

2022

The Effect of COVID-19 on Independent African Churches (IACs) in Johannesburg, South Africa

Constance Nyika

University of Johannesburg, constance.nyika@yahoo.com

Milena Ivanovic

University of Johannesburg, mivanovic@uj.ac.za

Kevin A. Griffin

Technological University Dublin, kevin.griffin@tudublin.ie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp>



Part of the [Geography Commons](#), and the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Nyika, Constance; Ivanovic, Milena; and Griffin, Kevin A. (2022) "The Effect of COVID-19 on Independent African Churches (IACs) in Johannesburg, South Africa," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 10: Iss. 1, Article 10.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.21427/ad3x-n065>

Available at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol10/iss1/10>

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](#).

The Effect of COVID-19 on Independent African Churches (IACs) in Johannesburg, South Africa

Constance Nyika

University of Johannesburg
constance.nyika@yahoo.com

Milena Ivanovic

University of Johannesburg
mivanovic@uj.ac.za

Kevin A. Griffin

Technological University Dublin
kevin.griffin@tudublin.ie

This paper explores the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the religious tourism activities of the four most prominent Independent Apostolic Churches (IAC) operating in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is an interpretive qualitative research study based on data from 15 telephone-based semi-structured interviews with congregants and church leaders of the Zion Christian Church, Zimbabwe (ZCC Mutendi), The Apostolic Church of Johane Marange, The Apostolic Church of Johane Masowe and Apostolic Faith Church, Mugodhi. Thematic content analysis was used for data analysis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the religious tourism activities of all four IACs in the study as they accepted and implemented various aspects of the lockdown regulations. The cancellation of their main annual events and weekly and monthly activities combined with a considerable reduction in contribution from their members resulted in churches' inability to finance their main activities, i.e. their healing camps. It is evident that the ripple effects of reduced IAC activities in and around Johannesburg has negatively affected the city's income from churches' religious tourism activities.

This is the first study to explore the activities of IACs in Johannesburg (and Africa) before and during the pandemic, pointing to churches' significant contribution to religious tourism in the city.

Key Words: religious tourism, Independent African Churches, COVID-19, Johannesburg, South Africa

Introduction

Religious travel is one of the earliest forms of tourism in the world. It has shown significant growth over the years as various religions spread or are being conceived (Griffin & Raj 2017; Nyikana, 2017; Saayman, Saayman & Gyekye, 2013). Religious travel is driven by people's faith and need to feed spiritual beliefs with more understanding of its inception, current leaders and sacred places among other things. This leads to individuals visiting holy places, sanctuaries, tomb sites of historical spiritual people or forefathers as well as to learn the history and proper traditions of their respective spiritual beliefs (Apleni & Henama, 2016; Duran-Sanchez *et al.*, 2018). These travelling individuals are known as pilgrims or religious tourists but for purposes of this paper we shall refer to them as pilgrims which simply means an individual motivated to travel by religious purposes

(Collins-Kreiner, 2010). In all these visits there exists a functional generation of tourism income as destinations benefit financially from travelling individuals (Engresi, Fatih & Bayrum, 2014; Ivanovic, 2009; Olsen, 2012, 2013; Raj, Griffin & Blackwell, 2015; Terzidou, Scarles & Saunders, 2018; Vukonic, 2002).

Evidence of religious tourism's economic benefits are apparent around the world in prominent religious cities such as Mecca, Bodhgaya, the Vatican City, Karbala, Jerusalem and Istanbul. Despite the majority of religious cities (other than the likes of Jerusalem) connecting to only one specific religion, African religious cities are centres of religious activities of many Independent African (Apostolic) Churches with Johannesburg being an important African centre of Christian religious pilgrimage. In the same manner as the aforementioned

famous cities, Johannesburg benefits from the religious activities of these churches. Religious based festivities and commemorations typically include spending on food, transport, clothing and travel, which all contribute economically to urban development (Apleni & Henama, 2017; UNIVEN Research Report, 2015). As the religious tourism multiplier effect works through the city economy it creates new economic linkages spreading outwards from cities into peri-urban areas and ultimately the entire region (Henama & Sifolo, 2017; Kruger & Saayman, 2014). Local communities benefit through the creation of new employment whilst businesses, informal and formal, avail of new business opportunities, seasonally or throughout the year (UNIVEN Research Report, 2015). In turn, this promotes economic growth, infrastructure and social development in urban destinations.

Despite the contribution of Independent African Churches (IACs), to religious tourism travel in Southern Africa, 'ZAR400 million boost for the regional economy in 2011' according to Saayman *et al.*, 2013:412, the phenomenon is not well understood and remains under the radar for researchers and policy makers. Many of these IACs have emerged as a result of political turmoil and economic instability in African countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Malawi. This unrest has led to considerable migration within the continent. For example, in Africa, the volume of international migrants in 2019 alone is estimated at 21 million of whom 4 million were hosted in South Africa (International Organisation for Migration, IOM, 2020). The majority of these migrants settle in Johannesburg, which houses the biggest population of Zimbabwean refugees and immigrants, estimated to be 2 million people (Botha, 2013; Blom Hansen, Jeannerat & Sadouni, 2009; Settler & Mpofu, 2017). This movement of people has led to diversification of religious practices, and as a result, a vibrant religious tourism industry has emerged. Migrant pilgrims who live and stay in Johannesburg host religious events / festivities of their native churches within Johannesburg as well as spending on travel back to their home countries for major annual events and festivals. For this reason, we cannot just define Johannesburg as a tourism destination as there is even more outward movement. Also, the impacts of these churches on the city economy are difficult to measure, although we know there is some impact because of the large migrant numbers, hence the need for a primary study of this effect after the pandemic. This is a unique phenomenon of African religious tourism where

IACs congregants travel back home for celebration of major annual commemorations, while also creating an economic significance in Johannesburg, their host city.

