

## Publishing World Christianity Locally and Globally: Opportunities and Ethics

### ABSTRACT

Publishing on World Christianity depends heavily on research completed in the Global South. Yet making the fruits of such research available to Global South communities through accessible publications has proved to be challenging. Either such scholarship is published in the Global North and rarely returned to the countries of origin, or scholarship is published within the country, but rarely makes it beyond its borders. One attempt to address this challenge is the work of the Kachere Series and Mzuni Press in Malawi. A striking example is *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024: A Centenary Assessment*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross and Mwawi N. Chilongozi and published by Mzuni Press in 2024. Through co-publication arrangements, it has a print edition widely available in Malawi, another print edition available in the southern African region, a print-on-demand edition available in the Global North and an open access edition available worldwide. Taking inspiration from this example, we explore in this article ways and means by which research originating in the Global South can be

*Studies in World Christianity* 31.3 (2025): 253–275

DOI: 10.3366/swc.2025.0521

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published so as to become available to the communities from which it arises.

*Keywords:* World Christianity, publishing, Global South, Uganda, Malawi, Mzuni Press, African Books Collective, Open Access

INTRODUCTION: IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD, NOT ALL BOOK  
ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE EQUAL

While book announcements are a staple of academic listservs, not all book announcements are equal. On 25 March 2024 an announcement email landed for *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024: A Centenary Assessment*, edited by Kenneth R. Ross and Mwawi Chilongozi. This multi-author volume of essays, by Malawian authors (bar two), on a significant Malawian denomination, was not only published in Malawi by Mzuni Press, but also in South Africa by Barnabas Academic, distributed into the Global North by African Books Collective and made available for free download by Globethics Publications. This is an exceptional, extraordinary book announcement. A title originating from a Malawian publisher is distributed trans-continentially to South Africa, intercontinentally into Europe and North America and globally via free digital download. Few academic powerhouse presses on either side of the Atlantic have such reach. During 2024, Mzuni Press published a further two titles on Malawian Christianity for distribution in Malawi, Europe and North America, and in doing so, is the exception to the rule.

In the burgeoning field of World Christianity, titles on Christianity in the Global South predominate in announcements, yet the books are invariably published in the Global North at commensurate prices. In a survey of the book announcements between 2019 and 2021 on the listserv of the Yale–Edinburgh Group on World Christianity and the History of Mission, seventy per cent of publications focused on Christianity in the Global South. Yet over eighty per cent of these titles were published in the Global North with an average retail price of \$70.00, while titles published in the Global South commanded an average price of \$13.00. Over eighty per cent of the twenty-nine titles reviewed in *Studies in World Christianity*, volumes 29 and 30 (2023 and 2024) focused on Christianity in the Global South, at an average retail price of \$55.00. In contrast, only a single title on Southern Christianities was published in the region where the research was conducted, with a retail price of \$20.00. We are aware that an additional three titles published in the north were returned to the region of research, and

similar steps may have been taken with other titles reviewed. We recognise these are but snapshots of particular research communities that are both predominantly Anglophone in their discourse.<sup>1</sup> Therefore these figures do not consider publication outputs from other research communities in languages other than English and in different regions of the world.

While we applaud southern streams of refreshment flowing northwards, we are concerned that northern publishing outlets limit return of this scholarship to the communities from which it came. Research outputs in World Christianity are not created *ex nihilo*. They are predicated upon and crafted out of the faith experience of particular communities across the world. Without those communities, there would be no research and no publications. Publication outcomes belong not just to the researchers and their readers, but also to the communities out of which the research came. While publisher professionalism and prestige are significant considerations, does a publisher also have the capacity and inclination to return research to the communities whence it came? Not all publishing outlets are equal in this regard. Some are cast in a medium, format, language or distribution network that renders them less accessible to southern communities of origin.

Both of us share a long-term commitment to theological scholarship and publishing in a particular African country, Uganda and Malawi respectively. Over several decades we have observed the following trend. Scholarship on these countries is published in the Global North and rarely returned to the countries of origin – invariably because a combination of structures and economics makes such return a non-starter, as described in more detail below. Or scholarship is published within the country, but rarely makes it beyond its borders; indeed, it can even be restricted to institutional or denominational silos within the country. The reasons for this are multiple and complex, including the trajectories of both higher education and scholarly publishing within countries blighted by political instability and economic vulnerability. The snapshot statistics above are further threads in this tangled tapestry, alongside a handful of other quantitative studies.<sup>2</sup>

Some of what follows focuses on the economics of publishing. Both of us have been closely involved in publishing operations in Sub-Saharan Africa, puzzling over spreadsheets to make the figures of shoestring publishing operations break even, while profit remains wishful thinking. In the Global North, scholarly publishing economies are predicated primarily on university libraries, and to a lesser extent individuals,

meeting the high retail price of academic books – a result of their low sales volume. In the case of commercial academic publishers, the profits from this model are handsome.<sup>3</sup> Yet as Kenneth describes below for Malawi, the capacity of libraries to buy academic books is marginal. Angus has observed similar challenges in Uganda.<sup>4</sup> Digital publication, certainly of journal articles, and increasingly of monographs, is now prevalent in the Global North. Yet digital publication presumes access to and navigation through the plethora of publisher and aggregator platforms, alongside the necessary reading device, appropriate bandwidth and stable electricity supply. None of these assumptions can be taken for granted in many African counties, rendering digital publishing less the silver bullet of presumption for African publishing woes.<sup>5</sup> On both sides of the Atlantic advances in print technology now allow the printing and dispatch of a single copy at an affordable price. On the continent of Africa offset printing still predominates, where price per copy drops as the print run rises – a serious challenge with short-print-run academic titles. Sleek and swift northern distribution networks efficiently deliver copies to bookstore, library or home, and transcontinental shipment is commonplace. On the African continent, effective but expensive urban-focused couriers vie with unreliable but cheaper rural post for distribution options to connect the stockroom with a sparse sprinkling of bookstores and customers. Transcontinental distribution continues to be a rarity, despite decades of lamenting commentary.<sup>6</sup> In the face of these challenges, it is extraordinary how much rather than how little is published on the continent, even in the face of a tsunami of ten million donated titles per year into the markets of African publishers.<sup>7</sup> There are in effect two parallel and contrasting publishing ecosystems, predicated on very different socio-economic realities, with the playing field tilted decidedly against African scholarly publishing.<sup>8</sup> It is hardly surprising that publishing with ‘international’ outlets in the North becomes the default option for many authors on the continent.

