

Information and Resources Developed by African Anglican
Christians for Curbing Anti-Gay and Anti-Transgender Violence,
Discrimination and Marginalization

Prepared by Dr. Masiwa Ragies Gunda in fulfillment of Resolution
A051 of the 2015 General Convention (“Support LGBTI Advocacy in
Africa”)

In partial fulfillment of Resolution A051 of the 2015 General Convention (“Support LGBTI Advocacy in Africa”), the Episcopal Church commissioned Dr. Masiwa Ragies Gunda of Zimbabwe, perhaps the leading African Anglican scholar on issues relating to the role of the Bible in shaping African Christian attitudes towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people, “to compile for church-wide reference and use, a listing of information and resources developed by African Anglican leaders and organizations working to curb anti-gay and anti-transgender violence, discrimination, and marginalization.”

Introduction

The Anglican Church in Africa has been labeled as homophobic and anti-transgender, and accused of helping to justify and even perpetuate violence against LGBTI persons on the African continent. This accusation is not totally without merit because the activities of some Anglican bishops, especially in Uganda and Nigeria, have given rise to this perception. These few Anglican leaders have been ably supported by their colleagues from North America and England including key players from the North American Christian right. In their campaign to defend and protect Africa against what they see as a grave sin, they paint a romanticized and distorted picture of life on the continent. Among their key arguments are that:

- Homosexuality (by which it is meant gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex persons) is un-African.
- Homosexuality was brought to Africa by Arab traders and European colonizers, otherwise Africans were strictly heterosexual.
- The Bible explicitly condemns same-sex and other alternative sexual relationships, here the bullet-texts are cited for proof.
- African Christianity is Bible-based hence its insistence that homosexuality cannot and should not be tolerated.
- The Bible presents marriage as the union between a man and a woman and that union must have the potential to produce children thereby disqualifying same-sex marriage as an alternative family unit.
- Same-sex relationships are against nature and natural morality.
- African culture does not recognize same-sex relationships.

In these instances, African LGBTI persons are presented as products of the effects of the global village, which is exposing young African men and women to “choose” this lifestyle. It is further argued that they are lured by money from rich “American and European LGBTI persons” to go against their culture, faith and morality. The Christian right, working through many African Christian leaders, including some Anglican leaders, has waged a crusade to re-convert these “converted” African LGBTI persons. To show their good work, testimonies are elicited from supposed re-converted gays and lesbians.

Africa, like all other continents, is struggling with the reality of persons of a different sexuality and like other continents, work has been done to deepen society’s understanding of sexual minorities. The Anglican Church in Africa has been going through similar processes, sometimes very publicly but most of the time internally and almost silently. Among Anglican

Christians in Africa, much has been done in the past decade or so regarding the position of LGBTI persons in general, but LGBTI persons of faith in particular. In compiling this resource, I have searched for materials that have been produced by African Anglicans or materials in which African Anglicans are prominently featured, dialoguing and discussing the plight and fate of LGBTI persons in Africa. This work is not exhaustive of all the materials by African Anglicans. Some Africans who write on LGBTI issues do not indicate their faith identity. Some materials have no electronic footprint, and some of the ideas shaping African Anglican thinking on these issues has not yet been captured in print or on video. Nonetheless, this compilation provides a firm base upon which the wider Anglican community and other Christians can engage with African Anglicans on the subject of LGBTI persons.

There is an alternative African Anglican voice on LGBTI issues, and in the works listed, one can begin to hear it. Among the key points to be discovered through these works being:

- That people of a different sexuality have always been present on the continent, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial.
- That what colonial Europe did, was to supply names of diversities that were already well-known by many African communities. In some cases, African communities already had names for these diversities.
- That it is possible to be gay and Christian because all diversities are created by God.
- That the biblical texts that are widely quoted to condemn are historically conditioned and therefore in need of serious engagement with to establish their true import in the contemporary world.
- That the essence of Christianity is to stand up for justice for all, that violence and discrimination of sexual minorities is against this Christian calling hence the need to defend the Image of God in all those that are different from us.
- That African philosophy of Ubuntu suggests that all diversities are accommodated into the larger whole, "I am because We are. We are because I am." The many are not meant to unfairly dominate the minority but to protect the minority.

