

# Perspectives on the Religious Landscape in Africa

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# Perspectives on the Religious Landscape in Africa

Edited by  
Lady Jane Acquah  
Toyin Falola



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# Preface

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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

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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  
University of Texas at Austin



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