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Preface

The purpose of this volume is to contribute our expert research findings on the nature of religion in Africa to the ongoing conversations on developments in Africa. Although the focus of the chapters is on sub-Saharan Africa and some regions are represented more than others, it is safe to say that the issues discussed in this volume are a good representation of religion in Africa. Africa’s major religions—Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion—do not exist in isolation. These religions have contributed to that intricate fabric of diversity, unity, continuity, development and chaos through years of unique historical experiences, cultural, environmental, and foreign influences. The chapters in this volume hope to bring to the attention of readers some aspects of religious experiences in Africa.

The socio-cultural, economic, and political developments in sub-Saharan Africa have combined with elements of religious fanaticism. The result is the upsurge in terrorist activities which create unstable communities and nations, and endanger human lives. Globalization and foreign ideas have also seeped into the African religious space and impact religious performance and worship. Religion has become a medium of escape, a rallying call for social movements, sustaining traditions, engaging in social activism, and the source of conflict in the society.

All but two of the chapters in this volume were made possible by the 2013 annual Africa Conference held at the University of Texas at Austin, USA, where they were originally discussed in a number of panels. The authors whose chapters made it into this volume revised their papers several times after a series of editing. The introduction is a synthesis of the papers and a commentary on religious developments in sub-Saharan Africa. Our gratitude goes to the contributors who have endured this long process in making the volume a reality.
Series Editor’s Foreword

The Carolina Academic Press African World Series, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola
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Rahman Adewale Abdul-Azeez studied the twin disciplines of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Universities of Ilorin and Ibadan, Nigeria, obtaining first and second degrees with a post-graduate diploma in education. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 2010. He has taught Arabic and Islamic Studies to undergraduates at Osun State College of Education, Ilesa, an affiliate of University of Ibadan, since 1994. He is presently a Chief Lecturer and the Dean of the School of Languages. He has authored some books in his disciplines and has published research papers in some local and international journals.

Lady Jane Acquah graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, and worked under the supervision of Toyin Falola. Her work borders on Muslim leadership in Accra, Ghana. Her research interests include Islam as experienced socially and politically, and through gender in Ghana, Africa, and the Muslim World in general.

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George Anderson Jr. holds a Bachelor of Education Arts and Master of Philosophy Degrees in the study of Religion and Human Values from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He doubles as a Principal Research Fellow in the Department of Religion and Human Values, and a Lecturer in the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast. He has ten internationally published papers to his credit. He is now a Doctoral candidate at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana and working on his dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Victor S. Gedzi. His work centers on Ethics and Commercialization of Religion in Ghana among Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches. His research interests are the Philosophy of Religion, Akan Ethics, Humanist Ethics, Logic, and Pentecostal/Charismatic Studies.

Aisha Balarabe Bawa is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. She teaches history at the undergraduate level and Gender Studies at the postgraduate level. Her area of specialization is Gender Studies. Her Ph.D. thesis is on the role of Nigerian First Ladies in governance (2014). She has published some articles in Journals and contributed chapters in books. Some of her published works include “Engendering Democratisation: The Changing Political ‘Images’ of Women in Post-Colonial Politics” (2013), and Historical “Trends of Nigerian Women in National Development.” Her recent published chapter is “Gender Identity and Change: The Case of Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria” (2016).

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Toyin Falola is the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities at the Department of History, the University of Texas at Austin. He is a prolific writer with more than a hundred publications to his name. He is the convener of the annual Africa Conference held at the University of Texas at Austin, which draws hundreds of respected academics and researchers from all over the world.

Louis Audet Gosselin holds a Ph.D. in sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal (2014). His research focuses on historical and contemporary religious dynamics in West Africa, mostly Burkina Faso. He studied religious youth associations and their relations with national history; Islamic resistance to state initiatives; intergenerational relations; and faith-based NGOs. He now teaches sociology at Bishop’s University and pursues postdoctoral research at the Centre d’expertise et de formation sur les intégrismes religieux et la radicalization (Longueuil, Canada).

Nathanael Homewood is a graduate student in the Department of Religion at Rice University. His research on Global Christianity focuses on African Pentecostalism and revolves around three central interests: spirits, sexualities, and bodies.
Obinna Innocent Ihunna studied at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. He holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Political Science from this institution. Ihunna’s research interests are in the areas of Comparative Politics, Feminist Epistemology, Political Theory, and Indigenous Political Institutions and Structures. He teaches at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria.

Frédérick Madore is a Ph.D. student in history under the co-supervision of Dr. Muriel Gomez-Perez from Laval University (Quebec, Canada) and Dr. Cédric Jourde from University of Ottawa (Ottawa, Canada). His main research topics are the relations between politics and Islam, profiles of Islamic militants and inter-generational relations in Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire. His Ph.D. thesis is entitled “Islam, Media and Public Space in Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso (1970–present): The Emergence of ‘Social Cadets’.” The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) granted him the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Doctoral Scholarship. His work on Islam in Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire has been published in several scientific journals, including Islamic Africa and Canadian Journal of African Studies. He is also the author of the book La construction d’une sphère publique musulmane en Afrique de l’Ouest, published in co-edition by Presses de l’Université Laval and Éditions Hermann in 2016.

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