It is hoped that through the writings outlined below, all those who are open to engagement, reflection and dialogue will find many partners to engage with.

Be blessed as you enter into this journey!

DVDs

1. *Created in the Image of God*. Available from Inclusive and Affirming Ministries. <http://iam.org.za/dvds/>
 - A compilation of LGBTI stories and contributions by leading African theologians, including Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.
2. Goldman, Julie, dir. Roger Ross Williams. *God Loves Uganda: Have you heard the Good News?*. New York: First Run Features, 2013. DVD.
 - A film featuring Bishop Christopher Senyonjo

Articles, Booklets and Speeches

1. Consultation, Chicago. *Anglicans, Sexuality and Scripture: An African Consultation*. Chicago: Chicago Consultation, 2012.
 - Based on a Consultation held in Durban, South Africa in 2011, this booklet documents the proceedings from this consultation and in one of the presentations, Masiwa Ragies Gunda averred, "The Bible has risen from being a "suspicious magical book that speaks to the white man" to being the sole Word of God that legitimizes everything that people did, are doing or want to do in the future. African Christians will not hesitate to throw the question: "Is it in the Bible?" to anyone who speaks about things they do not approve but which things they also believe the Bible does not approve. ... Finally, how can we make the Bible the place of refuge for victims of homophobia and homomisia?"
2. Fenga, Vincent. "The Bible and Homosexuality: The Practise of Homosexuality in the Anglican Communion." *Unpublished Undergraduate Dissertation*, University of Zimbabwe. 2008.
3. Gunda, Masiwa Ragies. "Gender prejudice in the use of biblical texts against same-sex relationships in Zimbabwe." *Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* 17 no. 2 (2011): 93-108.
 - In this article, Gunda sees attitudes towards sexual minorities to be firmly ensconced within the discourse of gender relations in Africa. This explains why there is greater focus and abhorrence of male-male relationships, where people are obsessed with how "they have sex." The use of the creation narratives as texts to condemn same-sex relationships is to be understood within this context. However, Gunda advocates a re-reading of these texts to fight against gender imbalance and by implication gay rights.
4. ---. "Jesus Christ, homosexuality and masculinity in African Christianity: Reading Luke 10: 1-12." *Exchange: Special Issue on Masculinities* 42 no. 1 (2013): 16-33.
 - There are many people arguing that Jesus did not teach about sexual minorities hence we need to go back to Old Testament laws. In this paper, Gunda looks at one text in which Jesus clearly speaks on one of the Old Texts alleged to be speaking on same-sex relationships, that is, the Sodom narrative. Gunda shows that Jesus' understanding of the sin of Sodom was one of inhospitality and not same-sex relationships.
5. ---. "Handle the Bible with Care! A Site for Struggle with the Potential to Exclude and be Violent or to Include and Love." *Kuchu Times*, October 27, 2016.

<https://www.kuchutimes.com/2016/10/handle-the-bible-with-care-a-site-for-struggle-with-the-potential-to-exclude-and-be-violent-or-to-include-and-love/>.

