplish the objective of converting Africans to Christianity.⁹ This effectively produced the current situation where many people on the African continent are followers of Christianity, with relatively few of them belonging to traditional African religions.¹⁰ Analysis of the curricula taught by theological faculty in most South African universities reveals that Indigenous Religious Knowledge remains subordinate to Christian religious education. In addition to advancing the goals of Christian proselytization, this creates a polarized atmosphere in which African religious knowledge is still marginalized in formal educational institutions, such as theology faculties. The concept of indigenous religion in Africa and early African religious education programs are first discussed to preface the introduction of Christianity in Africa.

This article first explores how formal religious education in Africa, with a focus on South Africa, has marginalized and suppressed indigenous religious education to promote Christianity. The second part of the discussion addresses how African indigenous religious identity was polarized by the success of proselytizing Africans through Christian religious education. Thirdly, the article illustrates how the status quo has been maintained in South Africa following the end of apartheid, with many of the nation's universities still providing courses in Christian theology at the expense of native religious instruction. Thus, this article's work will primarily show how successfully missionaries have used formal schooling systems to promote Christianity, as well as how much these systems have been used to divide African religions even to the present day. In essence, it will show how the establishment of formal education systems and the spread of religious teachings by missionaries in countries like South

² Talal Asad, "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," in *Religion in Today's World* (Routledge, 2013), 17–34; J.F. Haught, *Science and Religion in Search of Cosmic Purpose* (Georgetown University Press, 2000).

³ Peter Beyer, "The Modern Emergence of Religions and a Global Social System for Religion," *International Sociology* 13, no. 2 (1998): 151–72.

⁴ Lloyd Ridgeon, *Major World Religions: From Their Origins to the Present* (Routledge, 2003); R S Ellwood and G D Alles, *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Facts on File Library of Religion and Mythology (Infobase Publishing, 2008).

⁵ M. Humphries, *Early Christianity* (Routledge, 2006); Graeme W Clarke, "The Origins and Spread of Christianity," *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 1996, 848–72..

⁶ D.L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*, vol. 25 (John Wiley & Sons, 2009); P A Viera, "Christian Missions in Africa and Their Role in the Transformation of African Societies," *Asian and African Studies* 16, no. 2 (2007): 249–60.

⁷ Joseph Omosade Awolalu, "What Is African Traditional Religion," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 10, no. 2 (1976): 1–10.

⁸ Roy Love, "Religion, Ideology & Conflict in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 110 (2006): 619–34.

⁹ Francisco A Gallego and Robert Woodberry, "Christian Missionaries and Education in Former African Colonies: How Competition Mattered," *Journal of African Economies* 19, no. 3 (2010): 294–329.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995); Birgit Meyer, "Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 2 (2002): 167–99.

Africa intensified Christian evangelization efforts, leading to the fragmentation of traditional African religious education. The introduction of Christianity to South Africa by missionaries and the establishment of official educational institutions as a result will then be covered. Finally, the article examines the widespread presence of Christian religious teachings in higher education theological curriculums in South Africa, resulting in the marginalization of indigenous religious traditions. The concluding section offers proof that Christian-promoted theological curricula in higher education continue to be harmful and polarizing toward African religious traditions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on religious education on the African continent has largely been dominated by histories of how European missionaries and colonial administrators which Boas and Weiskopf described as ‘... the first decade of British rule was not altogether unsympathetic to the needs of colonists. In fact, one of them was that it consistently favoured the concerns of Boers over this society.’¹¹ Bundy it is often noted that the role of early missionaries covertly encompassed the early introduction of capitalist social norms, the market economy and class formation systems in Africa.¹² Analysing the above statement, Lewis’s contribution was that capitalist propagation was not the primary concern of missionaries.¹³ Theirs was to introduce the Western kind of education with selective interpretation of data. Lewis made a huge scholarly contribution to the topic of religion and education in South Africa.

In his PhD thesis, completed in 1999, Lewis observed that there were two commonly held perceptions about missionaries. First, that they were racist. Second, their education system promoted colonialism.¹⁴ The understanding of racism, colonialism and missionaries’ role therein, was in turn determined by numerous factors among historians, academics, politicians and journalists. The perceptions of each of these groups are often determined by partisan interests, which inevitably lead to unfair generalisations and stereotypes since the metaleptical nature of education is denied. Cross unpacks the two basic theoretical models that emerged from colonial and mission education. Here, the author refers to the first model as the ‘Reproduction Model’ with which education is perceived as ‘an agency of social control or a mechanism of reproduction of labour’. The second one is called the ‘Balance-sheet model’ in which missionaries are perceived as assessing their ‘good’ and ‘bad’ activities.¹⁵

As a leading scholar on decolonisation, Ndlovu-Gatsheni posits that for colonisation to have succeeded on the African continent, schools, colleges, universities and churches played a significant role as they became sites for the reproduction of every of coloniality.¹⁶ In his scholarly works, Ndlovu-Gatsheni has been concerned with the consequences of conquest for the colonised and its impact on indigenous social, political and economic organisations. This, he contends, was accompanied by effective mental control of indigenous people.¹⁷ Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s line of argument was supported by Seroto who explained that the ‘consequence of colonialism and coloniality on indigenous social, political and economic organisation is currently a serious concern.’¹⁸ The call to decolonise university programmes, intellectual landscapes and infrastructures has become the norm.’

This article has its roots within the wider scope of transforming the education sectors in South Africa. The historicization of colonial education as articulated in this article further suggests the importance of re-looking at the curriculum development of the South African higher education

¹¹ Jack Boas, “The Activities of the London Missionary Society in South Africa, 1806-1836: An Assessment,” *African Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (1973): 417–35.

