

Prenotandum: This report by me as the newly appointed AASR Webmaster on the new AASR website was published in *AASR Bulletin* 24 (November 2005): 4-8

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AASR Web Master

WWW.A-ASR.ORG

Why a-asr?

Domain names must be bought and registered. www.aasr.org is for sale at the moment but its present owner demands a price for it far beyond the financial means of the AASR. Therefore we settled for a less appealing, but much cheaper solution, that of inserting a hyphen: www.a-asr.org.

Four levels

The AASR Executive has requested that the AASR internet site has three sections or 'levels': one that can be visited by the general public for finding out what the AASR is about; another that can be accessed by AASR-members only; and a third which will be exclusively used by the officers of the AASR. To these three a fourth level needs to be added. It is the one that is accessible only to the AASR Web Master(s) for managing the site, and to the IT-administrators for maintaining the software part of the site.

'Static' and 'dynamic' parts

Another important aspect of the site is that some of its parts are, or will be, 'static', while others will be 'dynamic'. The static sections are the parts on which information is posted as it is e.g. in the *AASR Bulletin*. They allow one-way communication only: the visitors to this electronic bulletin can read what is posted on it but need to employ other (e.g. electronic) means if they wish to respond to it. By contrast, the dynamic sections will enable two-way communication by inbuilt e-mail addresses, e-mail lists, internet links and by forums. The first three are for responding to information, or for obtaining further information; and the forums are for discussing particular subjects, such research projects – e.g. the development of

Islam in Tanzania, or that of Pentecostalism in Ghana, or that of the methodology of the comparative study of spirit possession in Africa or worldwide, etc. – or for preparing conferences, or collective book projects; and for any other project in the academic study of the religions of Africa. ‘Chat rooms’ and other kinds of instant communication facilities – of the MSN/Messenger type – are for the moment not aimed at, but may in due time become part of the AASR internet site if need for them arises.

The public level

The part or level accessible to the general public, including AASR members, is the one part that is fully operational at this moment, even though its pages still sport the ‘Under Construction’ icon. It has mainly two kinds of pages: those that inform the general public about the AASR: its aims, history, constitution, present Executive, Publications; and the Membership Form which informs scholars and advanced students of the religions of Africa who wish to join the AASR what particulars to send in electronically, and to whom. It also informs them that an annual membership fee is due for all AASR members for 2006 onwards.

The other is the News rubric. I use it especially to post announcements on it, which need to be brought to the attention of AASR members at once because they often require that members interested in them respond to them at short notice because of a deadline close-by. Instances, which are, or were, posted in this rubric in late 2005, are:

- = the Cadbury Fellowships of the Centre of West African Studies of the University of Birmingham. The deadline for the 2006 fellowships was 1.12.05. For further information visit: <http://www.cwas.bham.ac.uk/staff/visiting.htm>;
- = a call for papers from the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, for a conference on Islam, Terrorism and African Development, 8-10 February 2006. The deadline for submission of abstracts was 31.10.05; for registration is 2.01.06. The person to contact is Dr. Afis A. Oladosu at afism3@yahoo.com;
- = the call for papers by Prof. Jacob Olupona for his panel ‘Locating African Indigenous Religions in a Global Space’; see below p.
- = the call for post-graduate research proposals on ‘Sharia Debates and their Perceptions by Christians and Muslims in Selected African Countries’ from Zanzibar University, sponsored by Volkswagen Foundation. The deadline was

16.12.05; the contact person is Dr. Abdulkadir Hashim Abdulkadir (e-mail: abdulkadirhashim@yahoo.com)

= the call for applications for post-doctoral fellowships for 2006-2008 from the Irish Research Council of Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) with the deadline of 12.12.05. For further information visit the website of the IRCHSS at www.irchss.ie.

= the call for papers from ASC, CODESRIA, ISIM and IIAS for an international conference at Dakar, Senegal, from 13 to 15 October 2006 on 'Youth and the Global South: Religion, Politics and the Making of Youth in Africa, Asia and the Middle East'. The deadline for abstracts is 1.02.2006. Further information: Ms. Dr Manon Osseweijer (e-mail: M.Osseweijer@let.leidenuniv.nl), or visit: www.iias.nl. See also below, p

It should be clear from these announcements that it will pay for AASR members now already to occasionally visit the AASR website even though the site has but one level yet and is as yet only a static facility. Members have already understood this, as is clear from the Site Statistics which keeps track of how many unique visitors have paid how many visits to the AASR website since 25 August. It shows that their numbers are steadily increasing, for on January 16, 2006, 677 visitors had already paid 708 visits to the AASR web site and had made 2.227 page impressions. In addition, the electronic version of the latest AASR Bulletin will be posted on the public section until the members-only section is operational.