- Speaking to theological educators under the auspices of All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association, Gunda cautions against a careless use of the Bible as that becomes a recipe for marginalization, exclusion and discrimination of minorities and other vulnerable groups. Gunda takes a historical line in showing how careless uses of the Bible have led to dehumanizing situations in the history of African people seen in slavery and colonization and now manifesting itself in the discrimination of sexual minorities.
6. ---. "Homosexuality and the Bible in Zimbabwe: Contested Ownership and Interpretation of an 'Absolute Book'." In *Biblische Religionskritik: Kritik in, an und mit biblischen Texten*, edited by Joachim Kügler, and Ulrike Bechmann, 76-94. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2009.
 - In this article, Gunda focuses on how pro-gay rights activists and anti-gay rights activists have been tussling for the control and right to interpretation of the Bible, whose position as a holy and sacred book is recognized by both. African Christianity is indeed strong in its recognition of the sanctity of the Bible meaning any dispute must be settled by an appropriation of the Bible.
 7. ---. "Silent No Longer! Narratives of engagement between LGBTI groups and the churches in southern Africa." Johannesburg: The Other Foundation, 2017. <https://www.nacosa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Silent-No-Longer.pdf>.
 - In a commissioned study by The Other Foundation, Gunda looks at the strategies that have been used by Christian Churches that are anti-gay inclusion into the house of God as well as the strategies used by those Christians and LGBTI groups in claiming space for sexual minorities in the house of God. This report outlines these strategies and proposes strategies for the continued fight for the inclusion of LGBTI persons in the house of God on the continent and beyond.
 8. ---. "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor: African Anglicans in the Service of the Common Good with LGBTI brothers and sisters" last modified September 30, 2015. <http://houseofdeputies.org/2015/09/30/let-no-one-seek-good-good-neighbor-african-anglicans-service-common-good-lgbti-brothers-sisters/>
 9. ---. "Is it in the Bible? Understanding the Critical Role of the Text of the Bible in African Christianity." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 2-7. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 10. ---. "The Sin of Sodom from the Perspective of Biblical Readers of the Narrative." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 29-33. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 11. ---. "Judges 19:1-30: Sexual Violence worse than Sodom." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 50-53. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 12. ---. "Studying Luke 10:1-12 in the Context of Violence against Sexual Minorities." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago*

- Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 69-72. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
13. Kuloba, Robert. "Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19: A Third Opinion." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 34-44. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 14. Lee, Peter. "Jesus and homosexuality: a reflection by Bishop Peter Lee" last modified March 18, 2009. http://www.churchoftheword.net/wr06-04/windsor_rpt_ct6_jesus_and_homosexuality.html
 - A presentation made to the Provincial Synod of the Church Province of Southern Africa, Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal, 2005. In his speech, Bishop Lee, while questioning the morality of homosexual practice, does make important concessions regarding homophobia and violence against sexual minorities.
 15. Lees, Kevin. "Uganda and LGBT Rights: An Interview with Bishop Christopher Senyonjo," *Suffragio* (blog), March 3, 2014, <http://suffragio.org/2014/03/03/uganda-and-lgbt-rights-an-interview-with-bishop-christopher-senyonjo/>
 16. Mbuwayesango, Dora. (2016). "Sex and Sexuality in Biblical Narrative" in Danna Nolan Fewell (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 456-464.
 17. ---. "Sexual Vulnerability: Reading Genesis 19:1-38." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 26-28. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 18. ---. "Women's Sexual Vulnerability: Reading Genesis 38." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 47-49. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 19. Mombo, Esther. "Isaiah 65:17-25: Envisioning a New Community." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M. R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 54-55. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 20. ---. "Acts 15: 1-21: Cultural Identities and Exclusion." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 85-87. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 21. Magomba, Mote P. "1 Corinthians 13:1-13: Love – the More Excellent Way." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 93-96. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 22. ---. "Ephesians 1:3-14: New Life in Christ." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 97-100. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 23. ---. "Paying the Price of Seeking and Serving Christ." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa*

- Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 105-109. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
24. Muse, Alice K. "Reading Luke 7:36-50, 8:3ff and 1 Corinthians 7:7-24." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 66-68. Church Publishing, 2017.
 25. Nguyen, Eliza M. "Ugandan Bishop Pushes for LGBT Rights." *The Harvard Crimson* (blog), September 29, 2011, <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2011/9/29/mccarthy-senyonjo-bill-human/>
 26. Ogle, Albert. "Ugandan Bishop Christopher Senyonjo breaks silence on David Kato's murder," *San Diego Gay & Lesbian News*. February 2, 2011, <http://sdgln.com/news/2011/02/10/ugandan-bishop-christopher-senyonjo-breaks-silence-david-katos-murder>
 27. Parris, Kay. "Esther Mombo Interview: The Importance of Talking," *Reform*. September 1, 2009. <https://www.vrouwenenduurzamevrede.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Esther-Mombo-Interview-The-importance-of-talking.pdf>.
 - In this interview, Prof. Mombo talks about the situation of women in the Anglican Church in Africa and also touches on the attitudes of African Anglican leaders towards sexual orientation and same-sex relationships.
 28. Russell, David. *The Bible and Homosexuality? What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?* Cape Town: Inclusive and Affirming Ministries, 2011.
 - In his Foreword to this booklet, Desmond Tutu writes, "Historically, and still in these present times, Christian communities, broadly speaking, have been decidedly prejudiced in their attitudes towards people of same-sex orientation. As a consequence, their treatment of our sisters and brothers created in God's image, has been harsh and rejecting. The psychological damage that has been inflicted as a result has been devastating. The first step that we need to take corporately as churches (and individually) is to acknowledge this wrong. ... This booklet fills the gap admirably. It is well thought out, characteristically lucid and wonderfully irenic. It will be a very useful resource for the Church."
 - http://iam.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/TBAH_Text.pdf.
 29. Torr, Douglas. "Joseph – A Different Kind of Father: Studying Matthew 1:18-24 and 2:13-24." In *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, edited by M.R. Gunda and Jim Naughton, 56-57. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 30. Trisk, Janet and Sue Burns. "Sexuality and Identity." In *The Anglican Communion and Homosexuality: A Resource to Enable Listening and Dialogue*, edited by Philip Groves, 217-237. London: SPCK, 2008.
 31. Trisk, Janet E. "A Response from Janet Trisk." In *Anglican Theological Review: Same-Sex Relationships and the Nature of Marriage: A Theological Colloquy*, edited by Ellen K. Wondra, 93, no. 1 (2011): 131-133.
 32. "Ugandan Bishop Christopher Senyonjo to Speak Against "Kill The Gays" Bill in Uganda," *Outword Magazine*. <https://www.outwordmagazine.com/inside-outword/glb-news/293-ugandan-bishop-christopher-senyonjo>

33. Van Klinken, Adriaan S. and Masiwa Ragies Gunda. "Taking up the Cudgels for or against Gay Rights? Trends and Trajectories in African Christian Theologies on Homosexuality." *Journal of Homosexuality* 59, no. 1 (2012) : 114–38. doi:10.1080/00918369.2012.638549.
- In this contribution, van Klinken and Gunda trace the different directions that African theologians have taken regarding gay rights in Africa. There appears to be a constant of conservatism by theologians in African Inculturation theology, while some liberation and African womanist/feminist theologians have been champions of liberation yet find the same principle of liberation to be inapplicable to sexual minorities. However, there are important players from the liberation strand who have openly advocated for gay rights, among them, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.
34. West, Gerald O. "Reconfiguring a Biblical Story (Genesis 19) in the Context of South African Discussions About Homosexuality." In *Christianity and Controversies over Homosexuality in Contemporary Africa*, edited by Ezra Chitando and Adriaan van Klinken, Oxford: Routledge, 2016, 184-98.
35. ---. "Towards an African Liberationist Queer Theological Pedagogy." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 155, 2016, 216-24.
36. ---. (2017). "Re-reading Genesis 19 in its Literary Context: A Contextual Bible Study" in Gunda, M. R and Naughton, J (eds), *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, Cluster Publications and Church Publishing, 2017, 18-25.
37. ---. (2017). "What would Jesus do? Towards an Inclusive Ethic" in Gunda, M. R and Naughton, J (eds), *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*, Cluster Publications and Church Publishing, 2017, 116-120.
38. ---. "Queering the "Church and Aids" Curriculum: Tracing an Improper (and Indecent) Trajectory." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 34, no. 1, 2018.
39. Williams, Ken. "Bishop Christopher Senyonjo does God's work helping LGBT people in Uganda," *San Diego Gay & Lesbian News*. December 2, 2010, <http://sdgln.com/news/2010/12/02/bishop-christopher-senyonjo-doing-gods-work-helping-lgbt-people-uganda>