¹² Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, vol. 28 (Univ of California Press, 1979).

¹³ A Lewis, “Perceptions of Mission Education in South Africa from a Historical-Educational Perspective,” *Journal for Christian Scholarship= Tydskrif Vir Christelike Wetenskap* 43, no. 1_2 (2007): 192.

¹⁴ A. Lewis, “Past and Present Perceptions Surrounding Mission Education: A Historical-Metaleptical Overview” (University of Stellenbosch, 1999).ii.

¹⁵ Michael Cross, “The Political Economy of Colonial Education: Mozambique, 1930-1975,” *Comparative Education Review* 31, no. 4 (1987): 550–69.

¹⁶ Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity* (Berghahn Books, 2022).

¹⁷ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity*.

¹⁸ Johannes Seroto, “Dynamics of Decoloniality in South Africa: A Critique of the History of Swiss Mission Education for Indigenous People,” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 44, no. 3 (2018): 1–14.

institutions and assessing to what extent these institutions harboured religious education in advancing to colonial and apartheid projects.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Religious Education in Africa

The history of education in Africa or its consequent introduction in a formal sense can be divided into two periods ranging from pre- to post-colonialism. Furthermore, historical literature encompassing African societies indicates in one way or another that Africans always had some level of respect for religious education, be it formal or non-formal, far prior to the introduction of formal education by European colonists. To this end, what may very well be referred to as traditional African religious education falls in the pre-colonial period and the European style of religious education in the post-colonial period or as accurately noted by Seroto, the curriculum of African indigenous education which includes but was not limited to religious education in the pre-colonial period consisted, among other things, of the oral transmission of stories, legends, traditions, and ritual knowledge from one generation to another.¹⁹

In the Southern Africa region, especially among the Khoi, San, and Bantu-speaking people, the transmission of indigenous knowledge was vertical in the sense that adults or older generations handed teachings to the younger generations of the society. Consequently, or as it may very well appear, African people always appreciated the value of religious education or some form of a system wherein transmission of accumulated religious knowledge was facilitated in one way or another. However, it is perhaps important to note that such an educational system was almost always closely linked to or expressed the socio-cultural norms upheld by African indigenous societies in their majority. In other words, what may be called the African religious education system was relevant if it enabled the preservation of the society's shared religious beliefs and norms or their oral passing down from one generation to the next. Considering this, the following two paragraphs will make an effort to define what has typically come to be recognized as the key distinction between pre- and post-colonial religious education in Southern Africa, as well as potentially in other regions of Africa. The only thing that stands out in the history of religious education in Africa is that when it was formally introduced, particularly in the form of religious education in Christian mission schools, it was significantly less integrated into everyday African life than in the pre-colonial period.

Although the history around the first arrival of the Christian religion in Africa remains complex and multi-layered, church historians largely trace it to the early centuries of the Christian era. According to historical legend, Mark the Evangelist was the founder of the Christian church in Alexandria, Egypt, laying the foundation for its growth in North Africa in the first or early second century. Consequently, after its early arrival, it further spread into and across other regions of Africa involving other agents, communities and especially various missionaries who played a prominent role in spreading its presence throughout the countries of Africa. The very first missionaries in Africa appear to have been of Catholic affiliation and were accompanying European explorers and traders who established contacts with various African indigenous communities and kingdoms in the late 15th or early 16th centuries.

In particular, the early Catholic missionaries who travelled along the west coast of Africa in the 15th century were in the company of Portuguese explorers such as Diogo Cão and later Vasco da Gama. Catholic Christian missionaries first arrived in Sub-Saharan Africa in the late 15th century, and King Afonso I of the Kingdom of Kongo in Central Africa appears to have been among the first African rulers to welcome them. Consequently, aside from the uncertainty of its early introduction, what was seen as formal religious education later came onto the scene with the very same European missionaries who introduced it as part of or almost parallel to the establishment of formal schooling in several parts of Africa.

The Dutch colonial administrator Johan Anthoniszoon van Riebeeck (also called Jan Van Riebeeck) sailed from Texel in the Netherlands to Africa on December 24, 1651, accompanied by 82

¹⁹ Johannes Seroto, "Indigenous Education during the Pre-Colonial Period in Southern Africa," *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 10, no. 1 (2011): 77–88.

men, 8 women, and a member of his family. After their arrival on April 5, 1652, at the southern tip of the African continent, they settled at the Cape of Good Hope, which has since developed into today's Cape Town in South Africa. Since then, the arrival of Christian missionaries to southern Africa attained unprecedented levels, further establishing Christianity as a religion among the indigenous people. Later in the 17th century, the arrival of many other Christian missionaries such as Georg Schmidt, who arrived in July of 1737 and founded the first Protestant mission called the Moravian Brethren. These increased arrivals may have anticipated the missiological call expressed in Carey William's 1792 publication calling for greater conversion of the 'heathens', referring to indigenous Africans. This publication was not only hailed as a landmark in Christian history but was also referred to as the 'first and still the greatest missionary treatise in the English language.'²⁰

Shortly after the publication of his pamphlet, Carey preached his famous sermon with its two heads, namely, 'Expect great things ... Attempt great things'. After this and five months later, the Baptist Missionary Society was founded on 2 October 1792. This was quickly followed by the interdenominational London Missionary Society, which was founded in 1799. This was followed by the Religious Tract Society, and several other organisations later. On the other hand, the promotion, translation, and publication of the Holy Bible was the specific task of the British and Foreign Bible Society which was established in 1804. It should be noted that most of the missionary work during this time was carried out outside English-speaking Protestantism.²¹ All these developments the Africans gave little space to reject or accept the introduction of Christianity to their shores.