Consequently, radically different economic models and assumptions control African scholarly publishing operations in contrast to their northern counterparts.<sup>9</sup> To illustrate this, Kenneth describes in the first section of the article the development of theological publishing in Malawi. He then goes on to describe the genesis of *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024: A Centenary Assessment*, announcement of which was described above. Angus brings a comparable experience of African publishing, having supported the establishment of two

theological publishing initiatives, the first within Uganda, the second an intracontinental publishing network for Anglophone Africa. Neither lasted beyond their maiden handful of titles, joining Hans Zell's list of around twenty failed networked initiatives to support scholarly publishing across Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>10</sup> These Malawian, Ugandan and pan-African publishing operations are characterised by small local sales income (with a vital intercontinental infusion from Global North sales) which funds the production of the next volume, alongside author fees and grants, with precious little left to fund the publishing infrastructure. While publishing the same title in different African colonial and regional languages is the ideal, the additional costs of translation, re-editing and re-typesetting would wreak havoc on such shoestring publishing. These publishing models would stop most Global North academic publishers in their tracks, yet they create bodies of published research on the region that is available within the region. The alternative is a modest stream of publications on African Christian communities from presses in the Global North which remain tantalising on display via the internet yet functionally out of reach for many institutions and readers on the African continent. We conclude with a series of practical suggestions as to how researchers publishing beyond the region of research can return their work to the communities from which it came.

#### THEOLOGICAL PUBLISHING IN MALAWI

Academic life in Malawi is relatively young with the first University dating from the 1960s. Theological publishing began modestly in the 1970s when the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Malawi launched the *Sources for the Study of Religion in Malawi*, a simple roneo production, as an outlet for the first results of its research work. The same Department formed the base from 1987 of *Religion in Malawi*, the first academic journal in this field to be published in the country. For the next twenty-five years it produced an impressive sequence of issues, under the inspirational editorship of Joseph Chaphadzika Chakanza, the long-serving Head of Department.<sup>11</sup> It was in the 1990s, however, that the Department embarked on its most ambitious publishing project. This was a decade when the Department assembled on its Faculty something of a golden generation in terms of productivity in research and publication. Its members included Chakanza, Hilary Mijoga, Isabel Apawo Phiri, Kenneth R. Ross, Felix Chingota, Fulata Lusungu Moyo, Martin Ott and Patrick Kalilombe.

Joining this vibrant academic community in 1992, Klaus Fiedler brought experience of publishing in Germany and a vision for what could be done in the African context that enabled him to become the catalyst for a pioneering publication project within the Department.<sup>12</sup> It was soon named the Kachere Series, its logo a spreading *kachere* tree intended to evoke the place where communities had gathered from time immemorial to conduct religious ceremonies and discuss their affairs. Prior to this the publication ambitions of Faculty members at the University of Malawi focused on articles in international journals and the very rare opportunity to publish a book internationally. Besides technical editing skills, Fiedler brought the vision of publishing locally as a way to strengthen academic life in Malawi.<sup>13</sup> While the Kachere Series had a primary focus on theology and religion, it took an open and generous approach, covering a wide range of social and cultural issues. The Department was a leader in interdisciplinary engagement within the University, and this was reflected in some of the early Kachere publications.<sup>14</sup> The Department's Faculty members formed the Editorial Board for the emerging book series, often meeting in the evening at Fiedler's home, which is known to this day as the 'Kachere House'. The host's passion for publishing was infectious, and before long books were pouring off the press at a rate that was unprecedented within the academic context in Malawi. In due course the Series came to be recognised, as Jessica Johnson wrote, as, 'a local publishing outlet that is unique in the region outside South Africa'.<sup>15</sup> The Kachere Series has continued to be active up to the present, with its administrator Josephine Kawejere acting as a lynchpin for both production and sales. Currently Dorothy Tembo, a member of the Theology and Religious Studies Department at the University of Malawi, is leading a reinvigoration of Kachere and building a wide editorial base across several Departments of the University. The fifteen years (1993–2008) that Klaus Fiedler spent at the helm have been foundational for Kachere, but since 2008 his primary energies have been focused on another University press.

During the dictatorship of Kamuzu Banda from 1964 to 1994, the one-party system was reflected in tertiary education by a determination that there would be only one University in the country. This restricted the opportunity to study at University to very few, and with the democratic era in 1994 came demands to expand the University sector. The next public University to be founded was Mzuzu University, which opened its doors in 1999. In 2008 Fiedler accepted an invitation to take up the position of Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Mzuni

(as it is popularly known), taking up a chair he was to occupy for the next twelve years. True to form, it was not long before he was taking a leading role in the development of postgraduate studies at the young University and shouldering responsibility to start its publishing house, Mzuni Press. The new University Press did not take long to establish itself as the most prolific academic publisher in the country. Particularly through its collaboration with the Oxford-based African Books Collective it also enjoyed growing international exposure.<sup>16</sup>

The Kachere Series and Mzuni Press often describe themselves as 'sisters' and the family relationship is apparent in their approach to publishing. Both have used the same business model, based on an understanding that the commercial book market in Malawi is very small and therefore books have to be self-funding. Typically, an author will fund the production of a small print run and receive in return a quantity of copies to sell so that the outcome might be a break-even situation. The printing has been done by local firms in Malawi. For example, most Mzuni Press books have been printed by Baptist Publications in Lilongwe. This makes it possible to have a retail price that is affordable in the Malawian context. Occasionally, grants have been made to support the publication of a particular book, allowing for a larger print-run and wider distribution. This model offers little financial reward to editors or the publisher and has therefore depended heavily on Faculty who understood work on publications as part of their role, or other forms of freely given labour. Mzuni Press has never been able to have a salaried editorial staff, operating instead on a basis of *ad hoc* payments to editorial assistants for particular pieces of work. It also benefits from the freely given labour of its International Editorial Board and the peer reviewers who play a critical role in quality assurance. The main virtue of the model is that it has worked. A steady stream of academic books has become available. At the last count, ninety-one books have been published by the Kachere Series and seventy-six by Mzuni Press.