Throughout the early months of 2020, rising incidents of COVID-19 around the world led to an increasing concern throughout the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2020; WHO, 2020) especially in relation to religious activities in cities. In many situations, lockdown regulations such as restricted mobility and social distancing temporarily closed down all religious tourism (Raj, 2020). Thus, this paper explores the effects of COVID-19 lockdown rules on religious tourism activities in one of the tourism cities (Johannesburg) in Southern Africa. To elaborate on this, the study provides a comparative analysis of pre-pandemic and lockdown religious activities of four prominent IACs in South Africa: The Apostolic Church of Johane Marange; The Apostolic Church of Johane Masowe; The Mugodhi Apostolic Faith Church and The Zion Christian Church (ZCC), Zimbabwe (Mutendi). The study explores the perceptions of congregants towards measures taken by authorities to curb the spread of the pandemic through social distancing and subsequent cancellation of their most celebrated annual festival, the Passover (in Hebrew Pesach) originally a Jewish holiday where they commemorate their exodus from slavery in Egypt. It also looks at responses the churches have taken to overcome these challenges to their faith. As disruption of the main churches' activities reflects negatively on their income, the paper also identifies ways the churches have generated income during lockdown to ensure their survival. Lastly, the paper presents how churches managed to maintain the fine balance between the needs of the faithful and the imposed lockdown restrictions. Results of the study will add to a better understanding of religious travel and tourism activities in the African context and contribute towards policy making and urban planning in tourism cities.

This paper is structured as follows: it begins with a description of IACs and their background, a discussion on how migration has supported the growth of religion and urban tourism in Johannesburg followed by an exploration of how COVID-19 lockdown regulations have impacted this religious tourism in an urban setting. These sections are followed by a description of the methodology and the findings of the research. Following this an overall discussion is presented.

Literature Review

Background of IACs

Christianity has existed in Africa for a long time. The Biblical New Testament in Acts 8 verses 26 onwards references Africa when it talks about Phillip the Ethiopian Eunuch. There is also evidence of Christian practices in Cyrene, Egypt during the 1st century, and the ‘Desert Fathers’ of north Africa are credited with establishing the origins of Christian asceticism (Salminen, 2017). In more recent times evidence for the rapid spread of Christianity in Africa is attributed to 19th century colonial Christian missionaries (Chitando, 1991). African Christianity owes its roots to this missionary / western influence but has developed into an indigenous initiative largely influenced by local beliefs (Ross *et al.*, 2017). The term Independent African Churches (IACs) is used interchangeably with African Initiated Churches (IACs) or Instituted / Independent African Churches (IACs) (Zwane, 2017). All of these terms mean one thing ‘a church which has been founded in Africa by Africans primarily for Africans’ (Daneel, 1971:285). The term ‘Independent’ refers to these churches being independent from racial and economic exclusion which was a feature of the initial missionary churches during colonial times – this is one of the primary reasons for their formation – in a form of schism.

IACs have shown noticeable growth throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (Pobee, 2002). In 1981 they comprised 15% of the Christian population in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their membership was estimated to be over 83 million in 2002 (Pobee, 2002) and is estimated in (2020) to be in the region of 243 million out of a population of 1.14 billion in Sub-Saharan Africa (Statista, 2021). The growth of IACs is a major form of Christian development throughout the African continent (Daneel, 1971). Missionary Catholics and Methodists were considered western by Africans and while African natives wanted to take part in the gospel they disagreed with some of the doctrine and the paternalistic way in which missionaries in their churches disadvantaged the native Christian leaders. In addition to religious variance, most of the missionaries became colonial leaders, helping to dominate the African people (Kealotswe, 2014). Consequently, Africans saw western Christianity as a colonial tool of oppression thus, the formation of IACs was a direct response to colonialism. In addition, Africans felt the western church was not concerned with their daily problems so they formed a type of church which would address poverty, witchcraft

and healing among other desired practices (Kealotswe, 2004). Thus, IACs clearly combine Christian beliefs with African traditional beliefs and despite many theories being suggested regarding their formation, the most prevalent is that they are a response to Europeanisation of Christianity which did not address the specific spiritual and physical needs of African people (Jules-Rosette, 1987; Ross *et al.*, 2017).

Characteristics of IAC practices

IACs are viewed by some scholars as protest churches (Kealotswe, 2014). However, this has proven to be untrue as 60-70% of congregant members of mainline churches (i.e., the Initial Christian missionary churches) have now moved to IACs (Bompani, 2010; Jules-Rosette, 1987). The main reason for Africans to join the IAC appears to be to seek the protection of the Holy Spirit.

IACs take the negative forces within African cosmology seriously by responding to real problems as perceived ... namely witchcraft, sorcery, and evil spirits, understanding it is acceptable to interpret socio-economic hardships and deprivation in contemporary society within the context of adverse cosmic forces. IACs are considered experts in granting people protection and fortification against the powers of evil accounting to a large degree for their popularity and growth (Bompani, 2010:309)

These IACs also travel to new places, converting new people and baptising them in rivers, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They hold services and gatherings where pilgrims come from far and wide for events such as Passover (they commemorate the Passover as derived from the Old Testament of the bible in Exodus 12 as well as the New Testament John 13, verses 1-15 as opposed to Easter celebrations which commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ). This element of travel makes the pilgrims direct contributors to tourism spending, with widespread ripple effects for African economies (Kealotswe, 2004).

The detailed happenings in many IACs is vague. Some of these institutions have experienced constant schisms, many of them lack proper tangible records, and literacy levels of church members is an issue in certain instances (Ohlmann, Frost & Grab, 2016). Some scholars have lived among the congregants in order to develop first-hand experiences and wrote extensively about the inner

workings of the churches, e.g., Sundkler and Steed (1961) who examined the Bantu prophets in South Africa; Daneel (1971) who explored Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches; Kealotswe (2004) who examined African Independent Churches in Botswana.

IAC practices are largely similar with only slight differences between the denominations; however, all operate very differently from the mainline churches. This applies to the four churches under investigation in this study. In IACs, preaching and sermons are not prepared systematically, a preacher selects a part of the scripture and it is read to them text by text as they explain it and preach at the same time. Singing is allowed to interrupt the preaching from time to time. It is common for several preachers to hold the service and to carry out prophecy or laying of hands which is allowed to run concurrently with the sermon – this free-flowing structure is very different from most of the mainline churches (Hill, 2019).