The members-only section

This section will have four features: the full AASR Register of Members, as it is kept updated by the AASR Registrar; the most recent AASR Bulletin; the forums for discussing any AASR-related issue such as research, conference and book projects; and an electronic archive. To the latter AASR members may contribute prepublication versions of their recent articles in order that AASR members in Africa, whose university libraries cannot afford to subscribe to academic journals in our fields, may also read them. Forums and the electronic archive should in particular benefit postgraduate students in the religions of Africa preparing MA and Ph theses in African universities as well as young upcoming scholars in those universities specialising in particular religions, or subjects, or methodologies, or disciplines, or regions. They may use the forums to contact other, especially senior AASR members who have published on their particular subject and solicit their

advice or criticism. Though the software part of the Forums has been installed already, the forums are not operational yet. That will be the case only after ‘rubrics’ have been defined for them and installed in them, i.e. after members have proposed to the Web Master that a forum be created for the discussion of a certain subject or issue.

AASR members will be able to access the members-only level through their names and/or e-mail addresses and a pass word granted by the Web Master. In line with the decisions taken by the AASR Executive in its maiden meeting at Tokyo (see AASR Bulletin 23: 16-19) and reiterated in this Bulletin (pp.), access will be restricted to fee-paying members. It follows that AASR members who wish to use this facility need to ensure (1) that they pay their membership dues on time; and (2) that they have a working e-mail address and pass it on to the Web Master. Quite a number of AASR members, however, have never even registered their e-mail address in the AASR Register of Members – nor most other relevant particulars – or are registered in it with an e-mail address that is no longer operative. They are the following members

Benjamin Abrahams, 427 Gilbert Street, Boston, MA 02048, USA

Rev. Ope Arowolo, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Nigeria

Dr Hazel O. Ayanga, Dept. of Religion, Moi University, P O Box 3900, Eldoret, Kenya

Mr. Joshua Otieno Ayiemba, Dept. of Philosophy & Religious Studies, Egerton University, PO Box 536, Njoro, Kenya

Rev. Peter Bartimawus, Brownm Lutheran Seminary, PO Box 74, Yola Adamawu State, Nigeria

Mrs. Molaji O. Bateye, Dept. of Religious Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Prof. Ngwabi Bhebe, Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe

Prof. Michael F. C. Bourdillon, Dept. of Sociology, University of Zimbabwe, PO Box MP 167, Harare, Zimbabwe

Asst. Prof. Samuel Britt, Furman University, Greenville, SC 29601, USA

Ms. Marjorie Broward, United Lutheran Theological Seminary-Paulinum, Private Bag 16008, Windhoek, Namibia

Karen McCarthy Brown, Drew University-Seminary, Madison, NJ 07940, USA

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Rev. Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyison, Trinity College, PO Box 48, Legon, Ghana

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Rev. Sister Anthonia M. Essien, Dept. of Religious Studies & Philosophy, University of Uyo, PMB 1017, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Rev. Obiora F. Ike, Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace, PO Box 302, Enugu, Nigeria

Dr. Paul John Isaak, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

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Mr. John Karanja, Dept. of History, University of Nairobi, PO Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. Paul Kinyanjui Thiong'o, Dept. of Religion, Moi University, PO Box 70, Naromoru, Nyeri, Kenya

Mr. Joseph K. Koech, Dept. of Religion, Moi University, P O Box 3900, Eldoret, Kenya

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Valentino Lassiter, John Carroll University, Carroll Boulevard, University Heights, Ohio 44118, USA

Dr. Gervase Atama Matua, Dept. of Religious Studies, Makerere University, PO Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda

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Dr. Emmanuel M. Ome, Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, ?????, Nigeria

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Rev. Brandford Yeboah, Dept. for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, PO Box 66, Legon, Ghana

Mr Pieter van der Zwan, PO Box 685, Mellville, 2109 South Africa

All are requested to mail their current e-mail address to jgplatvoet@hetnet.nl together with the other particulars of the AASR Membership Form as posted on the AASR internet site (www.a-asr.org).

The AASR Executive-only section

The purpose of this section is primarily to provide the AASR Executive with an easy and efficient means of communication for three types of exchanges: (1) for policy discussions, financial reporting, preparing for meetings and conferences, and conducting any other AASR business between the members of the AASR Executive; (2) from the AASR Executive to all AASR members or a specific group of them for notifying them on some subject matter by means of e-mail-lists; and from AASR members to AASR Officers. For these purposes, AASR Officers will have e-mail addresses that are linked to their offices, e.g.: President@a-asr.org; GenSecretary@a-asr.org; Editors@a-asr.org; RepresNA@a-asr.org, etc. More importantly, however, the AASR Web Master cannot include into this communication system members who have no (working) e-mail address or fail to inform him when their e-mail address is changed. Members who wish to be included into this system are advised to keep the AASR Web Master informed about their current e-mail address.

In conclusion

The AASR Web master is most grateful for the initiative of the AASR President and General Secretary for initiating the AASR Internet Fund for the development and maintenance of the site, to which already Euro 250 has been donated. It is hoped that this fund will supplement the as yet meagre AASR regular funds from the member fees well enough for the site to be developed and maintained well.