In terms of where the books come from, Mzuni Press has had a close relationship with postgraduate studies at Mzuzu University, as has the Kachere Series correspondingly with the University of Malawi. Postgraduate students have been encouraged to complete their research with a view to eventual publication (monograph style instead of research report style) and many of them have attained this goal. After successful completion of their degree, graduates have engaged with the Press in a rigorous process of revision and rewriting that reshapes their material into a form suitable for publication as a book. In this way Doctoral and

Masters theses that might otherwise have been confined to a single library shelf have resulted in books that have circulated and played their part in building up academic life in different fields.

In both Universities the Department of Theology and Religious Studies has provided the institutional base for the publishing, but in both cases a broad approach has been adopted that encourages scholars to contribute from across a range of disciplines, particularly from within the humanities and social sciences. This is reflected in the Mzuni Press strapline: 'This book is part of Mzuni Press which offers a range of books on religion, culture and society from Malawi.'<sup>17</sup> The necessarily concentrated focus of the books that originated as post-graduate theses has been complemented by anthologies that offer a broad and varied coverage of a chosen theme, often originating from a conference or a festschrift project, several of them for other countries in Southern Africa. Mzuni Press is also keen to publish scholarly monographs by mid-career scholars, but this genre of books is currently little developed in Malawi. Nevertheless, taken together, the Kachere Series and Mzuni Press have generated a literature that is now foundational for further studies in religion, theology and related fields in Malawi.

The books also find their market primarily within the academic context. Faculty members and postgraduate students are the most likely customers. Regrettably, most University libraries (and even the National Library) in Malawi lack an acquisitions budget and depend on gifted books to add to their collections. Efforts have been made through grant-funded projects to supply Kachere and Mzuni Press books to libraries, but neither has benefited from what in other contexts would be a source of regular orders. The book trade is on a small scale in Malawi. A few bookshops in the major cities stock Kachere and Mzuni Press titles with a low but steady level of sales. The Kachere Series has its own bookshop in Zomba, which also stocks Mzuni Press books. Again, the level of sales is generally low, but it does occasionally attract international customers who have become aware of the Malawi publications. Both Presses offer their books to the African Books Collective, the Oxford-based online book depot which supplies print-on-demand or e-books, as well as making books accessible on aggregating platforms. This provides a modest but steady income stream. In summary, the Kachere Series and Mzuni Press have created a model of viable academic publishing in the African context. It is, however, a hand-to-mouth enterprise, and the editors are constantly looking for

ways to achieve more robust viability and sustainability, as well as to make their books more widely available.

A comparison with Ugandan theological publishing is instructive in assessing the impact Kachere and Mzuni Press have had on publishing Malawian scholarship. In a similar way to Malawi, Uganda has witnessed an outpouring of research on Christianity in the country. Between 1936 and 2010, over 500 postgraduate degrees on Ugandan Christianity were completed. Of the 174 completed doctorates within this period, more than two-thirds were authored by Africans. Yet when it comes to publication, just a third of Africans publish their research in comparison to just over half of those from the Global North. Only half of this published doctoral research could be located in the libraries of three major Ugandan theological institutions.<sup>18</sup> The reasons for this are multiple and complex, yet stable theological publishing outlets over decades is a contributory factor. As in Malawi, the optimistic years of Independence during the 1960s produced an impressive flourishing of scholarship on Ugandan Christianity, supported by regional publishing outlets. The denominational presses Uganda Church Press (Anglican, now Centenary Publishing House) and Marianum Press (Roman Catholic), while focusing primarily on liturgical publications, contributed to general and scholarly publishing from the late-colonial period onwards. The East African Literature Bureau and East African Publishing House, informed by the brief flowering of East African cooperation, published foundational monographs on Ugandan Christianity such as Fred Welbourn's *Religion and Politics in Uganda* and Okot p'Bitek's *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, alongside thirty regional academic journals across disciplines.<sup>19</sup> The more homespun roneographed publications *Occasional Research Papers* and *Dini Na Mila*, published by Makerere's Department of Religious Studies, gave voice to ground-breaking research by staff and students from across East Africa.<sup>20</sup>

The political and economic chaos of the 1970s and 1980s decimated many of these outlets: the pages of academic publications found more pressing use wrapping meat in Wandegeya butcheries down the hill from Makerere, while archival and library holdings built up over decades were depleted or destroyed. Since the 1990s, scholarly publishing has increased and tends to reflect the free-market approach in higher education, with authors bearing much if not all the financial costs in publishing. Fountain Publishers is often seen as Uganda's leading and certainly most long-standing general and academic publisher, while the Daughters of St Paul have supported Ugandan and regional publishing

initiatives such as the Ecumenical Symposium of Eastern Africa Theologians.<sup>21</sup> The late Benedict Ssettuuma pioneered theological publishing with *The Waliggo – A Philosophical and Theological Journal*, which by 2021 had reached ten volumes since its founding in 2008, serving predominantly Roman Catholic scholars. However, there is no Ugandan equivalent of Kachere and Mzuni Press, with a focus on publishing religious studies research that has made more than 160 titles available in Malawi over the last three decades. The above statistics for publishing doctoral research on Ugandan Christianity would look very different if it had a dedicated and sustained publishing outlet for theology and religious studies within the country. Instead, highly significant research on Ugandan Christianity remains in its authors' heads and in a few copies of theses scattered literally around the world. Yet, just as in Malawi, it is extraordinary how much research finally sees the published light of day in Uganda.