Some IACs understand and relate to scriptures (ZCC Mutendi, AFC Mugodhi) whereas others like the Johane Maranke and Johane Masowe churches do not believe or read scriptures. According to Daneel (1971), the congregants venerate but do not worship ancestors, unlike the original missionaries who would have considered this idea as heretical. For IACs, witchcraft is a reality that can only be neutralised or eliminated by the Holy Spirit. At times, people who practice sorcery and witchcraft are pointed out, these are expected to confess and are helped by the prophets to get rid of the evil spirits which are using them (Ohlmann *et al.*, 2016). Congregants thus, feel protected and at ease when the prophets are present. The accused can be rehabilitated and absorbed back into their religious community which is something liberating which western / mainline churches would not accept.

Urban spaces and religious activities

Considering their contemporary growth and spatial distribution, IACs exist mainly in urban spaces, where they promote religious activities. The share of the worldwide population which lives in cities and the proportion affiliated with religious traditions has increased over the years (Berkley, 2019). Therefore, urban spaces / cities act as cradles or laboratories for spiritual and religious movements, they are ‘loci of presence and public expression of religious diversity’ (Martinez-Arino, 2018:811). Unfortunately, it has taken some time for religious scholars to recognise that built

environments and urban infrastructure are habitats for religious performance and place making (Knott, Krech & Meyer, 2016). Thus, earlier assumptions were that urbanisation led to secularisation and the demise of religion as suggested by classical sociologists such as Marx and Durkheim (mentioned by Coser, 1977), but this line of thought has since changed. Burchardt and Becci (2013) and Kealotswe (2014) suggest that forces of change in the 21st century such as globalisation and transnational migration actually promote the growth of religious activities.

Studies of religious landscapes in Europe and Africa note that these spaces have been changed dramatically by migration (Snyder *et al.*, 2016). Johannesburg, Southern Africa’s economic hub has shown pronounced migrant pluralism since the end of apartheid in 1994 (Sodouni, 2013). An increased visibility of religion has resulted, with an emergence of ‘new religious institutions, religious events and religious festivals in this metropolis’ (Sodouni, 2013:47). While significant communities of Muslims, Hindus and others exist in Johannesburg, this paper focuses on Christians, and African churches specifically. Their religious events and festivals form part of an urban religious tourism phenomenon, using businesses and facilities which provide food, transport, accommodation and venues among other services. This has been explored in the instance of ZCC gatherings in Morea studied by Saayman (Saayman *et al.*, 2013). Thus, domestic, regional and international religious tourism are all enhanced by this increased migration to cities.

However, in recent times, the mass movement of worshippers, and the resultant high concentrations of people linked with this economic / religious activity and thus, the unavoidable levels of inter-personal interaction have proven to be major disease infection hotspots. Thus, religious gatherings have attracted considerable attention in light of COVID-19 and its spread. This has resulted in governments restricting religious gatherings or in some cases prohibiting them completely.

COVID-19 and its impact on religious activities in the city

Prior to COVID-19, studies on the effects of pandemics in tourism cities were very limited. Recent evidence, however, redresses this gap and has shown that COVID-19 has devastating impacts on all sectors of the economy worldwide and cities have been central stage in both the causes for spread of the virus and in paving a way

to recovery. Of interest for this paper, the behaviour of pilgrims in tourism cities has been altered in response to this pandemic (Gosling *et al.*, 2020). Faith communities had to cancel their activities, including pilgrimages, observances and festivals, and have turned to virtual platforms to continue their divine work (Raj & Griffin, 2020). At a very practical organisational level, this has led to huge losses of income which would be characteristic of major events such as Passover festivities, Ramadan and Hajj - some of the largest religious observances and gatherings contributing economically to religious tourism cities (Griffin & Raj 2017; Saayman *et al.*, 2013).

Based on lessons learned from handling Ebola and MERS outbreaks in West Africa and the Middle East respectively, Africans were well prepared to deal with COVID-19 and responded quickly and positively to the implementation of strict regulations. While these restrictive regulations impacted on all sectors of society in many ways, the focus of this paper is on religious activity, and thus we focus on this aspect of pandemic management.

The South African government and other international institutions have begun to appreciate the complex structures within religious institutions as well as their enormous influence and the potential they have for working with communities and congregations. While knowledge about faith communities in Africa is still quite limited, some African governments and agencies have sought input from religious communities during lockdown and restriction, as they constitute the majority of the populace. Efforts to solve the differences between authorities in Southern Africa and religious communities in implementing lockdown measures are normally poorly executed, and instead of cooperation, have resulted in deepening suspicions and potential rebellion instead of the intended positive reactions. Translators / mediators or people who understand these groups are crucial in building viable bridges and involving religious institutions in planning for solutions because they constitute an important populace, but also because they contribute economically and otherwise through religious tourism (Marshall & Wilkinson, 2020).

In the early days of the pandemic, as evidence emerged of religious gatherings accelerating the spread of the virus, gatherings were prohibited and later as the lockdown restrictions started to ease religious gatherings were still strictly controlled (Dallas, 2020; Dein, Loewenthal, Lewis & Pargament, 2020). The South-African government in

its five-level COVID-19 alert system issued guidelines regarding religious gatherings. Regulation 37(1) of the Disaster Management Act stated the following:

'Religious gatherings allowed under lockdown level 3 but with certain restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19 as of 01 June 2020.

-Maximum 50 congregants within appropriate venue

-Plans and protocols to ensure health, hygiene and social distancing are observed

-Wearing of cloth masks, no physical contact, accurate register with contact details, screening to be done, no elderly people over 60 years of age

- COVID-19 committees to be established in every congregation

(South African Government, 2020)

A lockdown alert system was used to manage the easing of lockdown regulations in South Africa from total lockdown - Level 5 (from 26 March 2020) to Level 1 (from 21 September 2020). Level 3 meant there were still many restrictions included at workplaces and socially, to address a high risk of transmission (South African Government, 2020).

In common with many places around the world, most churches in South Africa urged their members to observe the instructions of the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020a) and local authorities. Responses from churches included turning to livestreaming, radio and television to provide fellowship services to their congregants. Some religious institutions set up drive-in church services in their parking lots and some turned to using online apps to distribute their devotionals (Dallas, 2020; Dein *et al.*, 2020). During this pandemic, increased manifestations of religiosity have been noted across the world (Parke, 2020). It is reported that people turned to religion for comfort and became more prayerful than before (Dein *et al.*, 2020). Some religious communities, however, chose to ignore health preventative measures because of differing doctrinal beliefs. Some Christian groups believe the pandemic was apocalyptic and was fulfilling prophecy and others believed it was punishment for sins.