Christian Religious Education in Africa

As already stated above, more Africans identified as Christians than any other religion in many populations in most of Southeast Africa, Central Africa, parts of the Horn of Africa West Africa, and Southern Africa. Religious networks in the form of religious organizations played a central role in establishing or founding formal education in both colonial and post-colonial environments, with the African continent being more affected.²² That is to say, notwithstanding the consequent overshadowing influence of Christianity, various religions played a role in establishing formal education systems in different parts of Africa. As an example among others, Muslim scholars or Islamic agents played an important role in the transmission of knowledge and the establishment of school systems, particularly in African regions where Islam was dominant.²³ In particular, formal education systems came to be founded and developed by Christian missionaries, though as a component of Christian-founded educational institutions. However, it is perhaps worth emphasizing at this point that the above statement in no way suggests that educational systems did not exist in Africa prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries in particular. Such misleading claims have long been rejected by historical scholarship, as in the case of Pearce and Ezeanya-Esiobu, who are unanimous in arguing that education, regardless of its informal status, was active in many parts of Africa way before the beginning of the colonial period itself.²⁴ That, however, does not discount the reality wherein early missionaries in Africa not only became the initiators of education formal systems but also erected educational institutions. Through such formal structures, the integration of secular education with Christian teachings was facilitated. In other words, or more strategically, in addition to supporting colonial goals such as economic exploitation, the establishment of formal schooling helped Christianity to proselytize most African communities, particularly the South African regions.²⁵

²⁰ Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova, "The Role of Early" Missionaries of Africa" or "White Fathers" In the Study and Development of African Languages," *Asian & African Studies* (13351257) 20, No. 2 (2011).

²¹ Pawlikova-Vilhanova, "The Role of Early" Missionaries of Africa " or "White Fathers" In the Study and Development of African Languages."

²² Hansjörg Dilger and Dorothea Schulz, "Politics of Religious Schooling: Christian and Muslim Engagements with Education in Africa: Introduction," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43, no. 4 (2013): 365–78.

²³ H.N. Boyle, "Islamic Education in West and Central Africa," in *Handbook of Islamic Education* (Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 637–50.

²⁴ Robert Pearce, "Missionary Education in Colonial Africa: The Critique of Mary Kingsley," *History of Education* 17, no. 4 (1988): 283–94; Chika Ezeanya-Esiobu, *Indigenous Knowledge and Education in Africa* (Springer Nature, 2019).

²⁵ J. Carpenter, P.L. Glanzer, and N.S. Lantinga, *Christian Higher Education: A Global Reconnaissance* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014).

Consequently, missionary networks appeared to have been overridden or used to ignite educational networks. Except for the focus on education, there were other different kinds of grids, namely, political, family, and religious, and how they formed organisational and geographical connections. Thus, the itineraries of missionaries across the continent traced certain agendas, and in some ways, parallel to using religion coupled with purported educational gains for political exploitation.

The dominance of Christian religion and Christian religious education in most African nations may have resulted from several factors, including the free dominance of missionaries who gave high priority to achieving Christian goals in their work as educators. Under such circumstances, the catechetical centres eventually evolved into schools, with missionaries and evangelists functioning as spiritual leaders and teachers, and their catechists being both students and potential converts.²⁶ More African converts were baptized and received holy communion in schools because of the missionaries' strategic and consequential establishment of formal educational systems, which went above and beyond the system's instructional initial objectives.

Furthermore, it is crucial to note here, though, that just as the arrival of Christianity disregarded the indigenous African religions, it also disregarded the existence of religious education systems within African communities.²⁷ Though somewhat informal, for most African societies religious education was a crucial aspect of passing on indigenous beliefs and practices to the next generations. This form of education was transmitted orally, through rituals, ceremonies, storytelling, initiation rites, and ceremonies performed by African spiritual leaders, elders, or priests.²⁸ Here, the study argues, the African family structures played a significant role in facilitating this kind of religious education, albeit informal.

Despite the complexity of African family structures under disruptive colonialism, in initiating children to Christian education, short Bible stories were emphasized. Consequently, new Christian religious education was introduced through formal schooling systems established by missionaries, replacing the informal religious education systems that existed in Africa at the time.²⁹ Consequently, or following the era of apartheid as a byproduct of colonization, the next sections will show the extent to which the maintenance of Christian religious education in and of itself has marginalized Africa's indigenous religious education systems.

Christian Mission in Religious Education

The consequent arrival of Christian missionaries and their advocacy for Christian religious education had a significant impact on the politicisation of education in South Africa. In this section of the article, the following key aspects of its influence are highlighted. First, the spread of Christianity was fast-tracked by missionary education. Missionaries often established schools alongside their churches. In these church schools, not only were religious doctrines taught but basic literacy and numeracy skills were also offered. This was also confirmed by Gallego and Woodberry, who state that Christian missionaries were central agents in the development of the educational systems in former African colonies.³⁰ In most former colonies, the first schools were founded by missionaries.

Second, there was an envisaged 'transformation' agenda by the introduction of Western education to indigenous South Africans. However, this transformation agenda, the study argues, was accompanied by the exploitation of these South Africans to also despise what was African at the expense of the Western way of life. This, to a greater extent, challenged traditional African norms and customs. Interestingly, these church schools taught in European languages which contributed immensely to the somewhat partial extinguishing of the indigenous language to be considered as academic languages of instruction. Along with academic subjects, the missionaries also taught

²⁶ Terence Ranger, "African Attempts to Control Education in East and Central Africa 1900-1939," *Past & Present*, no.32(1965):57-85.