#### NEW OPPORTUNITIES: CO-PUBLISHING AND OPEN ACCESS

While publication in Malawi has always been the primary objective of the Kachere Series and Mzuni Press, it has all along been combined with an aspiration to make Malawi-originated scholarship available in the wider world. Customers from overseas have always been welcome at sales points in Malawi and the arrangement with the African Books Collective has ensured that print-on-demand Mzuni Press and Kachere Series books have been available in the Global North. The changing publishing landscape of the early 2020s, however, presented new opportunities. With Cogitator Mapala joining Klaus Fiedler in the editorial leadership of Mzuni Press in 2023, efforts have been made to exploit these new opportunities. Contributors to a major anthology on Malawian politics being prepared in 2020–21 were keen for their work to have an international publisher as well as Mzuni Press. This prompted a productive discussion with the University of Cape Town (UCT) Press so that when *Beyond Impunity: New Directions for Governance in Malawi* appeared in 2022, it was a co-publication between UCT Press and Mzuni Press.<sup>22</sup> A further innovation is that the UCT Press edition was available either as open access or print-on-demand. This was the first time a Mzuni Press book had been available on open access and, surprisingly, even as the downloads climbed past the 1,000 mark, this did not adversely affect the level of sales of print copies in Malawi. Encouraged by this experience, the following year Mzuni Press entered into discussions with Edinburgh University Press (EUP) about co-publication of

a book located at an intersection of Malawian and Scottish History, Kenneth Ross's biography of Alexander Hetherwick.<sup>23</sup> In this case, EUP published first and gave full permission for Mzuni Press to publish the same edition shortly afterwards (see below for further details).

These first steps into the new world of co-publication and open access helped to stimulate imagination when Mzuni Press became involved with a major book project that was initiated in 2023. The centenary of the influential Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), the largest Protestant church in Malawi, was approaching in 2024. Zomba Theological University conceived the ambition of generating a book that would take account of the CCAP's 100-year history. It convened a research conference in April 2023, which resulted in a body of work that could become a substantial book. In the following few months presenters worked on their papers to turn them into chapters for the book. The volume aimed to be celebratory in nature but nevertheless to offer a robust critical assessment, and the chapters went through the full rigour of academic peer review. By the end of the year, it was ready to go to press. The question of what would be the best publishing model engaged both the editors of the book and the leadership of Mzuni Press. It was essential that the book should become widely available in Malawi, particularly within the CCAP as the church community whose centenary was being celebrated. There was no publisher better placed than Mzuni Press to achieve this, so the decision about how to publish within Malawi was a straightforward one.

While the CCAP was keen that the book would be available within its own constituency, it was also motivated to make its story known internationally. A simple way of doing this was for Mzuni Press to use its customary agreement with the African Books Collective to include the new book on its list. Publishing plans, however, did not stop there. The Christian Literature Fund in Wellington, South Africa, had started a new imprint, Barnabas Academic, and its editors, Gideon van der Watt and Mias von Jaarsveld, were aware of the long history that connected Malawi and South Africa, particularly through the Nkhoma Mission of the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>24</sup> They became interested in publishing a South African edition that would give the book wider visibility and circulation in the southern African region. For global availability a productive discussion began between Mzuni Press and the Geneva-based online publisher Globethics. Given the significance of the volume, its editor-in-chief Amelé Ekue and managing editor Ignace Haaz were interested in publishing and were willing to treat it as a

commissioned book, which meant that they did not levy any fee for the preparation of an open access edition. As a result, when *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024: A Centenary Assessment* appeared in 2024, it was co-published by Mzuni Press, Barnabas Academic and Globethics.<sup>25</sup> This meant that there was a print edition widely available in Malawi, another print edition available in the southern African region, a print-on-demand edition available in the Global North through the African Books Collective and an open access edition available to anyone with access to the internet anywhere in the world. This arrangement made an important Malawian book widely available both in Malawi and in the international market.

#### ON RETURNING RESEARCH TO THE REGION FROM WHICH IT CAME

In our introduction, we laid out the parallel and contrasting scholarly publishing ecosystems in the Global North and many African countries. Wherever we are located in the world, we must navigate these contrasting ecosystems. There are no easy answers and no quick-fix solutions. We maintain research out of particular Christian communities should be returned to those communities and so we offer the following suggestions in that regard. In doing so, we are echoing calls and recommended action laid out by the African Books Collective and African Studies Associations on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>26</sup> African publishers have for decades lamented their inequitable treatment by their Global North counterparts, calling for them to cede ‘reprint, translation and adaptation rights on terms corresponding to the purchasing power of African economies’.<sup>27</sup> We have drawn on these statements and appeals, alongside concrete examples garnered over several decades.

#### *A regional publisher who also distributes to the Global North*

Mzuni Press’s publication of *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024* is an outstanding case study of how scholarship by Malawian authors on a Malawian denomination can be made available both in Malawi and globally. It also illustrates the creativity required and the level of financial subsidy (£2,500, alongside gratis labour by Fiedler and Mapala) to achieve this.<sup>28</sup> To cite another example, Professor Lalsangkima Pachuau decided to publish *Indian and Christian: Historical Accounts of Christianity and Theological Reflections in India* with the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in order ‘to reach the Indian audience and to keep the cost down’.<sup>29</sup> At the time of publication in 2019, the title retailed at \$3.00 in India and \$17.00 on Amazon in the

Global North. The African Books Collective lists on its website the publishers they represent by African country, and so is a valuable resource through which to identify a publisher who distributes into the Global North.<sup>30</sup>

Researchers must bear in mind they may be required to contribute to production costs in settings where sales revenue from academic titles is both low and slow (see above). However, they will also find such contributions are required by some publishers in the Global North, cloaked in euphemisms such as ‘subvention fees’ which are expanded upon in the small print of the publishing contract or in ‘the guide for authors’.

When Global North based researchers offer their scholarship to a Global South publisher, they need to recognise the limitations as well as strengths of their location. Perspectives and theories – advanced through Global North conferences and publications – cast in a particular style of English, can result in a title that resonates less readily with audiences in other parts of the world.<sup>31</sup> This may impact the response of a publisher in the region, be they presented with a manuscript for production or a co-publishing or rights agreement (see below).

#### *A Global North publisher open to distribution in the region*

In a standard publishing contract, the author grants to the publisher all publication rights in any format anywhere in the world. Yet in practice, publishing houses acquire and publish titles for the markets they are best placed to reach. While developments in technology now allow a single publisher effective and economically viable print and e-book distribution on multiple continents, publishers can still reach some regions more than others. Where a title is deemed to have relevance beyond this region, they identify a second publisher better placed to exploit the market the first cannot reach. In such situations, the two publishers may agree to publish the book jointly and apportion costs (co-publishing), or the first publishes the title initially and then subsequently sells the second the right to publish the book in the specified region (rights agreement). Such agreements are harder to realise where there is significant socio-economic disparity between the contexts within which the partners operate (see below). The functional outcome is titles published in the Global North on southern Christianities struggle to return to the region from which the research came.