In comparison, during the 2019 Ebola pandemic in West Africa, the disease spread rapidly. Schools were closed and economies as well as societies were disrupted. In the religious world, many pastors, out of ignorance continued to lay hands on the sick, referring to the plague as the wages of sin. Fear and distrust led to attacks on

medical teams in some places. One of the problems was that public health experts did not think to engage with religious communities and their leaders to spread crucial information, resulting in deaths from handling and digging up corpses to perform cultural rituals (Marshall & Wilkinson, 2020).

In a nutshell, African governments have shown improved understanding in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. They have involved church leaders in their discussions and plans of action which has helped to inform the public concerning the pandemic and what they should avoid doing to curb the spread. This has helped to lower the otherwise devastating impacts of the pandemic on the African continent especially as religious gatherings were pinpointed as super-spreaders. A closer look at the activities of IACs and how they have been affected is paramount as they have both a social and an economic significance for urban spaces that is otherwise overlooked. Understanding this will in turn assist in resetting the tourism economy, because according to a study by Olsen and Timothy (2020), religious travel is one area that may not see prolonged effects from the current crisis.

Methodology

This study is based on an interpretivist research paradigm and employs a qualitative phenomenological research design (via telephone-based interviews). Qualitative data are used because they provide a basic understanding of an issue using a limited number of subjects (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2009). Due to the nature of the study, thematic content analysis was used after the interviews were transcribed (Leavy, 2017). Limited time and resources made these techniques suitable for this study despite having a number of shortcomings. Following governmental and health safety guidelines, some additional fieldwork was conducted during the month of July 2020 in Johannesburg during the height of the pandemic when the country was at lockdown Level 3. A non-probability sampling strategy was utilised in the form of convenience sampling technique as it was a difficult time to get into contact with people.

In total, 15 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted, out of 20 which were initially intended. Some of the interviewees withdrew at the last-minute citing personal as well as official reasons, and in line with the ethical requirements of the study this was unavoidable. It is assumed that certain potential participants were

uncomfortable taking part due to the pressures and strains experienced during the various restrictions related to combating COVID-19 (WHO, 2020b).

Two sets of interview questions were used, one for church leaders (who were all male) and the other for congregants. Four of the respondents were female and eleven were males. In this regard one leader for each church was interviewed making a total of four leaders and eleven congregants. To ensure anonymity, respondents were asked not to provide their names, and their identities were coded as Respondent 1, Respondent 2 etc. The population sizes of the churches were as follows: Johanne Marange, approximately 1000 congregants, Orange farm branch; Johanne Masowe, approximately 60 congregants, Kempton Park Branch; AFC Mugodhi, approximately 100 congregants CBD branch and; ZCC Mutendi, 60 congregants termed as Caderah Cresta branch. Because we only used a single branch from each church the results of this study are only an indication and not conclusive. The interviews lasted on average, 25 minutes each. The interview protocol was developed based on a mixture of data from the literature review as well as the study's aim. Triangulation of data sources from secondary research, interviews with leaders and interviews with congregants was undertaken. Themes were established based on these converging sources, adding to the authenticity and credibility of the study. In a number of instances, follow-up interviews were conducted with participants asking them to verify details and the accuracy of their initial responses.

Findings

The main objective of this study is to explore the effects of COVID-19 on the religious activities of Independent African Churches (IACs) in Johannesburg. In the subsections below the overall profile of the respondents is illustrated (see Table 1), the interview findings are summarised briefly and then a discussion is presented. In analysing the data several themes emerged which assisted in presenting the findings thematically, as well as benchmarking results against the research questions of the study and literature findings. The key themes were activities of churches before and during pandemic lockdown, perceptions of congregants towards lockdown measures, responses of churches to challenges of lockdown, concerns, fears and financial impacts of lockdown.

Table 1: Characteristics of Interview Respondents

Respondent	Church*	Position	Age	Gender	Education
R1	Johane Masowe	Leader	40	M	
R2		Congregant	35	F	BSc Accounting
R3		Congregant	28	F	Diploma in Culinary Arts
R4		Congregant	34	M	B Com Electrical engineering
R5		Congregant	28	M	Advanced level
R6	AFC Mugodhi	Leader	Not disclosed,	M	Diploma in architecture
R7		Congregant	35	M	Ordinary level
R15		Congregant	28	M	Degree in animal science
R8		Congregant	35	M	Ordinary level
R9	ZCC Mutendi	Leader	Not disclosed	M	
R10		Congregant	30	F	Hons in Sociology
R11	Johane Marange	Leader	Not disclosed	M	Ordinary level
R12		Congregant	34	F	Accountant
R13		Congregant	40	M	Higher national diploma in HR
R14		Congregant	48	M	Master's in finance

The full names of the churches are:
- The Apostolic Church of Johane Masowe,
- The Apostolic Faith Church Mugodhi
- The Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in Zimbabwe (Mutendi).
- The Apostolic Church of Johane Marange,
Note: Respondent 15 is under the AFC Church.

Activities of churches before and during pandemic lockdown

The research reveals that the activities of the churches have been negatively impacted by the pandemic lockdown. The four churches reported cancellation of at least one core festival because of the pandemic, Passover for the ZCC Mutendi, Johane Marange and AFC Mugodhi whilst Johane Masowe missed their biggest annual festival – which is called *Musangano Wegore*. For their annual festivals, members of the churches spend between three- and seven-days camping (as mentioned in Table 2). Since the introduction of lockdown Level 3, which allowed church gatherings but under strict conditions as mentioned in the literature, one church out of the four (AFC Mugodhi) reported having resumed weekly congregations whilst one Johane Marange congregant (R11) said the regulations would be near impossible to follow because of their large numbers - hence they decided to suspend all services. Congregants of the same church, though from a different branch, reported attending weekly services in open spaces and sometimes at their homes. For those who were attending they have had to make a lot of changes such as reduced number of hours from seven to three hours, less than 50 people at one time, not eating together, leaving children and the elderly at home due to their potential vulnerability among other things. In a similar study by Parke (2020), Catholics

likewise requested their elderly congregants to not attend church services for their own safety. When comparing the activities of the churches before pandemic lockdown and during it, the data show that church activities were significantly reduced.