²⁷ Michael B Adeyemi and Augustus A Adeyinka, "The Principles and Content of African Traditional Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35, no. 4 (2003): 425-40.

²⁸ Seroto, "Indigenous Education during the Pre-Colonial Period in Southern Africa"; Harold Scheub, "A Review of African Oral Traditions and Literature," *African Studies Review* 28, no. 2-3 (1985): 1-72.

²⁹ J.W. Fraser and D.L. Moore, "Religion and the History of Education," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 445-58.

³⁰ Gallego and Woodberry, "Christian Missionaries and Education in Former African Colonies: How Competition Mattered."

European cultural values and norms. Potentially this led to the erosion of some indigenous cultural practices and the adoption of European superiority.

Despite the above, there were also political impacts. For example, missionary education contributed to the emergence of an educated South African elite who played a significant role in various societal spheres, including political arenas. As will be shown in the article, many African leaders who later became instrumental in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid were products of missionary schools. To place the above into a South African proper perspective, we argue that in line with the principle of sphere sovereignty, South Africa as a state has no natural or inherent right to infringe upon the affairs of other societal relationships such as religious institutions, parental homes, the school, businesses, sports bodies and so on, since all of these are autonomous societal relationships. Thus, the study contends that there are overlapping relationships in this regard. Like many other countries, South Africa also experienced the meddling of the state on religious matters which ultimately led to religion being used to advance party politics. As explained by Van der Walt, the state should always uphold the following two basic human rights purposes, namely, to shield citizens and their societal relationships against state dominance as well as the vagaries of other citizens.³¹ Civil liberties protect individuals against the arbitrary use of state power.

Mission Schools in South Africa

In South Africa, almost 80% of the population subscribes to some religious faith or another. This clearly shows the influence of religion on the population. During the pre- and post-apartheid eras, religion influenced policies. Christianity inspired revolutionaries, and freedom struggles and provided spiritual nourishment for social justice. Paradoxically, the same Christianity through religious education in schools entrenched divisions by supporting the divide-and-rule policies under the apartheid regime post-1948. The above-mentioned status quo led to political and religious resistance to the different governments of South Africa. In the Eastern Cape, for example, the mission stations which were viewed by Africans as institutions for subjugation were destroyed in successive frontier wars. The network of believers or 'school people' that emerged from these mission stations and schools was to profoundly influence the intellectual history and political life of South Africa. Thus the purpose of education was solely, in the eyes of many missionaries, to transform black pupils from 'heathens' to what was perceived as useful, and industrious citizens, in keeping with Calvinist ethic inculcating the notion that idle hands were the devil's workshop. Consequently, black pupils and their communities were at this stage not entirely satisfied with the quality of education they were receiving, in addition to not perceiving the point of attending such a schooling environment.

By converting Africans to Christianity, missionaries believed that they were civilizing and 'saving' them. This, the study contends, was part and parcel of religious indoctrination that engulfed the whole country and reinforced European superiority. Furthermore, mission schools became instrumental in controlling the dissemination of knowledge. In the main, this approach privileged Eurocentric perspectives whilst at the same time marginalized indigenous knowledge systems. With this approach and the control of what was taught, missionaries could shape the worldview of Africans, ensuring that the world was viewed through colonial lenses. At the social level, these schools played a role in creating an 'educated' group that was often loyal to colonial authorities through Christian institutions. Some of these 'educated elites' were sometimes used as intermediaries between colonial and local populations, helping to maintain colonial control. The above view was also confirmed by Mkhathshwa who writes:

The churches, especially in South Africa, are riddled with contradictions. All the contradictions of the society are reproduced in the structures, practices, and ideologies of the churches... Perhaps the most serious contradiction in the churches is that between the promise of salvation or liberation and the reality of complete passivity or blind obedience.³²

³¹ Johannes L Van der Walt, "Religion in Education in South Africa: Was Social Justice Served?," *South African Journal of Education* 31, no. 3 (2011): 381–93.

³² S. Mkhathshwa, "The Churches, Liberation, and the Future," in *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa*. (Penrose Book Printers, 1994), 155.

In the early 1900s, when independent churches first started to dabble in politics of resistance, the Afrikaners and the British alike were upset and puzzled. The General Missionary Conference of 1906 simplistically felt that Ethiopianism's origins lay in 'a spirit of pride and jealousy'³³ Ethiopianism³⁴ was a philosophy of religious independence, that manifested itself in the rise of African separatist churches that broke away from the paternalistic control of white missionaries. This was another form of response by Africans towards growing white domination in South Africa.³⁵ With Ethiopianism, the utilitarian value of churches was now clear, namely, education, economy, stability, and political connections. The researchers contend that all of this to a certain extent stressed an element subservient to the government of the day. However, this was contested by Volz who stressed the propensity to amalgamate and concluded that 'adoption of Christianity did not connote subservience to European rule, and the primary allegiance of most Tswana evangelists to continue to lie with their rulers and communities'.³⁶ On the other side, Campbell probed the deep-rooted intersection of politics and religion to peer deeper into the motivations of early activists to better gauge the inspirations and driving forces of men and women active in church and politics.³⁷

According to Odendaal, Africans also responded to expanding white dominance in South Africa with the ideology of religious freedom, which was shown in the emergence of African separatist churches that rebelled against the paternalistic authority of European missionaries.³⁸ In contrast to those who supported constitutional methods of bringing about evolutionary change, separatists were irritated with white dominance and doubtful of the possibility of evolutionary transformation. After growing disillusioned with the flaws of colonial society, they left white-dominated institutions and founded African-only organizations to better their own lot in life. They sought to maintain what they saw as the finest aspects of European civilization while renouncing the bonds of white dominance and reclaiming their precious freedom.

