



UJAMAA CENTRE

UJAMAA NEWS

People's Theology in Sweden

The Lutheran Church of Sweden extended an invitation to the Ujamaa Centre to facilitate Contextual Bible Study on religion and migration in VarldensFest (the Feast of the World) in Vasteras. The Church of Sweden organized this global event in collaboration with Uppsala University. Rev Zwane represented Ujamaa Centre and gave a presentation at Uppsala University on African Instituted Churches (AICs) in postcolonial development.

In his presentation, he gave a candid analysis of the role of AICs in colonial and postcolonial period in South Africa and SADC region from 1980s to 2000. The emergence of AICs was twofold: First, they emerged as a protest against racism that was pervasive in white dominated mission churches, especially the Anglican and the Methodist churches during the colonial period. Second, they emerged because of fundamental ideological and theological differences regarding contextualization of African Christianity. The AICs are perceived to be the conduit for decolonization of African Christianity in postcolonial period. The colonial legacy is entrenched and hegemonic in most historical mission churches. The Ujamaa Centre has created 'safe spaces' for the decolonization of Christianity through the



AICs as an instrument. The People's Theology becomes the prerequisite for prophetic theology. The Ujamaa Centre continues to build theological leadership capacity among the leaders of the AICs.

Inside this Issue

Public Theology: the Case of Mt. Elias	2
Poverty in South Africa	2
Public Theology: International Impact	3
Body Theology: Community March against Women & Children Abuse ..	3
Word from our Director.....	3
Body Theology: Workshop on Time Management	4
Body Theology: HIV & AIDS Discordant Couples	4
Body Theology: CBS with People Living with a Disability.....	4
Body Theology: Tamar Campaign and Advocacy	5
Body Theology: Refugee Women in Pietermaritzburg.....	5
Visits of DREW and BOSTON University	5
Body Theology: CBS and (Art-) Therapy.....	6
Body Theology: Refugees, Youngsters	6
Body Theology: Lament Poetry and Sand-Tray-Therapy	7
Body Theology: Lament Poetry in the LGBTI Community	7
Ujamaa	8
Upcoming Events.....	8
Contact Details.....	8

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Public Theology: the Case of Mt. Elias

Poverty in South Africa

Recently a report came out showing the latest Poverty Trends in South Africa. It revealed that one in three South Africans lived on less than R797 a month in 2015. As Ujamaa we would like to commit ourselves to further engage on this topic.

Taken from the preface of the report:

“This report presents poverty levels and trends based on data collected by Stats SA through the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) and Living Conditions Survey (LCS). These data sources provide us with comparable data points for 2006, 2009, 2011 and now 2015, based on the results of the recently released LCS 2014/2015. The poverty indicators in this report have been derived using household expenditure data collected through a combination of the diary and recall methods and utilising the rebased national poverty lines published in 2015. The report focuses on the poverty profile of individuals and households at national and provincial levels.”

The report can be found at: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-10-06/Report-03-10-062015.pdf>

By Rogers Ndawula Ujamaa has been working in the community of Mt. Elias for a couple of years, focusing on two groups, that is; the HIV and AIDS support group and the unemployed youth group. Mt. Elias area is comprised of two sections, D- Section and Efyee and as a collective falls under “Mshwathi Municipality”. On political grounds, the majority of the people residing at D- Section support ANC political party and those at Efyee support IFP political party. Ironically, both sections are being led by one Councilor who is an IFP member and he resides at Efyee area.

On the outset, as far as development is concerned, this political leader chose to focus much more on Efyee area than D- section and obviously this caused tensions among the residents in these two areas. Having heard about this tumult, we as Ujamaa, under the Public Theology, which normally deals with issues of religion and democracy, thought of workshopping the people of this area on the notion of Leadership using the Ujamaa methodology (See, Judge and Act).

The workshop took place on the 9th June 2017 at Mt. Elias, Efyee community hall and the theme was “Land and Leadership”, using Genesis 41: 46-57, (Joseph in charge of Egypt) and Gene-

sis 47: 13-26 (Joseph and the Famine). The whole workshop was in a CBS format, whereby the “See, Judge and Act” methodology was exercised. The workshop was attended by 38 people (female and male). The major focus was on the issue of leadership, nevertheless the aspect of land was also mentioned.