The literature asserts that internationally, most religions had their annual festivities and pilgrimages cancelled indefinitely as a result of the pandemic lockdown, for instance the Hajj for Muslims and Catholic Easter at the Vatican took place online (Dein *et al.*, 2020; Quadri, 2020). Before lockdown the IACs performed all of their activities freely, such as attending services which last an average of seven hours every Saturday or Sunday, singing and laying of hands on the sick (healing) eating together and sitting in close proximity. Additional church activities included visiting the sick and providing for their leaders as well as other groups like *sisters* (women devoted to prayer who never marry), but, because of the regulations they cannot do this (R1). Some religious practices have changed in significant ways in Europe and other parts of the world, resulting from the pandemic lockdown (Dein *et al.*, 2020). These include the cancellation of live services, pilgrimages and religious celebrations. In South Africa however, activities such as prophecy and healing through laying of hands appears to have continued for some of the IACs. R9 discusses how they responded to calls for a congregant who got sick:

Table 2: Comparison of Church Activities Before and During COVID-19 Lockdown

Annual Gatherings / Festivals	
Activities Before Lockdown	Activities During Lockdown
<p>ZCC has 3 major festivals annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-up in January to thank God for getting into a new year (takes place in South Africa); • Passover in Zimbabwe, Masvingo in April; • Festival of the year where they ask for the rains - also in South Africa. 	<p>The ZCC Mutendi and AFC Mugodhi were supposed to attend their Passover in April at their headquarters in Masvingo, Zimbabwe and Wedza, Zimbabwe, respectively but these were cancelled.</p>
<p>Johane Marange is comprised of two different groups who both have 12 gatherings per year - two are the most important - Passover and Festival of the Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first group attend Passover and the other monthly gatherings in Pretoria, South Africa, then the Festival of the Year in the Bocha Marange area, Zimbabwe; • The second group attend all their gatherings in Delmas in South Africa, a small town 64km east of Johannesburg. 	<p>Johane Marange cancelled their annual Passover due to take place in Pretoria in April and their largest international festival due to happen in the Marange area of Zimbabwe in July.</p>
<p>Johane Masowe Church do not have Passover but one main gathering annually (<i>Musangano Wegore</i>) in Zimbabwe where they fellowship and visit the grave of their leader (Baba Johane) in Rusape town, Gandanzara.</p> <p>They have other gatherings in south Africa and other Southern African countries once or twice per month depending on their programmes. They also visit satellite places such as in Johannesburg, Meyerton where sisters and selected leaders stay and pray for the sick.</p>	<p>Johane Masowe Church cancelled their annual <i>Musangano</i> due to take place in September and all other gatherings that were scheduled to take place in south Africa for example fundraising meetings (<i>Masanga</i>).</p>
<p>AFC Mugodhi has 3 major gatherings annually for the whole congregation and other gatherings only for the leadership. They celebrate the main Passover followed by Pentecost and the Festival of Shelters (<i>Matumba</i>). All of these are held in Zimbabwe so they camp there for two weeks.</p> <p>Other Passover gatherings are held in different countries after the main one, so members who were unable to travel to Zimbabwe meet in their respective countries of residence and the leaders come to give them the Passover. Leadership meetings for the South African provinces take place in Johannesburg for a duration of three days each.</p>	<p>The AFC Mugodhi cancelled their follow-up Passover scheduled to happen in South Africa.</p>
Weekly Services	
Activities Before Lockdown	Activities During Lockdown
<p>The four churches undertake weekly services. ZCC and AFC Mugodhi on Sundays whilst Johane Marange and Johane Masowe attend on Saturdays.</p> <p>Services span between 9am and 4pm each week.</p>	<p>Johane Marange and Johane Masowe churches are not using online platforms to conduct their weekly church sermons.</p> <p>Johane Marange has some large congregations e.g., Orange Farm Branch who cancelled weekly services because their numbers are large whilst smaller branches in other areas of the same church are attending (large congregation defined as congregation with average weekend attendance of between 301-2000) (USA Churches, 2014; Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2016).</p> <p>AFC Mugodhi and ZCC Mbungo started conducting services online as well as in person after Level 3 was announced. Those who are attending physical services do so for 3 hours at a time. AFC Mugodhi has 3 groups on each Sunday.</p>

Table 2: Comparison of Church Activities Before and During COVID-19 Lockdown (cont.)

Prophecy	
Activities Before Lockdown	Activities During Lockdown
All four churches have time for prophecy during their weekly services	Prophetic messages were passed on using phones or where necessary followers travelled to convey the message or carry out instructions from the Holy Spirit.
Healing, Laying of Hands	
Activities Before Lockdown	Activities During Lockdown
All of the churches practice healing through laying of hands during their church services and at festivals. This is also done when there is need - for instance, they visit their members at home to lay hands on them when one gets sick during the week or they are bedridden.	Although regulations did not allow movement, church leaders continued to visit the sick at home and prayed for others over the phone.

In terms of raviros (religious healing concoctions) mostly, our Bishop has encouraged everyone to prepare their own raviros but if it happens they need to drink things like tangandas tea and other complicated mixes. Maybe those could be tricky and they would have to call Vadzidzisi (church leaders) who stay close to them who would go and prepare the concoctions for them provided it is allowed at their residence. If not, we would have to plan for them to go somewhere where their raviros can be prepared for them (R9).

The leader of Johanne Marange Church also agreed that during times of emergency they were required to ignore social distancing measures and heal the sick:

In things like illnesses, if we hear anyone of us is ill, we go there and pray for them, if anyone gets deceased, we also go there and support them financially and emotionally (R11).

From the interviews, it appears that congregants believe there are no theological implications of not attending the core festivals. They believe it was God's plan this year. They acknowledge this is unusual for them considering these festivals are at the core of their liturgical calendar and it strengthens their faith. As discussed by R2 and R3, congregants also use these festivals for visiting their church shrines (Baba Johanne's grave for the Johane Masowe congregants) for upliftment of their spirit and for seeking healing and prophecy, especially since these are times and places when all come from far and wide to congregate in one place. Now they continue to get prophecy and healing but from local members of the church.