According to Dube and Molise, education in mission schools provided fertile ground for educating people and developing a nationalist consciousness. They argue that liberation theology was embraced as a lens for interpreting the apartheid system.³⁹ Reddy also echoed the same sentiments that mission schools produced and domesticated emerging black elites for the important terrain of student mobilization, ideological debate, and resistance.⁴⁰ However, in their work, these authors fail to interrogate the negative impact of these mission schools in entrenching the apartheid ideals, that of oppression. The most notable missionary schools in South Africa prior to the promulgation of the Bantu Education in 1953 were Healdtown and Lovedale College in the Cape Province, now the Eastern Cape, and Adams College and St Francis College in Natal, now KwaZulu-Natal.

Apartheid's impact versus resistance to missionary education

As already elucidated above, the introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 had a devastating impact on the role of the missionaries in South Africa. Explaining the above, Frederick Hale argued that the introduction and implementation of Bantu Education was one legal measure that proved traumatic to the missionaries. The Bantu Education Act as a piece of legislation effectively compelled most missions and denominations, which largely depended on public funds to support their schools, to

³³ F. Suter, "The Ethiopian Movement," in *Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Missionary Conference for South Africa*, 1906.

³⁴ The influx of diverse 'ethnic' groups provided the foundation for the first African mass movement on truly 'national' aspirations. This was the Ethiopian Church, which was established in Pretoria in 1892 by Mangena Mokone. Mokone and several indignant fellow ministers formed the church after having been excluded from a meeting of their white Wesleyan colleagues. They called themselves Ethiopians in reference to biblical texts such as Psalm 68:31, 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God'. The Ethiopian movement soon spread beyond Pretoria, incorporating more and more secessionists from the white-controlled churches (Odendaal, 1984: 25).

³⁵ A. Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics in South Africa* (Totowa, N.J: Barnes and Noble, 1984).

³⁶ Stephen C Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier: Tswana Evangelists and Their Communities during the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 9 (Lang, 2011).

³⁷ J. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, 1995).

³⁸ Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics in South Africa*.

³⁹ B. Dube and H. V. Molise, "The Church and Its Contributions to the Struggle to Liberate the Free State Province," *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 43, no. 1 (2018): 160–77.

⁴⁰ Thiven Reddy, "Higher Education and Social Transformation: South Africa Case Study," 2004.

relinquish them to the state.⁴¹ Prior to the Bantu Education Act of the apartheid administration in 1953, mission schools received government funding for 90% of Black South African schools. The Act took away management of African education from the churches and provincial government and required all such institutions to register with the state. The Bantu Education Department, an organization tasked with maintaining its distinct and subordinate, served as the focal point for this control. Nearly every mission school was shut down. The Roman Catholic Church was mainly by itself when it came to trying to continue operating its schools without public funding. The 1953 Act also separated the financing of education for Africans from general state spending and linked it to direct tax paid by Africans themselves, with the result that far less was spent on black children than on white children.

Moore highlighted that one of the pivotally important aspects of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, was the successful placing of the education of black pupils solely in the hands of the state.⁴² This meant taking the educational power out of the hands of the missionaries. To understand the approach of the apartheid regime, one needs to understand the funding system and the administration of African education at the time. The first important legislative change that saw the formalization of a nationwide finance policy regarding education came with the Union of South Africa in 1910. The Act of Union stipulated that education was a provincial matter for a period of five years. Concurrently, however, 'native affairs' were classified as national concerns, which meant that the administration of black education was the responsibility of the Union's policy. The Union Government established a Union Native Affairs Commission in 1920, which would seek to advise on matters pertaining to black education. Subsequently, there was an incremental shift from each of the four provinces, which used to fund black education from their own tax revenue to vesting the responsibility solely in the Union Government twelve years later.

In writing about mission schools in South Africa, Nwandule exposes dominant trends in this historiography but highlights the one-sided and mostly held view that the missionaries brought enlightenment to the Africans.⁴³ This viewpoint also suggests that the development of missionary education has been a peaceful evolution and has positively impacted Africans. As a result, many missionaries were hailed as having brought the blessings of Christianity and civilisation to Africans.⁴⁴ This shows the condescending way missionaries and missionary education were viewed in South Africa. Despite this credit given to the missionaries, there existed an 'uncivilised' regard by them for the Africans who were regarded as 'heathen' and judged the latter with subjective lenses of being backward in belief systems and behaviours. To the contrary, Majeke is of the opinion, from an economic and political point of view, that missionary education – which was provided in mission schools, aimed at supplementing the state's legislation such as the then Constitution of South Africa and the 1950 Group Areas Act to ensure the continuance of white dominance in South Africa.⁴⁵

As early as 1952, Hattersley warned about the approach of the missionaries when they engaged with the Africans. He stated, 'Few would likely appreciate the superiority of the ethical and spiritual ideals of Christianity since it might not come as a faith but as a body of dogma, unfamiliar to the native mind, already confused by the disharmony of denominated bickering.'⁴⁶ The above statement shows that the overlap of religion and philanthropic work of the missionaries was bound to be interpreted and viewed differently by those subjected to it. The duality of religious adherence created a deeply ambiguous context in which African political culture developed. The missionaries were accused of carrying with them a heavy Christian-liberal ideological baggage. This religion and ideology dichotomy influenced missionary-African relations to positive and negative outcomes, but at the same time followed what is referred to as a synthesis of intricate political maneuvering. The warning also

⁴¹ Frederick Hale, "The Impact of Apartheid on the Educational Endeavours of Two Missionary Agencies," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36, no. 2 (2010): 1–20.