Researchers can therefore advocate with their Global North publisher to explore an agreement with a publisher in the relevant region. We suggest the issue is raised while the author–publisher contract is under negotiation, although when commitment can be given to such an undertaking will vary depending on whether it is a co-publishing or rights agreement. Given the publisher may be unfamiliar with the region concerned, the researcher may need actively to seek out and recommend a publishing partner. Where there is significant economic disparity, the rights fee requested must be modest, one-off (to reduce international currency transfer charges) and include the digital files from which the second publisher can print, while possibly creating a more contextually appropriate cover. With a particular East African example in mind, the requested rights fee north of \$1,000 would have produced a book that sold at twice what the regional market could bear, until the author stepped in with a generous subsidy of more than double the rights fee. The African Studies Associations recommend a rights fee in the region of \$250 to \$300 and for authors to consider waiving royalties on the African edition.<sup>32</sup> Researchers may need to help Global North publishers understand that a rights agreement with a publisher in Kampala cannot be negotiated in the same way as one in Frankfurt. If researchers encounter significant resistance from publishing executives, they can request that the relevant region and language is withheld for republication from the publication rights specified in the publishing contract. The researcher then has freedom to pursue a second publishing contract with a publisher in the region concerned. However, this will result in the unnecessary duplication of editorial and typesetting work, which will increase production costs in an environment where it may be challenging to recoup these from sales revenue.

Despite such gloomy prognostications, successful co-publishing and rights agreements are negotiated between Northern and African publishers. For his Eastern Africa Studies series, the British publisher James Currey co-published titles with publishers in East African Educational Publishers (Kenya), Fountain (Uganda) and Mkuki na Nyota (Tanzania) on the basis that:

We can put all the heavy editorial and typesetting costs on to the copies for the rich world (Europe and North America) ... This allows us to negotiate a price with publishers in Africa, which enables them to put a price in their own currency that will make the book available in their own bookshops.<sup>33</sup>

James Currey understood and acted on Henry Chakava's call, cited above, for Global North publishers to cede 'reprint, translation and adaptation rights on terms corresponding to the purchasing power of African economies'.

In the similar arrangement mentioned above, Edinburgh University Press bore all the costs of editing, typesetting and preparing the cover and provided the files for Mzuni Press to publish a Malawi edition of Kenneth Ross's biography of Alexander Hetherwick without requiring any payment. While this generosity goes above and beyond the suggested level of rights fees, there is also a strong element of principled realism. The disconnect between the Global North and Malawi book markets is so great that the EUP edition is unattainable in Malawi, while its Malawi counterpart is unlikely to threaten sales of the EUP edition.<sup>34</sup> On the basis of this positive experience, EUP and Mzuni Press are currently exploring how they might develop collaboration and mutual learning despite operating in very different contexts and on a very different scale from one another.

#### *Open Access publishing for free download in the region*

Mzuni Press's co-publication of *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024* with Globethics Publications is an example of Open Access (OA) publication. In this instance, Globethics took the preprint file, adapted it for their digital platform, meeting this cost themselves, and then made the title available for free download. This has made little discernible impact on print sales. In this way, Mzuni Press has ensured the title is available to any reader in the world with a digital device and an internet connection that has sufficient bandwidth to handle the download. At a mouse-click, the traditional silos imposed by publisher reach and retail price evaporate.

The funders of research have been significant drivers for OA publishing. They objected to research they funded for the public good disappearing behind expensive paywalls of academic journals. Consequently, they made publishing research findings OA a condition of funding, usually after a stipulated embargo period to permit prior article publication. This condition has extended beyond journals to monographs and multi-author volumes of essays.<sup>35</sup> Yet if research publications are made freely available via digital download, how is the production of these publications funded? The preprint third-party production costs for a 250-page World Christianity textbook published in the UK came in at around £2,400. Despite the high ideals of OA pioneers, in reality

publication costs have shifted from content consumer to content creator in the form of processing charges. A 2021 survey put these charges at between £8,000 and £10,000 for a monograph, with the research funder or the researcher's institution the most common funding source. Yet the same survey revealed that few researchers have access to such funding.<sup>36</sup>

In 2024, Klaus Koschorke published his *A Short History of Christianity beyond the West: Asia, Africa, and Latin America 1450–2000*.<sup>37</sup> For Koschorke 'it has been of utmost importance for me that books and other relevant materials related to the history of Christianity in the Global South are easily available to the friends and colleagues and students from these regions.'<sup>38</sup> Consequently he secured an OA option alongside the print edition with its publisher Brill, who agreed to a discounted processing charge of €8,500. Koschorke was able to meet this with a mix of institutional and personal funds. He also made available OA via the website of UTB, the publisher of the German edition, 'a digital appendix with about 250 photos from various regions and places relevant for the history of Christianity in the global South. They were taken by the author during repeated overseas travels and research stays since the 1980s.'<sup>39</sup>

The combined efforts of Koschorke, his institution, Brill and UTB are to be applauded in making a significant title on the Christian history of the southern continents available for free download. Yet the significant book processing charges make OA publishing more of an option for those with funding from research grants or their institutions. Arianna Becerril-García, a professor at Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México and pioneer of Latin American OA publishing, highlights what the shift from journal subscriptions to processing charges means for the Global South:

We cannot afford, in the past, subscriptions. And now we cannot afford APCs (Article Processing Charges). If we forget about academia taking back control of publishing (the founding vision of OA publishing), we are going to end up in 10 years with another kind of exclusion. We are just transferring this problem into another problem.<sup>40</sup>

While the Mzuni Press collaboration with Globethics shows this is not always the case, Becerril-García is concerned that Northern OA publishing has shifted the South's exclusion from consumption to creation of knowledge.

