Religion and National Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa
11–12 April 2014

A workshop to examine the negotiation of political power in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa by featuring the manifestation of religious authority and civilian observance from a diverse sample of Africa’s religious communities

Convened by Dianna Bell, Mellon Assistant Professor of Sub-Saharan Religion, and Moses Ochonu, Associate Professor of African History

Friday 11 April
Vanderbilt Divinity School 129
9:00: WORKSHOP AIM AND INTRODUCTIONS
Tony K. Stewart, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in Humanities, Professor and Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University
9:30–12:30: LOCAL IDENTITY WITHIN THE UMMA
Moses Ochonu, Associate Professor of History, Vanderbilt University
“Northern Nigerian Muslim Elite’s Travel Narratives and their Implications for US-Northern Nigerian Engagements”
Abdi Samatar, Professor and Chair of Geography, Environment, and Society, University of Minnesota; Research Fellow at the University of Pretoria
“Faith and Politics in Somalia: Synergistic or Diabolic?”
Dianna Bell, Mellon Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University
“Religious and Political Discourse in Colonial and Post-Colonial Era Medersa Education in Mali, West Africa”
Respondent: Samira Sheikh, Associate Professor of History, Vanderbilt University

Friday 11 April (1:30 session, continued)
Isabel Mukonyora, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Western Kentucky University
“Three Ways to Die for Nation and God”
Timothy P. Longman, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of African Studies, Boston University
“Explaining Church-State Conflict and Cooperation in East Africa”
Respondent: Richard McGregor, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University

Saturday 12 April
Garland Hall 301F
9:00-11:00: CONTESTING THE SECULAR STATE
David Amponsah, PhD Candidate in Religious Studies, Harvard University
Murray Last, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology, University College London
“The Dilemma in Being an Islamic Radical in Northern Nigeria – Whether Non-Violent or Violent”
Respondent: Tiffany Patterson, Associate Professor of African American and Diaspora Studies, Vanderbilt University

11:00-12:00: CLOSING REMARKS
Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Professor and Head of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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