⁴² Nadine Moore, "Segregated Schools of Thought: The Bantu Education Act (1953) Revisited," *New Contree* 79 (2017): 21.

⁴³ C.Z. Nwandule, "The Swiss Mission in South Africa: A Critical Review of Its Educational Practices among the Tsonga People of the North Eastern Transvaal, 1899-1954" (Wits University, 1987).2

⁴⁴ Nwandule, "The Swiss Mission in South Africa: A Critical Review of Its Educational Practices among the Tsonga People of the North Eastern Transvaal, 1899-1954."2.

⁴⁵ Nosipho Majeke, *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* (Society of Young Africa, 1952).

⁴⁶ A.F. Hattersley, "The Mission in South African History," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 4 (1952): 86–88.

came from the Wesleyan Bishop Shaw who noted: ‘Keep yourselves as far as possible from all political affairs of the tribes.’⁴⁷

Religious Influence on Education

The history of the close relationship between religion and education, or the extent to which these two oldest human endeavors relate to and influence one another, has been well recorded in the historical literature.⁴⁸ The main part of this work itself was to show not only how religion and education are related, but also how the arrival and establishment of formal schooling by Christian missionaries in Africa influenced the prospects of the education system to this day. Although there continues to be considerable debate among Christian historians about the extent to which Christianity as a religion influenced the shaping of secular education in most African countries, such a centuries-long reality cannot be denied with certainty. Furthermore, or at least to the extent that in Africa, unlike other parts of the world, the model of Christian religious education preceded the fact of secular education, the influence of Christianity on the view of secular education in Africa cannot be doubted. To this end, it can be said that Christian religious education not only Christianized Africans but also took the form of a political ideology that sought to define the character of education in Africa that would endure for centuries beyond the colonial period itself.⁴⁹ That is, while some aspects of education may well be seen as a driving force of development and liberation in Africa, its inextricable Christian religious influence made it a kind of lifelong colonial weapon against African societies.⁵⁰ As a result, after observing this misguided educational purpose in Africa, several African scholars not only conclude that Africans are facing a crisis of education but also call for an immediate review of the entire African educational philosophy.⁵¹ Although such a crisis is the reality of education systems in several, if not all, regions of Africa, the next two paragraphs demonstrate the existence of such a reality generally in southern Africa and in South Africa in particular.

The entire African continent, as mentioned above, was significantly affected by Euro-Christian colonization, although some were more affected while others were either less affected or gained their independence much earlier. The effects of colonization were not only profound but also lasting, influencing the character of African societies in the areas of politics, economics, and social systems, including, but not limited to education. Fundamentally, for many European nations such as Britain, France and the Netherlands, Christianity became a major force in educating African societies to value Western practices over their indigenous African identities and philosophy. In the immediate years following the arrival of European missionaries in southern Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries, Christian religious education was increasingly used as a tool for proselytizing. Consequently, Southern Africa is probably one of the most African regions with a secular education, heavily influenced by colonialism under the mask of Christianity. Christian missionaries from Europe played a significant role in the establishment of educational institutions that integrated Christian ideas into the core curriculum in addition to helping Christianity spread throughout the Southern Africa region. This is supported by Odendaal who argued that colonialism, conquests and apartheid brought immense changes to African societies in southern Africa, thus affecting their economy, culture, thoughts, way of life and education. He mentions that a crucial part of this process of incorporation and change was played by European missionary societies, particularly through the churches they set up.⁵² This clarifies why southern African nations like Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, and South Africa still have curriculums and educational systems that are heavily influenced by European philosophy and Christian

⁴⁷ Hattersley, “The Mission in South African History.”88.

⁴⁸ Arto Jauhiainen and Marika Alho-Malmelin, “Education as a Religion in the Learning Society,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 23, no. 5 (2004): 459–74; Warren A Nord, “Science, Religion and Education,” *Religion & Education* 26, no.2(1999):55–66.

⁴⁹ Patrick Ebewo, “Religion as an Ideological Weapon in Africa: A View From the Stage.” *The Journal of Religion and Theatre* 5, no. 2 (2006): 115–23.

⁵⁰ Jutta Bolt and Dirk Bezemer, “Understanding Long-Run African Growth: Colonial Institutions or Colonial Education?,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 45, no. 1 (2009): 24–54; Birgit Brock-Utne, *Whose Education for All?: The Recolonization of the African Mind* (Routledge, 2002).

⁵¹ K.M. Billa, *Rethinking the African Philosophy of Education* (African Books Collective, 2024); E. Shizha and Ngoni Makuva, *Re-Thinking Postcolonial Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century* (Rotterdam Sense Publishers, 2017).

⁵² Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics in South Africa*.

values. Of these, South Africa remains one of the most affected countries, particularly since Christian-led colonization gave rise to apartheid as a by-product.