Some publishers make their digital content available for free to particular countries, for example Oxford University Press's Developing

Countries Initiative<sup>41</sup> or JSTOR's Access Initiative.<sup>42</sup> As publisher, aggregator and institutional depository online platforms proliferate, offering a blend of paid-for and OA content, discoverability is an issue for readers, not least in the region from which the research came. Again, researchers have an important role in both navigating these different digital delivery platforms and signposting readers to where their digital publication is available. Digital availability is not the same as reader accessibility.

*Discounted copies via suitcase delivery to the region*

Co-publishing or rights agreements require effective collaboration between Northern and Southern publishing partners, which in some instances is impossible to realise. For both parties, it may not be worth the investment of time for the revenue generated, or negative experiences may have dented willingness: co-published copies leaking back into the original publisher's territory undermining sales; unrealistic and inflexible negotiations which lack awareness of publishing realities elsewhere. The economic challenges can be so extreme as to almost destroy a reader-pays publishing model. The veteran Zimbabwean publisher Irene Staunton describes what happened to the once-thriving publishing industry in her country:

The whole sector fell into decline during periods of political unrest accompanied by hyperinflation. It is very hard to operate when, for example, print costs increase three times a day. It is not difficult to imagine what follows. Staff are laid off. Books are not printed, or are printed in much smaller quantities. Schools can no longer afford books. Teachers and librarians can no longer afford to go to work, since their salaries remain static while the price of bus fares increases exponentially. Our best writers very sensibly often chose to get published elsewhere.<sup>43</sup>

In such a situation, publishing an academic title from the Global North was no longer possible for Staunton's The Weaver Press, even with a generous rights agreement, as there was effectively little book-buying public left.<sup>44</sup> While not as extreme, the Kachere and Mzuni Press story above describes the sale of their titles as low and predominantly to academics, with institutional libraries often lacking acquisition budgets.

In such situations, researchers may consider the tried and tested suitcase method of delivery. Most publishers in the Global North

assume that the retailer will retain around half of sales revenue. On this basis, researchers can request discounted copies of their title for distribution in the region concerned. These can then be transported via suitcase (approximately twenty-five to thirty copies per twenty-kilogram bag) for either a small book launch or a handful of copies for donation to leading research libraries in the country concerned. In 2019, Angus secured a more than fifty-per cent discount on two copies of EUP's *Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (edited by Kenneth and others), which, via suitcase delivery, now reside in the libraries of a Ghanaian and a Kenyan theological institution.<sup>45</sup> It may be little, but it is better than nothing.

#### CONCLUSION

Theological publishing sustains communities of research, reflection and action. Ali Mazuri's dictum on economics is as applicable to theological publication: Africa consumes what it does not produce (Euro-American theological titles, with dependency fuelled by book donation programmes) and produces what it does not consume (extraversion of African theology to Northern publishers). As a result, the mission of these communities on the continent suffers. This article is delivered to you, our reader, by a sustainable scholarly publishing structure. Sufficient institutions and individuals subscribe to *Studies in World Christianity* for Edinburgh University Press to recoup production costs and overhead contribution. Economic and social realities in other parts of the world make such scholarly publishing models difficult to sustain, resulting in many Africa-based journals falling foul to the 'journal morality syndrome of "volume one, number one"'.<sup>46</sup> And so Kachere and Mzuni have forged new models to give Malawian scholarly communities access to their own scholarship on Malawian theological and religious realities, with publications radiating out across Malawi and beyond to South Africa, Europe and North America, even to anyone with an internet connection.<sup>47</sup> While it may seem small-scale and homespun compared to behemoths northwards,<sup>48</sup> it has ensured that Malawian scholarly communities have access to their own scholarship. The depressing alternative is an exodus of African knowledge across the seas with precious few structures to return this treasure to communities from which it came. However, we have suggested creative avenues that researchers can pursue in order to facilitate return. Indeed, such return is not limited to the academic publication. It could also include a more accessible and briefer booklet in the most appropriate language, for sale

during a day-long celebration to return research to the hearts and minds whence it came.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>i</sup>**Kenneth R. Ross** is Professor of Theology and Dean of Postgraduate Studies at Zomba Theological University in Malawi, and Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. He is Series Editor of the Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity (Edinburgh University Press, 2017–25) and co-author of *Hope in Times of Crisis: Reimagining Ecumenical Mission* (Cascade, 2025).

<sup>ii</sup>**Angus Crichton** is an independent researcher, based in Oxford. He has supported the establishment of two African theological publishing networks, one in Uganda, the other a trans-African initiative for Anglophone Africa. He also conducts research on the early history of Christianity in Uganda and advocates for archival records on this history to be available in Uganda.

#### NOTES

1 The listserv and all but one of its announced titles are in the English language. All titles reviewed in *Studies in World Christianity* were written in English. These two hemispheric terms are used loosely as a convenient shorthand, acknowledging their limitations, inaccuracies and oversimplifications.

2 See below (at note 18) for the percentage of doctoral research on Ugandan Christianity that is not only published but is available in Ugandan theological institutions. A 2012 study quantified publications in Kenyan theological libraries, bookstores (both Christian and general) and street vendors, revealing the predominance of titles authored by Euro-Americans in comparison to Africans. See Robert J. Priest, Kirimi Barine and Alberto Lucamba Salombongo, 'Reading and Learning – Challenges of African Christian Leaders', *African Christian Leadership: Realities, Opportunities, and Impact*, ed. Robert J. Priest and Kirimi Barine (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2017), 187–193. A 2020 study found that a third or less of the African Theology/Christianity titles in the major e-book aggregators Baobab, EBSCO and Perlego were present as print copies in three theological libraries in East and West Africa. This suggests that while digital platforms have the potential to offer African institutions more titles on African Christianity than their current print libraries, digital availability does not translate into reader accessibility because of the accompanying high price tag of accessing these digital platforms. Licenses for individual African theology titles typically started at around \$100, rising to as high as \$421, depending on numbers of users (Angus Crichton, 'The Print versus Digital Debate, COVID-19, Accessing and Publishing African Christian Thought' (unpublished research report for the African Theological Network Press).

