



Gender Talks Series

*Discrimination and Disruptive bodies:
Anti-LGBT+ sentiments in African Christianity.*



Dr Mias van Jaarsveld recently completed his PhD in Practical Theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of the Free State (joint-degree). His research is based on fieldwork he did in Zambia, and focuses on the intersection of religious agency, African masculinities and gender-based violence in Zambia. He is a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, a writer for Christian Literature Fund, a part-time lecturer, and a research fellow connected to the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the UFS.

Zambia is an official Christian nation – it is added in their constitution’s preamble. When tracing the country’s history, the story of European Christian missionaries whom installed a heteronormative and patriarchal understanding of the Bible is quite prominent. Despite decolonisation and a growing awareness of the importance of gender equality, heteronormative – and consequently anti-gay – sentiments are still prominent in African churches; especially in Neo-Pentecostal churches, whose theology is rooted in the American televangelism. These churches are the fastest growing nodes of spirituality on the African continent, and despite preaching “freedom” and “power”, they have a fundamental understanding of the Bible where there is no room for queer bodies. In fact, in this Christian country, homosexuality has been politicised, even weaponised, since a majority of Zambians are opposed to homosexual behaviour. In Van Jaarsveld’s presentation, he would give an overview of anti-gay sentiments in Zambia as experienced in the field, place this in conversation with Queer Theory and Queer Theology with the hope to draft a disruptive narrative for transforming practice.

Speaker: Dr Mias van Jaarsveld

Date: 28 October 2022

Time: 12:30 – 14:00

Moderator: Dr Juliet Kamwendo

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