We spoke about leadership qualities and the value of influence for effective leadership. Such qualities as Vision, Courage, Integrity, Humility, Strategic planning, Cooperation, were in focus. We related these to the style of leadership Joseph displays in the Bible and discovered that he was a good leader because he had a vision and was indiscriminate and very strategic. He was outstanding at strategic planning, he had the ability to look ahead and anticipated with some accuracy about the future and hence he managed to save everyone from the disastrous famine that had befallen on them.

Seemingly the people of Mt. Elias were able to use this information to reflect on the type of leadership they have in their community. They judged their Councilor to be discriminative, unjust and lacking strategic planning skills which were totally undesirable for the development of the community as a whole. In protest of this kind of behavior and for social transformation, after a couple of weeks, following the workshop, we heard that the residents of Mt. Elias D-section marched to the Councilor’s house demanding an urgent meeting with him to talk about their concerns. We are told that this meeting took place, and a number of their issues were resolved. For instance; the road to Mt. Elias from Efyee clinic which had been destroyed by heavy rains and had been neglected for years, it was agreed in the same meeting that it is going to be attended to.



Photo of the workshop on Leadership

Public Theology: international impact

By **Rogers Ndawula** Ujamaa work impacts on and attracts many people locally and internationally. For instance, last month, July 2017, we were visited by a group of students from Drew University (USA) who spent a full week at the centre learning about Ujamaa work and more so the modus operandi that's being used.

In his address to the Drew students while at the Methodist Seminary for the Sunday service, Prof. Kumalo stated that in our work at Ujamaa under the Public Theology programme, we empower clergy with biblical and theological resources for public prophetic theology, he added that once the clergy in solidarity

with the affected do protest to the system or structures for transformation, that means they practice prophetic theology.

The next activity within the Public theology programme will be a CBS on "Citizenship" and it has been scheduled to take place in September 2017. This will be followed by John Dube symposium on 14th Sept 2017.



Word from our Director

By **Gerald West** On the 23rd June, I attended the release of a report, "Hate Crimes against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) People in South Africa, 2016". The release was hosted by the Pietermaritzburg Gay & Lesbian Network. As I listened to the report I reflected on why it is that there is so much hate crime towards LGBT people in South Africa. Surely our struggle against race and economic injustice should have taught us to take sides with all marginalised sectors? See-Judge-Act, this is the process the Ujamaa Centre uses to engage with the realities of our context. So what does this process require of us in the case of hate crime towards LGBT people? The report is the reality we should 'See'. But the report did not go on to analyse the social systems that create this reality. But it is clear that the social system that generates this reality of hate is hetero-patriarchy. South Africa has achieved considerable political and legal liberation. There is partial economic liberation, but much more needs to be done to dismantle the systemic economies of extraction that benefit elites, both white and black, rather than the masses of our people. Similarly, there has been partial liberation with respect to gender issues, but much more must be done to align reality with the gender equity vision of the South African Constitution. Little has been done to overtly identify hetero-patriarchy as a system that requires liberation. Religion and culture conspire to keep hetero-patriarch intact. The hate crime report is testimony to hetero-patriarchy's refusal to transform. The Ujamaa Centre believes that without religious transformation there can be no sustainable social transformation. So we must work with the realities of the hetero-patriarchal system, 'judging' it with the redemptive and liberative re-readings of the Bible and the theological tradition.

Body Theology: Community March against Women & Children Abuse

By **Belinda Crawford** On the 10th June, the Ujamaa Centre together with other social and faith based organisations marched through the city peacefully protesting against women and children abuse. A seminar was held at the office of the premier at Langalibale Street, providing a platform to empower and expose the Government and other resources in assisting abuse victims.