3 These are reported to run at between 30 and 50 per cent. For a recent summary of the statistics on profit margins in commercial academic publishing, see Richard Westaway, 'Ethical Academic Publishing: How to Make Academic Publishing Fairer, More

Open and Less Wasteful', Open Research at Bristol Blog, University of Bristol Library Research Support Team and the Bristol Reproducibility Network, 23 September 2024: <https://openresearchbristol.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/2024/09/23/ethical-academic-publishing-how-to-make-academic-publishing-fairer-more-open-and-less-wasteful/> (accessed 25 April 2025).

4 The single title produced by the Ugandan theological publishing consortium that Angus was part of is not available in the libraires of the institutions in the consortium, despite marketing to Ugandan theological libraries and print copies being available in the country at an appropriate price for the Ugandan market.

5 Klaus Fiedler, the Malawian publisher profiled below, observed in a recent interview that 'ebooks may not be the ideal route in Malawi owing to their high prices' (Klaus Fiedler, 'Luviri Press, Malawi', *Logos* 35: 2-3 (2024): 21. For a characteristically encyclopaedic and nuanced account of digital publishing in African universities, see Hans M. Zell, 'Digital vs Print Resources at African University Institutions: A Discussion Document', *African Research & Documentation* 138 (2020): 3-16. See also the study referenced in n. 2 above.

6 To cite but one example, see Ruth Makotsi with Flora Musonda, *Expanding the Book Trade Across Africa: A Study of Current Barriers and Future Potential, Perspectives on African Book Development 7* (London: Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Working Group on Books and Learning Materials, 2000).

7 On book donation programmes into African countries, see Hans M. Zell, 'Part I: Book donation programmes in English-speaking Africa', *African Research & Documentation* 127 (2015): 3-130.

8 There are variations in publishing capacity between other African countries, with South Africa having the most developed scholarly and trade publishing. For a recent and excellent account of independent publishing in Africa, see Stephanie Kitchen, David Mills and Anshita Ail, 'Introduction: Small is Beautiful: Africa's Independent Book Publishers', *Logos* 35: 2-3 (2024): 7-14. The rest of this edition of *Logos* is devoted to interviews with African independent publishers.

9 We acknowledge that 'the Global North' and 'Africa' is an artificial binary, which can be punctured by examples of excellence on the continent and predatory pirates northwards. However, we stand by our foundational conviction of two contrasting publishing ecosystems on either side of the Atlantic/Mediterranean.

10 Hans Zell, 'The African University Press – A Gloomy Picture', originally published in *University World News* 475 (22 Sept. 2017) and then republished online with the added directory of Pan-African initiatives at [https://www.academia.edu/34690740/The\\_African\\_University\\_Press\\_A\\_Gloomy\\_Picture](https://www.academia.edu/34690740/The_African_University_Press_A_Gloomy_Picture).

11 See further Kenneth R. Ross and Fulata Lusungu Moyo, 'Editorial Introduction: Critic and Champion of Malawian Religion and Culture', in Joseph Chaphadzika Chakanza, *Religion and Culture in a Changing Malawi* (Balaka: Montfort Press and Mzuzu: Luviri Press, 2023), 7-19.

12 See further Kenneth R. Ross, 'Out of Left Field: Klaus Fiedler as Theologian for the Nondescript', *Journal of African Christian Biography* 8: 2 (2023): 42-57.

13 See further Klaus Fiedler, 'Theological Research and Publication', in *Theology in Malawi: Prospects for the 2020s*, ed. Kenneth R. Ross and Mzee Hermann Y. Mvula (Zomba: Kachere, 2021), 53-73.

14 See, for example, Matembo S. Nzunda and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Church, Law and Political Transition in Malawi 1992–94* (Gweru: Mambo-Kachere, 1995; repr. Mzuzu: Luviri Press, 2020); Kings M. Phiri and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Democratization in Malawi: A Stock-taking* (Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1998; repr. Mzuzu: Luviri Press, 2020); Kenneth R. Ross (ed.), *Faith at the Frontiers of Knowledge* (Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1998); repr. Mzuzu: Luviri Press, 2018).

15 Jessica Johnson, 'Malawi: Taking Stock in Turbulent Times', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 46: 2 (2020):195–207, at 195 n. 5.

16 The easiest way to access a 'catalogue' of the books is to log on to the website of the African Books Collective – <https://www.africanbookscollective.com> – and search for Kachere or Mzuni Press.

17 Text found at the foot of the back cover on all Mzuni Press books.

18 Statistics are based on the database of Masters and Doctoral theses created by Angus Crichton.

19 F. B. Welbourn, *Religion and Politics in Uganda, 1952–1965* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1965); Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971).

20 See Angus Crichton, 'Building Foundations for African Christian History: Collecting Church History Sources at Makerere University in the 1960s', *Journal of African Christian Thought* 24:1 (June 2021): 32–40. Another significant roneographed publication out of Makerere's Department of History was *Source Materials in Ugandan History*, which contained translations of important primary historical texts, including texts relating to Christianity.

21 For a recent overview of publishing in Uganda, see A. Isong, J. Murua, M. Chideme, N. Nene, R. Kizza and R. South, *Publishing Futures: A Study of the Publishing Landscapes in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe* (London: British Council, 2024): 78–89.

22 Kenneth R. Ross, Asiyati Lorraine Chiweza and Wapulumuka O. Mulwafu (eds), *Beyond Impunity: New Directions for Governance in Malawi* (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town Press and Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2022).

23 Kenneth R. Ross, *Mission, Race and Colonialism in Malawi: Alexander Hetherwick of Blantyre* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press and Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2023).

24 See Christoff Martin Pauw, *Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian 1889–1962* (Wellington, SA: CLF, 2016).

25 Kenneth R. Ross and Mwawi N. Chilongozi (eds), *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1924–2024: A Centenary Assessment* (Geneva: Globethics; Wellington, SA: Barnabas Academic; and Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2024).

26 See the statement, 'Publishing and co-publishing books in African studies: guidelines for authors', issued by African Books Collective, the Africa Studies Association of the UK and the African Studies Association of the US, available on the International African Institute's website at <https://www.internationalafricaninstitute.org/about/guidelines>. These principles are expanded by Mary Jay, the founding director of African Books Collective, in her article 'Co-publishing with Africa North-South-North', available at <https://www.readafricanbooks.com/opinion/co-publishing-with-africa-north-south-north/>.