The colonial maneuvers hidden behind Christian missionary efforts introduced a Western education system aimed at integrating South Africans into European culture and society. While on the one hand, Christianity was used as the strongest weapon in the arsenal of European imperialism to tame the indigenous South Africans into submission, the educational landscape and curriculum were designed to sustainably promote Eurocultural interests. In other words, Christian beliefs and practices, as promoted through Christian religious education from the pre-colonial era to its immediate post-apartheid impact, concretized the educational system that had hitherto protected colonial interests in South Africa.⁵³ Consequently, it is not even surprising to realize that, although apartheid in South Africa was erroneously maintained as a divine mandate, the transition to a new democratic dispensation in the early 1990s was equally carried on the back of Christian theological messages and themes. That is, although Christian theological thought itself is far from being the sole driving force of democracy in South Africa, it nevertheless integrated the nation into the ethical discourses of unity and reconciliation that characterized the period of transition from apartheid to democracy. In this way, Christian thought became the heartbeat of educational philosophy and symbolized the sole tool of logic that accompanies the thought process of South Africans to this day.

Consequently, or with a proselytizing intent, African thought has been subjected to the constraints imposed by Western forces through the introduction of Christian religious education and the maintenance of its values in South Africa's current secular education systems. Furthermore, or at least in terms of polarized education, the historical imposition of a Christian-centered education system has indoctrinated South Africans to apply logic only to the extent that it served Eurocolonial interests. Consequently, the historical conversion of native South Africans to Christianity during the pre-colonial era and the post-apartheid era was not a goal unto itself, but rather a calculated technique through which South African curricula were created to constantly yield to the generational demands of Eurocentric educational logic (polarized education).

CONCLUSION

This article has highlighted how indigenous African religious education has been and continues to be suppressed, marginalized and undermined by the Western approach to education. Using the current Euro-centric education system in South Africa it traced its origin from the nation's experience of colonization and later racial segregation under apartheid. This research aimed to fill a vacuum that encompasses South Africa's current curricula and higher education system as by-products of the connection between historical religious proselytization and educational polarization. Thus, or at least with the intention of proselytizing, it is concluded that African thought has been and remains endangered by the historical intellectual constraints that were imposed by Western forces and masked behind the introduction of Christian religious education. Considering this, or in reference to polarized education, it is equally concluded that South Africans have been irreversibly drawn to a higher education ideology and curriculums that continuously seek to uphold the commands of a Euro-centric form of education. In conclusion, it is argued that the historic conversion of indigenous South Africans to Christianity was not an end, but a deliberate strategy to entrench a polarized higher education system and curricula that will always pander to Eurocentric educational demands.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adeyemi, Michael B, and Augustus A Adeyinka. "The Principles and Content of African Traditional Education." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35, no. 4 (2003): 425–40.
- Asad, Talal. "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category." In *Religion in Today's World*, 17–34. Routledge, 2013.
- Awolalu, Joseph Omosade. "What Is African Traditional Religion." *Studies in Comparative Religion* 10, no. 2 (1976): 1–10.

⁵³ Francis Machingura and Cecil Samuel Kalizi, "Christian Education in Colonial and Post-Independent Zimbabwe: A Paradigm Shift," *Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024): 213.

- Beyer, Peter. "The Modern Emergence of Religions and a Global Social System for Religion." *International Sociology* 13, no. 2 (1998): 151–72.
- Billa, K.M. *Rethinking the African Philosophy of Education*. African Books Collective, 2024.
- Boas, Jack. "The Activities of the London Missionary Society in South Africa, 1806-1836: An Assessment." *African Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (1973): 417–35.
- Bolt, Jutta, and Dirk Bezemer. "Understanding Long-Run African Growth: Colonial Institutions or Colonial Education?" *The Journal of Development Studies* 45, no. 1 (2009): 24–54.
- Boyle, H.N. "Islamic Education in West and Central Africa." In *Handbook of Islamic Education*, 637–50. Switzerland: Springer, 2018.
- Brock-Utne, Birgit. *Whose Education for All?: The Recolonization of the African Mind*. Routledge, 2002.
- Bundy, Colin. *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*. Vol. 28. Univ of California Press, 1979.
- Campbell, J. *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg, 1995.
- Carpenter, J., P.L. Glanzer, and N.S. Lantinga. *Christian Higher Education: A Global Reconnaissance*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014.
- Clarke, Graeme W. "The Origins and Spread of Christianity." *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 1996, 848–72.
- Cross, Michael. "The Political Economy of Colonial Education: Mozambique, 1930-1975." *Comparative Education Review* 31, no. 4 (1987): 550–69.
- Dilger, Hansjörg, and Dorothea Schulz. "Politics of Religious Schooling: Christian and Muslim Engagements with Education in Africa: Introduction." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43, no. 4 (2013): 365–78.
- Dube, B, and H V Molise. "The Church and Its Contributions to the Struggle to Liberate the Free State Province." *Southern Journal for Contemporary History* 43, no. 1 (2018): 160–77.
- Ebewo, Patrick. "Religion as an Ideological Weapon in Africa: A View From the Stage." *The Journal of Religion and Theatre* 5, no. 2 (2006): 115–23.
- Ellwood, R S, and G D Alles. *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*. Facts on File Library of Religion and Mythology. Infobase Publishing, 2008.
<https://books.google.com.gh/books?id=1pGbdI4L0qsC>.
- Ezeanya-Esiobu, Chika. *Indigenous Knowledge and Education in Africa*. Springer Nature, 2019.
- Fraser, J.W., and D.L. Moore. "Religion and the History of Education." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education*, 445–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Gallego, Francisco A, and Robert Woodberry. "Christian Missionaries and Education in Former African Colonies: How Competition Mattered." *Journal of African Economies* 19, no. 3 (2010): 294–329.
- Guthrie, Stewart Elliott. "Religion: What Is It?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1996, 412–19.
- Hale, Frederick. "The Impact of Apartheid on the Educational Endeavours of Two Missionary Agencies." *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36, no. 2 (2010): 1–20.
- Hattersley, A.F. "The Mission in South African History." *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 4 (1952): 86–88.
- Haight, J.F. *Science and Religion in Search of Cosmic Purpose*. Georgetown University Press, 2000.
- Humphries, M. *Early Christianity*. Routledge, 2006.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.
- Jauhiainen, Arto, and Marika Alho-Malmelin. "Education as a Religion in the Learning Society." *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 23, no. 5 (2004): 459–74.
- Kilp, Alar. "Religion in the Construction of the Cultural'self'and'other'." *KVÜÕA Toimetised*, no. 14 (2011): 197–222.