Photo taken at the community march against Women & Children abuse

Body Theology: Workshop on Time Management

By Rose Nyirimana On the 08th April, a Contextual Bible Study (CBS) was facilitated on Time Management. The workshop was conducted among refugee women from the Great Lakes Region, mainly from two countries, Burundi and Rwanda, who live in and around the city of Durban. These women are part of the African culture which seems not to stick on the clock time but makes the use of time as it comes. This concept creates a root to different problems, including mainly, confusion, poverty and lack of development. The participants created some motivation, as the facilitator can anticipate some benefits of the CBS in the restoration of a balanced life because of a proper use of time and well planning which may overshadow their current limitations.



Photos taken during the Time Management CBS with refugee women

Body Theology: HIV & AIDS Discordant Couples

By Thando Gasa On the 29th April, we held a Contextual Bible Study with HIV Discordant Couples. One couple shared the story of the husband's promiscuous life which led to him being infected. The wife stood by him, he became a better partner and even uses his story to encourage young couples. He has given his life to being a Christian. The journey hasn't been easy but they have worked through it. Another couple shared how the woman met a guy, fell in love, lost her virginity to him only to fall pregnant and then he changed on her, abusing her. When her current partner came into the picture, he had to work extra hard gaining her trust and her love.



Body Theology: CBS with People Living with a Disability

By Thando Gasa On the 23 June, there was a social analysis training for people living with disabilities. The objective was to understand the religious reality of people living with disability, stigma & discrimination and to strengthened resilience among those living with a disability. The outcome of the social analysis was that more workshops are needed to teach our religious leaders about disability and that not everyone is a miracle case. Teaching sign language to religious leaders would be very useful so that they can actually pass on the message. Change their language in church (normal vs abnormal). To educate society that not all disabled people should be in special schools but some can actually cope in mainstream schools and assist young people in sessions for career guidance, HIV, gender and GBV so they are not excluded from the community.

Photo taken at the workshop with people living with disabilities

Body Theology: Tamar Campaign and Advocacy

By **Belinda Crawford** On the 26th May, Lihle Cwinya-ai and Rogers Ndawula conducted a Contextual Bible Study on GBV (Gender Based Violence), the objective was to raise awareness pertaining to the social ills in the Nseleni area in Richard's bay. The outcome of the workshop was that most of the young people are no strangers to the bible stories, they like reading it, and this learning touched one young person who felt a need to join the School of Theology and study further to help his community when he can preach the gospel that saves lives. He is continuing to enquire for more information.



Body Theology: Refugee Women in Pietermaritzburg

By **Rose Nyirimana** The workshop was conducted among refugee women from the Great Lakes Region, mainly from two countries, Congo and Rwanda who live in and around the city of Pietermaritzburg. These women are part of a community whose ways of life is a problem especially when it comes to privacy. The sizes of houses in which most of them live in do not permit much of privacy. In some cases the parents are obliged to let kids, both females and males, share one bed or sleep in the same room. This is not only done to children who are not only brothers but even extended families or friends who are hosted in the families. Due to

the consequences of the war in the Great Lakes Region, it is common that many families take care of orphans whether from their relatives, friends or other people from their villages. As these refugees cannot afford spacious accommodation, privacy is a challenge and it has led to different challenges. For instance pregnancies of teenagers who refuse to reveal those who raped them leading to suspicions and conflict in the communities. The workshop then assisted the mothers to understand their own mistakes and their own roles in various cases of rapes and sexual assault. They became aware of dangers and risks from people around them. The reading of the text, especially the discussion in the different groups led by some contextual questions about Tamar's rape by her brother awakened the participants, showing them their negative role. Some of them realized their failure in protecting their families members due to trust in carry people.



Visits of DREW and BOSTON University

We often receive requests from other universities or organisations to host them at Ujamaa. It is a pleasure to welcome them, to not only show them around and present our work but also to engage with them and challenge them to look at their own context.

This year we were delighted to welcome two groups of students, both from the United States of America. The first, from DREW University, spend almost a week in Pietermaritzburg. They attended the Shembe church on Saturday and took part in different theology classes at the university as well as a workshop on human sexuality by our partner, the Gay and Lesbian Network in Pietermaritzburg.

The second group, from BOSTON University, spend a couple of hours with Ujamaa. We presented our different programs, the Contextual Bible Reading methodology, and shared stories from the South African context as well as the American context.