27 These comments were made by the Kenyan publisher Henry Chakava in his article 'And another thing ..... Dealing with the British', *Logos* 10: 1 (1999): 54, and repeated by the Tanzanian publisher Walter Bgoya in his presentation 'Academic Publishing in the South' at the conference 'The Academic Book in the Global South', 7 March 2016, at the British Library, London, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KibTWqMShvA>.

28 The grant was made by a UK-based trust and allowed a substantial number of copies to be made available for free to the CCAP, reflecting the limited book-buying capacity of both institutions and individuals in Malawi.

29 Post on Listserv for Yale–Edinburgh Group on World Christianity and the History of Mission, 22 October 2019.

30 See <https://www.africanbookscollective.com/about-us>.

31 In her inaugural lecture, Professor Mary Bediako observes the rise in social science at the expense of theological perspectives in Global North institutions studying Christianity in the Global South and notes that disparities in research funding are in play. See 'Towards "Redressing the Balance": The Imperative of Primal Insights from Africa for Understanding World Christianity and the Theological Task', Inaugural Lecture at Akrofi-Christaller Institute, Akropong-Akuapem, 9 May 2024.

32 See n. 26 above.

33 James Currey, 'African Scholarly Network Press: A Co-publishing Model', in *African Scholarly Publishing Essays*, ed. Alois Mlambo (Oxford: Africa Books Collective, 2007), 99 (parathesis added).

34 The retail price in the UK is £85.00 hardback, £24.99 paperback. In contrast, the Mzuni Press edition retails for £6.00. Academic titles in the Global North have a high price because production costs + overhead contribution running into thousands must be recouped from the sale of relatively few copies (200 on average for a monograph). Replicating this model in Malawi would produce a book priced beyond what the academic book-buying market could afford.

35 UK Research and Innovation has introduced the following publication requirement from January 2024 onwards for research they have funded: 'for in-scope monographs, book chapters and edited collections, the final version of record or the Author's Accepted Manuscript must be free to view and download via an online publication platform, publishers' website, or institutional or subject repository within a maximum of 12 months of publication' (UK Research and Innovation, 'UKRI Open Access Policy', 4), available at [https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/UKRI-14112023-Nov-2023\\_UKRI-Open-Access-Policy\\_Version-1.8.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/UKRI-14112023-Nov-2023_UKRI-Open-Access-Policy_Version-1.8.pdf).

36 This data comes from a 2021 survey by twenty-five academic publishers in the Global North; see P. Shaw, A. Phillips and M.B. Gutiérrez, 'The Future of the Monograph in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences: Publisher Perspectives on a Transitioning Format', *Publishing Research Quarterly* 39 (2023): 73, 76–8.

37 Klaus Koschorke, *A Short History of Christianity beyond the West: Africa, Asia, and Latin America 1450–2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2024). Available for free download at <https://brill.com/display/title/70374?contents=toc-116020>.

38 Personal communication with Angus Crichton, 3 December 2024.

39 Koschorke, *Short History*, xii. The appendix is available at [https://www.utb.de/action/downloadSupplement?doi=10.36198%2F9783838559346&file=9783838559397\\_koschorke\\_digitaler\\_anhang.pdf](https://www.utb.de/action/downloadSupplement?doi=10.36198%2F9783838559346&file=9783838559397_koschorke_digitaler_anhang.pdf).

40 Quoted in Michael Schulson, 'A Revolution in Science Publishing, or Business as Usual?', *Undark Magazine* (30 March 2020): <https://undark.org/2020/03/30/science-publishing-open-access/> (paratheses added).

41 See <https://academic.oup.com/pages/purchasing/developing-countries-initiative>.

42 'More than 1,500 institutions in Africa and in low-income nations in other continents receive access to JSTOR free of charge or for steeply reduced fees through our JSTOR Access Initiative program': see <https://about.jstor.org/librarians/fees/jai/>.

43 Irene Staunton, 'Weaver Press, Zimbabwe', *Logos* 35: 2-3 (2024): 77. In 2023, The Weaver Press ceased publishing titles in the face of these challenges.

44 As Irene Staunton shared in a conversation with Angus Crichton in 2021.

45 Kenneth R. Ross, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Todd M. Johnson (eds), *Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

46 This phrase to describe the inability of Africa-based journals to sustain publication beyond a first few issues was coined by the Malawian scholar Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and subsequently cited by others. See Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 'The Challenges of Editing Scholarly Journals in Africa', in *Knowledge Dissemination in Africa: the Role of Scholarly Journals*, ed. Philip G. Altbach and Damtew Teferra (Chestnut Hill: Bellagio Publishing Network, 1998), 33.

47 Other pioneers of African theological publishing include Mary Bediako (Regnum Africa), Jesse Mugambi (Acton Publishers), Kyama Mugambi (African Theological Network Press), Benedict Ssettuuma (*The Waliggo*) and those at Cluster Publications, Editions Clé, NetACT and Paulines Africa.

48 To take but one example, Oxford University Press in the UK publishes around 6,000 titles a year and in 2023-24 generated a profit of £99.8 million (Oxford University Press, Annual Report 2023-24, available at <https://corp.oup.com/annual-report-2023-24/#FC>).

49 The inspiration for this suggestion is three-fold: 1) Akrofi-Christaller Institute's insistence that all doctoral students write the abstract to their Ph.D. theses in their mother tongue as well as English; 2) the appendix of Ezekiel Alembi's Ph.D., in which he describes presenting three chapters of his research on oral funeral poetry in Lunyore to the Abanyole community in a day-long festival (see 'The Construction of the Abanyole Perceptions on Death Through Oral Funeral Poetry', Ph.D. Thesis: University of Helsinki (2002), 227-77); 3) the *Tarikh* series, published in the 1960s by Longmans across Africa, which took new research in African history out of 'advanced and expensive texts or in the minds of scholars' into 'readable and easily understood form for school and higher certificate and first year university students'. The series ran from 1965 to 1982 and produced seven volumes with two editions of each volume. Might it be possible to create a series with a similar *raison d'être* for African Christianity?