Books

1. Brown, Terry, ed., *Other Voices, Other Worlds: The Global Church Speaks Out on Homosexuality*. New York: Church Publishing, 2006.
 - *Other Voices Other Worlds* is a collection of twenty-four essays by writers of stature, some with ecclesiastical responsibility, all thoughtful and filled with compassion.. Among the contributors are some distinguished African Anglicans.
2. Gunda, Masiwa Ragies, and Jim Naughton. *On Sexuality and Scripture: Essays, Bible Studies and Personal Reflections by the Chicago Consultation, the Ujamaa Centre and their Friends*. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.
 - This is a rich volume with personal narratives and experiences of sexual minorities and their friends, narratives of rejection and persecution but narratives of God's grace as well. Bible studies that can be appropriated for use by communities are also included, including some in-depth studies of particular biblical texts in a way that is accessible to both theologians and lay Christians. This

- volume is a culmination of work done over three consultations held in Durban, South Africa, Limuru, Kenya and Elmina, Ghana from 2011 to 2015.
3. Gunda, Masiwa Ragies. "Homosexuality and the Bible in Zimbabwe," *Bible in Africa Studies, Vol. 3*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2010.
 - Available on Open Access <https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-bamberg/files/242/BiAS3opusopt2a1A1e.pdf>.
 - This book is the PhD thesis of Gunda, which focused on the multiple discourses on homosexuality within Zimbabwe triggered by the 1995 infamous speech by the former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe when he labeled gays and lesbians as "worse than dogs and pigs." In this work, Gunda looks at the various contributions done to the discourse by multiple players but cast a special eye on how such contributors resorted to using the Bible to buttress their positions. This is a text, which while focusing particularly on Zimbabwe has proved to be very popular across the African continent because most people on the continent easily identify with the findings from this study.
 4. Kaoma, Kapya J. *Christianity, Globalization, and Protective Homophobia: Democratic Contestation of Sexuality in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
 - In this book, Rev. Canon Kapya Kaoma writes, "It is important to note that African opposition to homosexuality usually neglects African gay experiences while insisting that Africa has no gays. In most cases, sexual minorities are negatively ascribed as a danger to children, African traditions, and Christianity. To negotiate this political terrain, sexual minorities disrupt this dominant narrative by their physical visibilities in the public sphere. The interplay of these forces is what I term "the democratic contestation of sexuality."
 5. ---. *Globalizing the Culture Wars. U.S. Conservatives, African Churches & Homophobia*. Somerville: Political Research Associates, 2009.
 - The prolific Canon Kaoma investigates the role of United States of America's Christian conservatives in the exporting of homophobia to African Churches through funded projects and programmes, thereby making the African Continent a battleground for culture wars "made in the USA".
 6. Senyonjo, Christopher. *In Defense of All God's Children: The Life and Ministry of Bishop Christopher Senyonjo*. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2016.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this initial project will be kept as an ongoing concern so that it is constantly and continuously revised and expanded and always make sure that new publications and works are timeously made available to those who seek to engage with African Anglicans on the subject of sexual minorities and their rightful place in the house of God.

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize and commend the unconditional love and support that families, communities, scholars, and activists have shown to their Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) sisters and brothers in Africa who are at risk of violence, discrimination, and imprisonment; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the following redemptive words in the statement of the Primates of the Anglican Communion in the Dromantine Communique (2005) that: “The victimisation or diminishment of human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex is anathema to us. We assure homosexual people that they are children of God, loved and valued by him, and deserving of the best we can give of pastoral care and friendship;” and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church encourage parishes and dioceses, especially those with companion relationships with Anglicans in Africa, as well as advocacy groups, to build relationships with and learn from Anglican African scholars who are already offering Biblical interpretations that affirm the dignity and humanity of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex people; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of Global Partnerships, Justice, and Advocacy Ministries, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and other relevant church-wide offices be directed to work in partnership with African Anglicans who publicly oppose laws that criminalize homosexuality and incite violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex people; and be it further

Resolved, That The 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church direct the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns or other appropriate body as designated by Executive Council to compile, for church-wide reference and use, a listing of information and resources developed by African Anglican leaders and organizations working to curb anti-gay and anti-transgender violence, discrimination, and marginalization; and be it further

Resolved, That The 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church encourage parishes and dioceses to offer prayers for the safety of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex sisters and brothers, their families and communities, and for the scholars and activists who tirelessly work on their behalf.