Findings of this research show that the churches under study do not own their church buildings. They congregate either in open spaces or in rented places such as schools and community halls. This has meant that there can be no church activities because government owned properties had to fully comply with government regulations before any gatherings could take place on their premises. Other church activities affected by the lockdown included main activities such as prophecy and healing through the laying of hands. Table 2 provides a comparison of the main church activities before and during lockdown. Despite some earlier variations, all churches cancelled their annual festivals within the lockdown period (from 28 March 2020 until further notice).

Perception of lockdown measures

Respondents show consent with the measures put in place by the authorities. They agree with hygienic measures to help keep people safe during pandemics. R14 discusses:

Oh yes, it makes sense like we said, this is hygiene control and basic human hygiene practices, whether you are a believer or not. You can't expect miracles ... wash your hands [after] touching contaminated items, you must practice basic hygiene, wash your hands, sanitise and so forth. So, there is nothing evil here, it's just common sense.

Churches under study have adhered to these measures but with exceptions. There was a very low compliance by IAC members in this study in wearing of masks at church gatherings. They continued to visit sick members and pray for them, laying hands and delivering prophetic messages whenever possible when authorities were not

present (R6, R9). When they could not meet in their usual open spaces, community halls and schools, they opened their homes for church services and meetings. It is clear from these actions that it is very difficult to control all religious activities. Only public and large gatherings (more than 100 people) were controlled, otherwise the rest of the smaller meetings continued. As mentioned by R3 they even went to pray in the mountains during lockdown.

Study respondents considered that it would be appropriate for authorities to undertake consultations with religious representatives of all religious groups, since churches operate differently. This makes decisions inclusive, as some of the regulations appear to contradict what African churches do, such as forbidding the laying of hands for healing and reduced the number of hours they spend at church. In relation to the various regulations, participants mentioned that their leaders have encouraged them to follow the guidelines. The Johanne Marange Leader (R1) pointed out:

I think more consultations should have been made with different churches before enforcing these regulations because the way for example catholic churches and Pentecostal churches operate is totally different (R1).

One respondent reckons that people of prayer have emergency situations similar to medical ones, therefore, they should be given permission to help their congregants facing so called 'faith emergencies'. A Johanne Masowe congregant (R5) discusses this:

These regulations, we understand them that is why we opted to suspend our services for now. But we have emergency situations like someone gets sick and we need to pray for them— we have to go and pray for them because for us this is how we get healed (R5).

Responses of churches to challenges caused by lockdown

A recent observation that technology is changing religious activities in a similar way to other areas of life is proven true in this lockdown context (Rashid, 2018). Two out of four of the churches attest to having embraced the use of online platforms for communion (ZCC & AFC Mugodhi) the other two did not (R9, R6). Congregants had financial challenges during the lockdown and this was manifest in not having access to internet data, so they either did not

partake in online services or formed small cell groups and shared internet access as discussed by R7, R10. Congregants and leaders reported having kept in touch via social media platforms, to assist in strengthening each other's faith during this difficult time. However, Johane Masowe and Johane Marange churches believe that a church should fulfil communal dimensions for Christians through face-to-face interaction. Some respondents mentioned how they missed congregating for the church as it provides for them a strong emotional support system (R7, R8). R7 says he does not believe church services should be held over any online platform because they are divine activities and this act of recording and sharing it online removes the holiness, so they prefer to wait until face-to-face communions resume.

We are used to casting out demons in a physical congregation and not on zoom we can't even 'speak in tongues'; we as apostolic people like to do our things in private that way, we show reverence for the Lord (R7).

Those not using digital platforms were praying with their families at home until lockdown passes. Respondents claimed that the pandemic is a fulfilment of prophecy, signalling end times or Christ's second coming (R1, R6, R9, R10). They argue it is normal to have a pandemic because everything has its set time and this, like all other challenges, shall pass. At least one member from each church mentioned that the Holy Spirit warned them such a disease would come, and they should pray to be protected. Infection from the disease meant that one did not follow the previous instructions of the Holy Spirit or one is not following the doctrinal laws (R5).

Differences of opinion among believers was noted in the interviews. There is a belief that one's faith enables healing if it is sufficiently strong (R11, R12). However, R10 notes that this pandemic cannot be healed through faith, otherwise all the prophets whose churches were proclaiming healing miracles in the past would be helping out the world at such a difficult time. A Johanne Masowe congregant (R5) on the other hand believes the disease can be healed through prayer and faith because they know of someone who was healed and tested negative to the virus after drinking concoctions prescribed to them by the Holy Spirit through church prophets.

As for maintaining balance between faith needs and lockdown regulations, the churches struggled. They had to bend the lockdown regulations in order to take care of

their flock during these difficult times although they feel their actions were justified (R3, R4). To satisfy their faith needs they opted to attend church services in backyards, where authorities would not see or question them (R12, R3).

Impact on finances

The pandemic lockdown impacted the churches' finances negatively. Some church members lost their jobs and others struggled to make ends meet - they make a living as vendors through buying and selling on the streets. Most in the entrepreneurial field have been in a dire situation (in particular this impacts Johane Masowe and Johane Marange churches as their doctrines teach against formal employment). Johane Masowe respondents nevertheless report they have started to get their businesses back on track since lockdown Level 3 was implemented and their situation is improving. Evidence from the data shows the situation has made the church suffer financially because they could not afford to pay building rentals (R6) or fulfil responsibilities such as taking care of leaders and sisters who do the work of God – this is a serious blow (R1, R4, R10). These churches have struggled to cover their financial responsibilities because they do not have other sources of income besides contributions from members and because times are difficult for everyone, little or nothing is being contributed to the church.

Although each of the congregants reported that their incomes have been impacted by the lockdown, the respondents have still sustained their contributions to the church, though in reduced amounts. A study on charitable giving in American churches shows that this has declined significantly since the COVID-19 lockdown (Dallas, 2020), so this seems to be a universal trend in churches. African congregants' continuous support shows how much the people in African churches value commitment to their church and what they believe in. Though things are difficult for everyone (specifically developing nations), members continue to support the needy in their community. On the other hand, not having any fundraising activities or not having funds for emergency times like these, could be viewed as being disorganised. For instance, Johane Masowe church had sisters who were stuck in another country and were struggling to fund their return because of the pandemic (R1, R4). From another viewpoint, the fact that money is only contributed when a need arises could be viewed as a way to curb corruption and being economical. It would

also appear that some of the churches are not very eager to discuss their financial affairs, ZCC Mutendi leader (R9) asked why the interview had so many questions concerning money.