Group photo DREW university, N. Harris



Body theology: CBS and (Art-)Therapy

By **June Dickie** On the 13 and 17 July, on both days, the women first participated in creative work, sand-therapy (to tell a story, with miniatures) and the second day, making pretty keyrings. The purpose of this creative work was to stimulate the imagination, encourage non-verbal communication of their story (with the sand-tray therapy), and to ease them into the heavier part of the session, studying psalms of lament. On the first day, Psalms 3 and 13 were studied and the women then responded to some questions which helped them then write their own personal laments in isiZulu. The group then together wrote a communal lament, and performed it. The outcome was the participants learned a lot about expressing myself to God. They also learnt communications through handwork how to be creative using their mind and that God can help them be confident, God knows all their worries as well as what is right for them.



Photos taken at the Body Theology workshops



Body Theology: Refugees, Youngsters

By **Rose Nyirimana** On the 14 July, a workshop was conducted by Dr Rose M Nyirimana among Youth Refugees from the Great Lakes Region from the neighbouring countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda who live in and around the city of Durban. These are the teenagers who are mainly in High Schools and four who are starting Higher education (University). In every society youth are target for problems that are connected to poverty and the problem of education. The situation of youth refugees is even more complicated due to various problems because their life-condition in a foreign land with unemployed parents. The positive results among the youth who attended the workshop created a strong motivation for the future training for youth and parents as well as other members of the community.

Body Theology: Lament Poetry and Sand-Tray-Therapy

By June Dickie Workshop with young women from Mpophomeni
A group of 9 young women from Mpophomeni participated in workshops during July. The purpose was to provide a space for them to begin to tell their stories, and this was done through “sand-tray therapy” and them writing down their “sand-tray stories”. We then worked through two psalms of lament (Psalms 3 and 13), noting various features of lament poetry, and the women wrote their own personal laments. As a group, they then composed and performed a communal lament, which was video-recorded. On the second of the two days, the women learned to make pretty keyrings. The idea was to stimulate the imagination and creativity, and also show them a possible source of income.



Body Theology: Lament Poetry in the LGBTI community

By June Dickie An excellent workshop was held with 8 members of the local LGBTI community. They learned about lament, wrote their own personal laments, and then in two groups, composed and performed communal laments. Their enthusiasm and interest was very encouraging, and they have requested a second session to be held soon. Their work was also video-recorded, and makes for a moving presentation.



Bread Theology: East Africa Contextual Bible Study (CBS) Training Project for 2017

By Mote Magomba East Africa is among African regions most affected by chronic unemployment, extreme poverty and vast income inequalities. Despite their poverty, most people are religious, and so their religion and sacred texts play a significant role in their daily lives. However, religion and sacred texts have often been used as sources of both life and death. The theory of change of Ujamaa Centre is that change in religion and understanding of its sacred texts, from being a source of death to being a source of life, is critically vital. Consequently, the use of religion and religious texts to challenge socio-economic injustices in the East Africa region is essentially significant for most people who are poor.

From 4th to 12th December 2017, Ujamaa Centre will be conducting CBS training workshops in Uganda and Tanzania to provide pastors, priest and the laity from East Africa region the opportunity to critically engage with their socio-economic challenges from their communities, using the Bible as their resource for advocating socio-economic justice. For this year, the objective of CBS training project is to build and develop leadership capacity in CBS among 60 pastors, priests and the laity from the East Africa region. This will eventually lead to social transformation of the communities in the region.

UJAMAA CENTRE

The Ujamaa Centre was initiated in 1989 as part of the School of Theology at the then University of Natal (currently known as UKZN).

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

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

Upcoming events

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| 14th September: | John L.Dube Lecture by the College & Ujamaa. |
| 26th September: | Gunter H. Wittenberg Lecture by Revd. Dr. A. Warmback |
| 4th—6th October: | Eudy Simelane Workshops |
| 5th October: | Eudy Simelane Public Lecture |
| 4th—8th December: | CBS Workshop on Socio-Economic Justice in Uganda |
| 8th—12th December: | CBS Workshop on Socio-Economic Justice in Tanzania |



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