- Lewis, A. "Past and Present Perceptions Surrounding Mission Education: A Historical-Metabelical Overview." University of Stellenbosch, 1999.
- Lewis, A. "Perceptions of Mission Education in South Africa from a Historical-Educational Perspective." *Journal for Christian Scholarship= Tydskrif Vir Christelike Wetenskap* 43, no. 1_2 (2007): 181–98.
- Love, Roy. "Religion, Ideology & Conflict in Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 110 (2006): 619–34.
- Machingura, Francis, and Cecil Samuel Kalizi. "Christian Education in Colonial and Post-Independent Zimbabwe: A Paradigm Shift." *Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024): 213.
- Majeke, Nosipho. *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*. Society of Young Africa, 1952.
- Meyer, Birgit. "Christianity and the Ewe Nation: German Pietist Missionaries, Ewe Converts and the Politics of Culture." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32, no. 2 (2002): 167–99.
- Mkhatshwa, S. "The Churches, Liberation, and the Future." In *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa.*, 155. Penrose Book Printers, 1994.
- Moore, Nadine. "Segregated Schools of Thought: The Bantu Education Act (1953) Revisited." *New Contree* 79 (2017): 21.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity*. Berghahn Books, 2022.
- Nord, Warren A. "Science, Religion and Education." *Religion & Education* 26, no. 2 (1999): 55–66.
- Nwandule, C.Z. "The Swiss Mission in South Africa: A Critical Review of Its Educational Practices among the Tsonga People of the North Eastern Transvaal, 1899-1954." Wits University, 1987.
- Odendaal, A. *Black Protest Politics in South Africa*. Totowa, N.J: Barnes and Noble, 1984.
- Pawlikova-Vilhanova, Viera. "The Role Of Early" Missionaries Of Africa" Or" White Fathers" In The Study And Development Of African Languages." *Asian & African Studies (13351257)* 20, no. 2 (2011).
- Pearce, Robert. "Missionary Education in Colonial Africa: The Critique of Mary Kingsley." *History of Education* 17, no. 4 (1988): 283–94.
- Ranger, Terence. "African Attempts to Control Education in East and Central Africa 1900-1939." *Past & Present*, no. 32 (1965): 57–85.
- Reddy, Thiven. "Higher Education and Social Transformation: South Africa Case Study," 2004.
- Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Major World Religions: From Their Origins to the Present*. Routledge, 2003.
- Robert, D.L. *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* . Vol. 25. John Wiley & Sons, 2009.
- Scheub, Harold. "A Review of African Oral Traditions and Literature." *African Studies Review* 28, no. 2–3 (1985): 1–72.
- Seroto, Johannes. "Dynamics of Decoloniality in South Africa: A Critique of the History of Swiss Mission Education for Indigenous People." *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 44,no.3(2018):1–14.
- . "Indigenous Education during the Pre-Colonial Period in Southern Africa." *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 10, no. 1 (2011): 77–88.
- Shizha, E., and Ngoni Makuva. *Re-Thinking Postcolonial Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century*. Rotterdam Sense Publishers, 2017.
- Suter, F. "The Ethiopian Movement." In *Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Missionary Conference for South Africa*, 1906.
- Viera, P A. "Christian Missions in Africa and Their Role in the Transformation of African Societies." *Asian and African Studies* 16, no. 2 (2007): 249–60.
- Volz, Stephen C. *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier: Tswana Evangelists and Their Communities during the Nineteenth Century*. Vol. 9. Lang, 2011.
- Walt, Johannes L Van der. "Religion in Education in South Africa: Was Social Justice Served?" *South African Journal of Education* 31, no. 3 (2011): 381–93.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Jonas Sello Thinane is a researcher at the University of South Africa (UNISA), College of Human Sciences (CHS) within the Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR). With a PhD in Theology, specializing in Missiology, he has dedicated his entire career to the study and research of missionary work. Since then, he has published numerous scholarly articles in prestigious journals, covering a wide range of theological topics, but particularly Missiology topics. In addition to his publications, Dr. Thinane continues to actively participate in local and international conferences, seminars, and webinars. As such, his academic contributions continue to make a mark both in South Africa and internationally.

Chitja Twala is a History Professor in the Department of Cultural and Political Studies at the University of Limpopo (UL), South Africa. He is the author of ten chapters (co-authored three) in a book series entitled **The Road to Democracy in South Africa (1970–1990)**. He recently published a chapter co-authored with Peter Limb entitled: ‘The ICU in Free State Dorps and Dorpies’ in the book **Labour Struggles in Southern Africa, 1919–1949** published in 2023. Another chapter co-authored with Mohau Soldaat is entitled ‘Lesotho migrant workers in the Orange Free State farms’ and was published in December 2023. In 2024, he co-edited a book entitled: **Migration, Borders, and Borderlands: Making National Identity in Southern African Communities**.