Future lessons

According to this study, not much has been learned by the congregants from this pandemic experience. African Apostolic churches seem rigid in their beliefs and they shall not carry any permanent changes from this experience into the future (R3). After this episode is over, everything will go back to normal. Some suggest that COVID-19 will continue to exist for years to come, therefore, hygienic regulations shall continue to exist among church congregants (R14). Others suggest (R8) that because church members are now in the habit of not attending the church at all or for a reduced amount of time, this may break the habit of attending church in the future or reducing the amount of time people spend at their church. Dein *et al.*, (2020:4) made a similar observation in their study suggesting that 'a long period of lockdown may well break the habit of church attendance for a sizeable number of attendees'. Church leaders fear that this will reduce the number of churchgoers post-pandemic. There is a fear that congregants already struggling, might not financially recover post-pandemic, which will further impact negatively on church finances. Fears of infection are also very present, with some mentioning that breadwinners could perish leaving their families stranded (R10).

An interesting lesson mentioned in the interviews is that this pandemic will teach African religious people not to panic in future and not try to link everything that is happening in the world to apocalyptic and biblical beliefs.

What might happen is religious people might learn not to cause stampedes or start being radical about the end of the world and all sorts of imaginations (R14).

This respondent envisages that this will teach people how to deal with pandemics in the future because they have experienced it first-hand.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, this study aimed to investigate the effects of COVID-19 lockdown regulations on the religious activities of IACs in Johannesburg. Clearly, COVID-19 lockdown regulations had a significant impact on religious activities as they led to the cancellation of all annual religious events such as the Passover among others – these were cancelled by all four churches under investigation. Findings further show that the churches accepted the lockdown regulations although they did not fully comply. They continued to hold secret gatherings at congregants' houses and did not adhere fully to social distancing measures during these meetings. For each of the churches, the leaders were worried about the financial repercussions of the pandemic as financial contributions from congregants dwindled to almost nothing. The interviews also showed that IACs are frugal in nature when it comes to their finances as typically, they only gather finances as and when they are needed.

In the past, churches have been known to be reluctant in complying with government regulation during pandemics. It is interesting to note that the findings of this research confirmed this has also been the case with COVID-19 and the Independent African Churches. Data show that church members feel authorities do not fully consult them when they set these regulations and some of the regulations go against what they believe, which is why they do not fully comply.

In future, it is important for authorities to recognise how actions such as lockdown regulations impact all sectors of the economy, in particular areas like religious communities whose religious gatherings stimulate economies. They need to devise ways that would minimise this impact. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, they did not totally cancel the Hajj, they just delayed it, put measures in place, accepted only pilgrims from within their national borders and thus controlled both the activities and numbers of pilgrims. This prevents the total collapse of a sector and minimises the impacts on the communities involved.

It is noteworthy that lessons from the Ebola pandemic were learned and the South African government was in consultation with church leaders before imposing any COVID-19 restrictions. So, the government ensured a buy-in from church leaders and this is the major lesson. The government could not compromise the overall safety of its citizens in order to satisfy the religious needs of some but had to ensure compliance of the churches through negotiations. For example, Churches were allowed to perform burials with 50 people in attendance which was more than what was allowed for outdoor gatherings in level 5. While the beaches were closed during December holidays, public burials were allowed with 100 people indoors and not more than 250 outdoors. In return for being consulted and involved in decision making related to health measure strategies, churches could play a major role in the future - educating people about the benefits of vaccination and supporting of the government's efforts.

Bibliography

- Apleni, L. and Henama, S. (2017), 'Motivation for tourists' participation in religious tourism in Eastern Cape: a case study of Buffalo City, South Africa', *African Journal of Tourism and Leisure*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 1-20.
- Berkley Forum (2019), 'Religion and urban planning, challenges and possibilities', Available from <https://berkeleycenter.gorgetown.edu/posts/religion-and-urban-planning>. [Accessed 02 December 2020].
- Bompani, B. (2010), 'Religion and development from below: independent Christianity in South Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 307-330.
- Burchardt, M. and Becci, I. (2013), 'Introduction: religion takes place producing urban locality', Becci, I., Burchardt, M. and Casanova, J. (Ed.'s), *Topographies of Faith*, Brill, Boston, pp.1-21.
- Coser, L.A. (1977). *Masters of sociological thought: Ideas in historical and social context*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Creswell, J. and Creswell, D. (2018), *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE, Los Angeles.
- Collins-Kreiner, N. (2010), 'Researching pilgrimage: continuity and transformations', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 37, pp. 440-56.
- Chadha, H. and Onkar, P. (2016), 'Changing cities in the perspective of religious tourism - a case of Allahabad', *Procedia Technology*, Vol. 26, pp. 1706-1713.
- Chitando, E. (1991), 'Spirit type churches as holistic healing movements: a study of the Johane Masowe weChiShanu church', BA Honours dissertation, University of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe.
- Dallas, K. (2020), 'More prayer, fewer donations: how the coronavirus is changing peoples' religious habits', [online] Deseret News. Available from www.deseretnews.com. [Accessed 12 July 2020].
- Daneel, M.L. (1971), *Old and new in Southern Shona Independent Churches*. Mouton, University of Michigan.
- Dein, S., Loewenthal, K., Lewis, C.A and Pargament, K.I. (2020), 'COVID-19, mental health and religion: an agenda for future research', *Mental Health Religion and Culture*. Vol. 23, No 1, pp.1-9. Engresi, I., Fatih, K. and Bayrum, B. (2014), 'Economic impact of religious tourism in Mardin, Turkey', *Journal of Economics and Business Research*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp.7-22
- Duran-Sanchez, A., Álvarez-García, J., Río-Rama, M and Cristiana Oliveira, C. (2018) Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage: Bibliometric Overview. *Religions*, Vol 9, pp. 249
- Greg, N. (2020), 'Religious services to resume under lockdown level 3 but limited to 50 people', Daily Maverick, [online] Available from www.dailymaverick.co.za. [Accessed 20 July 2020].
- Griffin, K.A. and Raj, R. (2017), 'The importance of religious tourism and pilgrimage: reflecting on definitions, motives and data', *International Journal of Religious and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Article 2.
- Ivanovic, M. (2009), *Cultural tourism*, Juta Academic, Cape Town.
- Hartford Institution for Religion Research (2016), *Megachurch Definition*, Available from <http://web.archive.org>, [Accessed 24 August 2021].
- Hill, G. (2019), 'African Initiated Churches and African Earthkeeping movements', Available from [www.youtube](http://www.youtube.com), [Accessed March 2020].
- Jules-Rosette, B. (1987), 'New religious consciousness and the state in Africa: selected case studies', *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 32e, Vol. 64, No.1 pp. 15-35
- Kealotswe, O. (2004), 'The rise of the African Independent Churches and their present life in Botswana. Who are the African Independent Churches (AICs): historical background', *Studies in World Christianity*, Vol.10, No. 2, pp. 205-222.
- Kealotswe, O. (2014), 'The nature and character of the African Independent Churches (AICs) in the 21st Century: their theological and social agenda', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Vol. 40, No.2, pp. 227-242.
- Knott, K., Krech, V. and Meyer, B. (2016), 'Iconic religion in urban space', *Material Religion*, Vol.12 No. 2, pp. 123-136.
- Leavy, P. (2017), *Research design: quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based participatory research approaches*, Guilford Press, New York.
- Marshall, K. and Wilkinson, O. (2020), 'Religion and COVID-19; Four lessons learnt from Ebola experience', Available from Oxfarmblogs.org>religion-and-Covid. [Accessed 15 March 2020].
- Martinez-Arino, J. (2018), 'Conceptualising the role of cities in the governance of religious diversity in Europe', *Current Sociology*, Vol 66, No. 5, pp. 810-827.
- Mubarak, N. and Zin, S. (2020), 'Religious tourism and mass religious gatherings - the potential link in the spread of COVID-19: current perspectives and future implications', *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*, Vol. 36:101786. doi: 10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101786.
- Mordue, T. (2017), 'New urban tourism and new urban citizenship: Researching the creation and management of postmodern public space', *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 399-405.

- Musavengane, R., Siakwah, P. and Leonard, L. (2019), 'Does the poor matter' in pro-poor driven sub-Saharan African cities? Towards progressive and inclusive pro-poor tourism', *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp.392-411.
- Nyikana, S. (2017), 'Religious tourism in South Africa: preliminary analysis of a major festival in Limpopo', *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 1-8.
- Ohlmann, P., Frost, M-L. and Grab, W. (2016), 'African Initiated Churches' potential as development actors', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 1-12.
- Olsen, D. (2012), 'Negotiating identity at religious sites: a management perspective', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 7, pp. 359-366.
- Olsen, D. (2013), 'A scalar comparison of motivations and expectations of experience within the religious tourism market', *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Article 5.
- Olsen, D., and Timothy, D. (2020) 'The COVID-19 Pandemic and Religious Travel: Present and Future Trends,' *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 8: Iss. 7, Article 17.
- Pobee, J.S. (2002). *Revised edition of the Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. World Council of Churches and Wm, Eerdmans, Switzerland.
- Quadri, S. (2020), 'COVID-19 and religious congregations: implications for spread of novel pathogens', *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 96, pp. 219-221.
- Raj, R., Griffin, K. and Blackwell, R. (2015), 'Motivations for religious tourism, pilgrimage, festivals and events', Raj, R. and Griffin, K. (Ed.s), *Religious tourism and pilgrimage management: an international perspective*, Cabi International, Wallingford, pp 103-117.
- Raj, R. & Griffin, K.A. (2020), 'Reflecting on the impact of COVID-19 on religious tourism and pilgrimage', *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 8, No. 7, Article 2.
- Saayman, A., Saayman, M. and Gyekye, A. (2013), 'Perspectives on the regional economic value of a pilgrimage', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 407-414.
- Salminen, J. (2017). *Asceticism and early Christian lifestyle*. Academic Dissertation. University of Helsinki. Available from [https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/177236/..](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/177236/) [Accessed 06 April 2021].
- Sodouni, S. (2013). 'Somalis in Johannesburg: Muslim transformations of the city', Becci, I., Burchardt, M. and Casanova, J. (Ed.s), *Topographies of faith*, Brill, Boston, pp.45-59.
- South African Government (2020), 'COVID-19/novel coronavirus', [online] Available from: www.gov.za. [accessed 03 December 2020].
- Statista (2021). Sub-Saharan Africa: Total population from 2010-2020 [online] Available from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/805605/total-population-sub-saharan-africa/>, [Accessed 26 August 2021].
- Sundkler, B. and Steed, C. (1961), *A history of the church in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Snyder, S., Brazal, A. M. and Ralston, J. (2016), *Church in an age of global migration: a moving body*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire.
- Terzidou, M., Scarles, C. and Saunders, M. (2018), 'The complexities of religious tourism motivations: sacred places, vows and visions', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 70, pp. 54-65.
- UNIVEN (2015), 'The socioeconomic impact of religious tourism on local communities in Limpopo: a case study', University of Venda, South Africa, Available from <https://tkp.tourism.gov.za/Research/researchpapers/pages/default.aspx>. [Accessed 12 June 2020].
- USA Churches (2014), Church Sizes, Available from www.USACHurches.org, [Accessed 24 August 2021].
- Vukonic, B. (2002), 'Religion, tourism and economics: a convenient symbiosis', *Tourism Recreation Research*, Vol. 27, pp.59-64.
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020a), Origin of SARS-COV-2', [online] Available from apps.who.int/rest/retrieve [Accessed 12 July 2020].
- World Health Organization (WHO) (2020b), *Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak*, World Health Organization, Geneva. Available from <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf> [Accessed 03 December 2020]
- Yin, R. (2009). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. The Guilford Press, New York London.
- Zwane, S. (2017), 'African 'Independent' churches (AICs) and post-colonial 'development', Ujamaa centre for community development and research, University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa.