

University of Portland

Pilot Scholars

Theology Faculty Publications and
Presentations

Theology

2021

African Migrant Christians Changing the Landscape of Christianity in the West: Reading the Signs of the Times

Simon Ahiokhai

University of Portland, ahiokha@up.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://pilotscholars.up.edu/the_facpubs



Part of the [African Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Catholic Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Citation: Pilot Scholars Version (Modified MLA Style)

Ahiokhai, Simon, "African Migrant Christians Changing the Landscape of Christianity in the West: Reading the Signs of the Times" (2021). *Theology Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 39.
https://pilotscholars.up.edu/the_facpubs/39

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the Theology at Pilot Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theology Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of Pilot Scholars. For more information, please contact library@up.edu.

PREPRINT COPY

CITATION: Ahiokhai S.M.A. (2021) African Migrant Christians Changing the Landscape of Christianity in the West: Reading the Signs of the Times. In: Dias D.J., Skira J.Z., Attridge M.S., Mannion G. (eds) The Church, Migration, and Global (In)Difference. Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue. Pp. 265 – 287. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54226-9_16

African Migrant Christians Changing the Landscape of Christianity in the West:

Reading the Signs of the Times

by SimonMary Asease Ahiokhai, Ph.D.

Contributor: SimonMary Asease Ahiokhai, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Portland, Portland, Oregon, United States.

Abstract: Gone are the days when one could clearly define the contours of western Christianity. Such a description must necessarily account for the influences of African expressions of Christianity and African religiosity in general. From the role of religious leaders to the very expressions of Christian rituals in the western world, Africa continues to play a prominent role. This is particularly true for the North American continent, where several hundreds of ordained ministers originally from the African continent are ministering.

Since Africa is not a monolithic continent, a legitimate question arises: What do we mean by the adjective, ‘African’ in the contexts of speaking of both an African identity and African Christianity? This work offers a response to the question by first exploring the colonial consciousness of the word. It proceeds further to show innovative ways contemporary Africans

reinterpret the word as a pathway for new imaginations of community and self – imaginations that are intentionally inclusive. Furthermore, this work sheds light on the successes and challenges facing African Christians as they navigate western socio-cultural identities both as diaspora African communities and as individuals., especially in the American context.

Keywords: African Catholicism, African Christianity, African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States, African Priests, African Theology, Colonialism, Evangelization, Migrants, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Western Christianity

1. Introduction

On January 11, 2018, it was reported by many media outlets in the United States of America and around the world that President Donald Trump had referred to the home countries of African immigrants in the United States of America as “shithole countries.”¹ There were outright condemnations of his comments by prominent members of the international community.² Many Americans were appalled at the comments. Social media was abuzz with comments in favor and against Mr. Trump’s comments. Being an immigrant myself from Nigeria, one of Mr. Trump’s ‘shithole countries,’ I was forced to reflect on how Americans view Africans and their countries. In my reflection, I noted that Mr. Trump has made public what most Americans consider kitchen talk as it pertains to American perceptions of Africa. My response to

¹ Ali Vitali, Kasie Hunt, and Frank Thorp, “Trump referred to Haiti and African nations as ‘shithole’ countries,” NBC News, January 11, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-referred-haiti-african-countries-shithole-nations-n836946>.

² Ibid.

Mr. Trump's comments was not limited to a critique of western perceptions of Africans and their home countries. I also had to ask my fellow Africans some hard questions that needed honest answers.

In this work, I do not intend to continue the diatribe against Mr. Trump based on his proven xenophobia towards African immigrants. Rather, I want to focus on the contributions African migrant Catholics are making to reshape Catholic-Christianity in the United States of America by intentionally highlighting their existential realities as persons navigating two-world-identities and the place of hospitality in the host communities in the western world. To achieve these, I will explore deeper notions of identity as they pertain to African immigrant communities in the United States of America. I will conclude by shedding light on their roles as missionaries in a pluralistic world.

2. Understanding African Identities

The challenge of the twenty-first century is linked to notions of identity and identity construction. The unintended consequences of advancement in science and the establishment of global institutions taxed with enforcing international laws, treaties, and cultural and social interactions are tied to an urgency to answer the primal question for humans today, who or what are we in relation to the other? In the past, such a question would have been easily answered by pointing to one's affiliation to tribe, ethnicity, and/or religion. Sometimes, such answers were articulated with a sense that the center of one's hermeneutic location was one's cultural context. Alterity, as a relevant player in the process, was either denied or barely recognized. All that is changing. One can argue that the wars of today are shaped by the tensions that are related to identity construction. When one looks critically at the emerging militant religious or secular

groups in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America, issues of identity play prominent roles, among others. For example, Boko Haram in northern Nigeria is, by its name, a militant and religious resistance movement to what it sees as secularized and pluralistic western influences on the national life of the country.³ For the members of this Islamic fundamentalist group, Nigeria should be an Islamic state and governed according to their own strict interpretations of Sharia Law.

Identity construction in contemporary African societies is deeply rooted in tribal consciousness.⁴ While shedding light on how the notion of tribal identity was a colonizing tool used by the British and other colonizing western powers in Africa, John Reader has the following to say about Nigeria;

In Nigeria, although broad cultural identities – pan-Igbo, pan-Hausa, and pan-Yoruba – had emerged before the missionaries and the British administration arrived to make their mark on the social landscape, they did not correspond to the colonial notion of static tribal identities. They were a reality, but they waxed and waned under changing conditions; they were units of inclusivity as often as of exclusivity, which embodied the notion of linguistic and cultural affinity rather than a rigid idea of shared descent... the perception of unity as the inevitable outcome of common origin – was rare in Africa (though not completely unknown) before it was applied by the colonial authorities. Thus, ethnicity (meaning tribalism) was not a cultural characteristic that was deeply rooted in the African

³ “Who are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamist group?” BBC News, November 24, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501>.

⁴ John Reader, *Africa. A Biography of the Continent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 614.

past; it was a consciously crafted ideological tradition that was introduced during the colonial present.⁵

Today, many Africans imbibe tribal affiliations not in the fluid sense of the word as it was in precolonial Africa but in the rigid form intended by the colonizing western powers. One is thus compelled to ask the following questions: What is Nigeria? What is Kenya? What is South Sudan? As I write these lines, Kenya is still trying to figure out a conciliatory government. South Sudan is involved in a civil war over issues dealing with control over mineral resources, tribal identity and political power. Nigeria is currently immersed in a hot debate over trying to understand itself as a pluralistic nation. Many are agitating for the breakup of the republic and a return to the pre-independent constitution that stressed regional rule and decentralization of political power. As a scholar trained to never stop asking the difficult questions, may I go further by asking the following, what is African identity when national identities are still being disputed by many in Africa? Does African refer to the continent or to something experiential?

Franz Fanon, reflecting on the colonial experience and its effects on the colonized people of Africa, speaks of a collective response by them to the negative, collective, and descriptive vision of the colonizers. “Colonialism, little troubled by nuances, has always claimed that the “nigger” was a savage, not an Angolan or a Nigerian, but a “nigger.”⁶ It is to this broad negation of African continental identities that “The colonized intellectual, steeped in Western culture and set on proving the existence of his own culture, never does so in the name of Angola or

⁵ Ibid, 615 – 616.

⁶ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 150.

Dahomey. The culture proclaimed is African culture.”⁷ This defense of an African culture and identity is reflected in the first generation of African literary giants like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka of Nigeria, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o of Kenya, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and many others. Most of Africa is free today from visible colonial rule. However, neo-colonialism continues to prevail in all of Africa, a reality that has the cooperation of some of Africa’s political and economic leaders whose interests are primarily motivated by greed and a lack of conscious embrace of continental or national identity. One then might be tempted to ask the following question, is there room for an African identity in the current dispensation? Fanon argues that “When the black man, who has never felt as much a “Negro” as he has under white domination, decides to prove his culture and act as a cultivated person, he realizes that history imposes on him a terrain already mapped out, that history sets him along a very precise path and that he is expected to demonstrate the existence of a “Negro” culture.”⁸ While Fanon presents a bleak picture shaped by a keen observation of the colonial agenda, there is another response to the question I have posed here. The response seems to be spearheaded by a new generation of African women scholars. African women within the continent and in the diaspora carry on the legacy of defining what it means to be African. Interestingly, while the first generation of African literary scholars focused on a generic African identity and culture without a bias for a tribal or national identity, the current generation of African scholars locate their works primarily within their national contexts. For them, an African identity is a given. What ought to be explored further is how an African identity is lived out within the cultural, tribal, or national context of the geopolitical realities of nation-states in post-

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

colonial Africa. I am conscious of persons like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie of Nigeria who deliberately explores issues related to identity in the context of cultural pluralism. Her focus is Nigeria. In one of her novels, *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie, as it were, sees it as her rightful place to continue the story of Africa that was started by the first generation of African scholars who might be said to have embraced a utopic African identity in their unified struggle against colonial rule and its effects on the continental psyche. In this novel, Adichie explores the theme of the African face of Christianity through the fictional character, Father Amadi. This young Nigerian priest embraces the vibrancy of life that characterizes what might be described as an African sense of social life as opposed to the European missionary priests in Nigeria who were detached and somewhat melancholic.⁹ Adichie also reflects on the crises faced by the emerging nationalistic consciousness of the newly independent Nigeria. Her work can comfortably be juxtaposed with Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In Achebe's work, the indigenous worldview of African people prior to colonial rule has been shattered by the colonizing agenda of the British presence and the introduction of Christianity.¹⁰ An emerging African female literary scholar, NoViolet Bulawayo from Zimbabwe reflects on the dictatorial and somewhat failed leadership of former President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in her novel, *We Need New Names*.¹¹ Bulawayo's work is best described by Margaret Busby's words, "Bulawayo immerses us in the world of 10-year-old Darling and her friends Sbho and Bastard and Chipo and Godknows and Stina – a child's -eye view of a world where there is talk of elections and democracy but where chaos and

⁹ See Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books, 2003).

¹⁰ See Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1958).

¹¹ NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013).

degradation become everyday reality, where death and sickness and the threat of violence lurk.”¹²

Petina Gappah, a Zambian born writer, who identifies as a Zimbabwean, has chosen to reflect in her collection of short stories titled, *An Elegy for Easterly*, on the resilience of fellow Zimbabweans who have chosen to remain behind and find ways of identifying with a country in chaos. Gappah wants to show not only how current political, cultural, economic, and social conditions play out in independent Zimbabwe, but also an aspect of what it means to be an African within the geopolitical space called Zimbabwe.¹³

On the theological front, Jean-Marc Éla, a notable theologian and sociologist from Cameroon, argues that an African identity is a paradoxical identity. It is not only shaped by a nostalgia for the past, but as well as by the disruption introduced by a colonial Christianity that is unable to redeem the African dream and hope for a better life. For Éla, African Christianity is simply colonial Christianity dressed in African attire.¹⁴ It speaks the colonial language and uses colonial structures to enforce its vision for Africa. In another work of his, Éla offers a corrective vision to this colonizing Christianity that Africa has inherited. He calls for an African Christianity that must be shaped by the content of African cultures, philosophies, spiritualities,

¹² Margaret Busby, “We Need New Names by Noviolet Bulawayo,” *Independent*, June 7, 2013, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/we-need-new-names-by-noviolet-bulawayo-8647510.html>.

¹³ Petina Gappah, *An Elegy for Easterly* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

¹⁴ Jean-Marc Éla, *African Cry*, trans. Robert J. Barr (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005).

theologies, and politics. Such a Christianity must have within its veins all that is authentically African without exception.¹⁵

Bénézet Bujo speaks of an African identity that is at its core relational and communal. Critiquing the Cartesian view of insular self-identity that has prevailed in the western world for centuries and traceable back to the philosophical propositional claim “I think therefore I am,” Bujo argues that “In the African conception, there is no separation between “being” and “doing”; consequently, one may say that the human person is what he does.”¹⁶ Bujo goes further by stressing the communal in shaping African identity by showing how identity points to the concept of belonging. One does not exist alone. Rather, one always belongs to a community. The community defines itself by its link to the ancestors.¹⁷

Mercy Amba Oduyoye seeks to reflect on what an African identity means for African women. In her work, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, she seeks to deconstruct traits of oppression in African cultures and religions, specifically, Christianity. She engages head on the narratives of subjugation that African women have been taught for centuries to embrace as their calling and identity in societies, where, prior to the advent of Islam, Christianity, and colonial rule, women’s roles in the political, economic, religious, and cultural spheres were highly regarded. In post-colonial Africa, African women have become the social

¹⁵ See Jean-Marc Éla, *My Faith as An African*, trans. John Pairman Brown and Susan Perry (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009).

¹⁶ Bénézet Bujo, *Foundations of An African Ethic. Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 124.

¹⁷ Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and The Dialogue between North and South* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 15 – 16.

donkeys whose only purpose is to be the beast of burden for the beneficiaries of patriarchy – African men. Oduyoye’s work forces Africans to pause and ask themselves, what type of African identity does the nostalgic longing of Africa’s pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial past seek to create? Does it include women? And if it does, is it oppressive or liberating?¹⁸

Laurenti Magesa makes a bold claim in relation to the question, what is African in African religious consciousness? In his work, *What is not Sacred: African Spirituality*, Magesa defends the claim that there is something in all of Africa, particularly within Sub-Saharan Africa, that is central to all the peoples and cultures, this he refers to as African spirituality, a spirituality that points back to interconnectedness.¹⁹ Following the trend of thought of Magesa and Bujo, I have argued in another work of mine that a cultural, religious, economic, political, and religious bias for the flourishing of all life is something central to African worldview. This is even validated by the role Africa has played in the Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.²⁰ Responding to the question, how does one explain an African identity that affirms life in light of the ongoing violence and disregard for all life in contemporary Africa, I hope for a return to the pragmatic solution found in African socio-cultural, religious, political, and economic consciousness. This pragmatic solution is hinged on the argument that all one does in Africa

¹⁸ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995).

¹⁹ Laurenti Magesa, *What is not Sacred?: African Spirituality* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013).

²⁰ SimonMary Ahiokhai, “An African Ethic of Hospitality for the Global Church: A Response to The Culture of Exploitation and Violence in Africa,” *Filosofia Theoretica. African Journal of Philosophy, Culture, and Religions* 6, no. 2 (2017): 20 – 41.

ought to lead to the flourishing of life and when this is not the case, that which denies life should be rejected, regardless of where it is located – religious or profane.²¹

Theresa Hinga, a founding member of *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*, seeks to create a legitimate and safe space for African women’s experiences as a vital part of any discourse of what it means to be African. In her work, *African, Christian, Feminist. The Enduring Search for What Matters*, Hinga continues the prophetic witness of Kimpa Vita (Dona Beatrice), who, prior to her conversion to Christianity, was a *Nganga*. Though Kimpa Vita fell victim to the religious and political intrigues of the Capuchins present in the then Kingdom of Kongo, who accused her of heresy and had her burned at the stake for witchcraft and heresy, her prophetic visions and agency of connection between the indigenous religion of her people and Christianity along with her vocation to be a conduit between the material world and the spiritual world serve as a reminder of what it means to be a woman in Africa.²² African womanhood is the source of life, knowledge, memory, tradition, and transformative change. For Hinga, any discourse of African identity must necessarily involve the experiences of African women and their roles in all the spheres of life. This means that the story of Africa must also be told by African ‘her-storyans.’ To deny African women the opportunity to tell Africa’s story is to

²¹ SimonMary Ahiokhai, “Embracing the Pragmatic in African Indigenous Religions: New Perspective for Interfaith Dialogue,” in *Christianity and Culture Collision: Particularities and Trends from a Global South*, eds. Cyril Orji and Joseph Ogbonnaya (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 151 – 163.

²² Teresia Mbari Hinga, *African, Christian, Feminist: The Enduring Search for What Matters* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), xiii – xxv.

tell an incomplete story, one that cannot birth-forth life and freedom both for the storytellers and the audience.

3. Negotiating American Identities as African Migrants

Whether the contributions and experiences of African immigrants in the United States are positive or negative, one thing is clear, there is room and need for some kind of integration. However, it is important that such integration into the larger United States' culture(s) be closely examined as means for understanding how African immigrants are continuously negotiating their identities either as Americans or as Africans with a renewed sense of self. This need is well researched into by Chinwe L. Okpalaoka and Cynthia B. Dillard. They focus on how the social realities faced by African Americans (descendants of enslaved Africans) and recent African immigrants in the United States play important roles in shaping a dynamic negotiation of their interconnected identities. Okpalaoka and Dillard highlight a very important issue at play in identity negotiations both for African immigrants and African Americans. This has to do with matters of race relations in America. In the encounter of African immigrants with African Americans in the socio-cultural space of America, "each is reminded of who they once were and who they are becoming, as recent immigrants face the possibility of a loss of connection to the homeland mirrored in the historical experiences of their African (American) kinfolk."²³ Furthermore, they note the following;

²³ Chinwe L. Okpalaoka and Cynthia B. Dillard, "(Im)migrations, Relations, and Identities of African Peoples: Toward an Endarkened Transnational Feminist Praxis in Education," *Journal of Educational Foundations*, 26 (Winter – Spring, 2012): 128.

As African immigrants become aware of the hierarchical racial structure that has American Blacks at the bottom of the hierarchy, they choose whether to associate or distance themselves from African (Americans) as a means of survival and identity preservation. African (Americans), on the other hand, may also respond to an unspoken hierarchy among minority ethnic groups in the U.S. that places African immigrants at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy by disassociating themselves from the newcomers.²⁴

Their research revealed that first-generation African immigrants tended to identify with their national origin rather than be identified as African Americans. The main reason for this, is that they “serve as a buffer against negative stereotypes about African (Americans).”²⁵

Furthering the discourse, Afe Adogame argues that the “re-construction of citizenship rarely operates in a vacuum but is contingent upon local, contextual and global historical, social, political, economic and other strategic factors.”²⁶ For African immigrants in the United States, identity negotiation is not only about the desire to assimilate; rather, it includes asking the fundamental questions: What is one assimilating into?; Who is considered American?; What does one have to give up in order to become an American?; In what ways can one continue to retain the nostalgic memories or resist the traumatic memories of the continent of Africa?; and, Who are they in relation to African Americans and fellow African immigrants they encounter in

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 131.

²⁶ Afe Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 133.

their new home country? For many Americans, these complex realities are sometimes reduced to one – skin color.

4. African Immigrant Catholic Experiences in the United States Catholic Church: Success and Challenges:

Within the administrative structure of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the office of the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT) is a subcommittee under the direction of the Committee on Cultural Diversity. Its mandate specifically focuses on providing pastoral support for migrants, refugees, and travelers within the respective local churches in the United States.²⁷ On its webpage it notes that currently there are twenty-two African countries being represented by African Catholic immigrants, refugees, and travelers in the U.S. Catholic Church.²⁸ Following the guidelines of the curia document, *Pastoralis Migratorum Curae*, published by the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People in 1973, and the reality of growth in immigrant communities in the United States, the National Conference of Bishops (that later became the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) established the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees (later renamed

²⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “The Subcommittee Mandate,” Pastoral Care for Migrants, Refugees and Travelers, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/index.cfm>.

²⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Ethnic Ministries,” Committee on Cultural Diversity, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/ethnic-ministries/index.cfm>.

Pastoral Care for Migrants, Refugees and Travelers) in 1983.²⁹ Among the initiatives implemented by this subcommittee is its support for the first meeting of the African Catholic Community Conference held at the Archdiocese of Boston in 1995. This conference discussed the challenges faced by African Catholic immigrants in the United States. It was made possible by the support of this subcommittee along with the Secretariat of African American Catholics and the Archdiocese of Boston.³⁰ In 1997, this subcommittee organized the first conference of African Women Religious Conference (AWRC) that was held in Bensalem, Pennsylvania.³¹ The next year, the subcommittee also organized the first conference of African Catholic Clergy Association (ACCA) in Tampa, Florida.³² Both the AWRC and the ACCA met jointly from 2000 through 2004 annually. It was at their joint meeting in Omaha, Nebraska in 2004 that both associations merged and renamed themselves as the African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States (ACCCRUS). ACCCRUS continues to be the flagship for African priests and religious in the United States.³³ Currently, ACCCRUS has eleven local chapters within eleven archdioceses/dioceses. These are Atlanta, Los Angeles, Boston, Newark, Chicago, Houston, Omaha, Phoenix, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh.

²⁹ Ibid. See also, Joanna Okereke, “History of the African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States,” African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States (ACCCRUS), accessed May 21, 2018, <http://www.acccrus.org/index.php/about-acccrus/history>.

³⁰ Okereke, “History.”

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ ACCCRUS, “Mission Statement,” accessed January 15, 2020, <https://www.acccrus.org/index.php/about-acccrus/mission-statement>

In 2010, the USCCB reported that there were more than 6,000 international priests working in the United States in different pastoral assignments.³⁴ Of these, African born priests are a significant number. In her work, Carolyn Presutti noted that in 2014, there were more than 1,000 African priests working in different pastoral ministries in the United States. 600 of these priests are from Nigeria and more than 70 were from Kenya.³⁵ This does not state whether these priests are ordained for African dioceses or are African-born seminarians and religious ordained to the priesthood for dioceses in the United States. Within the vibrant community of African priests and religious working in the United States, a distinction ought to be made between those incardinated into dioceses in the United States and those on temporary assignment whose dioceses or religious institutions of incardination are outside the United States. However, what is central to all the above groups of African priests and religious working in the United States is that they are all first-generation African immigrants. They embody two or more cultural worldviews – African and American. It should be noted that there is currently no second-generation African immigrants in priestly or religious formation in the United States. Furthermore, Dean R. Hoge and Aniedi Okure have called attention to the realities faced by international priests, including those from Africa. Some of these include linguistic differences,

³⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Promise to Protect. Pledge to Heal*, 2010, accessed May 25, 2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/2010-International-Priests.pdf>.

³⁵ Carolyn Presutti, “US Catholic Churches Recruit African Priests,” *VOA*, November 23, 2015, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-catholic-church-recruit-african-priest/3071204.html>. See also, Mary Gautier, et al., *Bridging the Gap: International Priests Ministering in the United States* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2014).

racism, cultural differences, poverty, and lack of proper theological and pastoral training relevant for the American context.³⁶

On another note, the USCCB website notes that throughout the history of Roman Catholicism in the United States, there have been twenty-six bishops of African descent. Nine of these are currently active. One is an archbishop (Wilton D. Gregory of the Archdiocese of Atlanta). Six of the nine active bishops/archbishop are heads of dioceses. Three are auxiliary bishops. Seven are retired. Ten are currently deceased.³⁷ However, while the USCCB website does not list any African-born bishop, there is currently a white South African-born auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon.³⁸ Bishop L. Smith was born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa in 1958. He immigrated to the United States in the 1990s and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon in 2001. He was consecrated a bishop on March 4, 2014 and is currently the titular bishop of Tubunae, Mauretania and the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Portland.

Focusing on African immigrant Catholic laity in the United States, the only available statistics can be found in the 2008 study carried out on behalf of the Office for the Pastoral Care

³⁶ Dean R. Hoge and Aniedi Okure, *International Priests in America. Challenges and Opportunities* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006).

³⁷ See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “African American Bishops,” accessed May 25, 2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/african-american-bishops.cfm>.

³⁸ Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, “Auxiliary Bishop L. Smith,” accessed May 25, 2018, <http://www.archdpdx.org/auxiliary-bishop-peter-l-smith>.

of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT) by Okure and Hoge.³⁹ While the population of African immigrant Catholics continues to grow in the United States, issues of identity and integration into the Catholic Church in America still need to be addressed. It is too simplistic an approach to identify African immigrant Catholics using the category of race as seems to be the norm in the United States. It is important to heed the advice of Hoge and Okure, who call for a more pastoral approach that recognizes and addresses the multilayered identity constructions by these Africans who do not have a race consciousness prior to immigrating to the United States.⁴⁰ However relevant this pastoral advice may be, it is also important to challenge African immigrant Catholics to work towards a more holistic vision of themselves in relation to their fellow Africans. Perhaps an observation I made some years ago will shed light on the point being made here. In the Summer of 2003, the Nigerian Catholic Chaplaincy in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles was celebrating ten years of their founding. As part of the celebration, Cardinal Francis Arinze, who was the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments, was invited to the event. As preparations began for the celebrations, issues arose with regard to what identity the group was to uphold. At the end, a tribal focus became the rallying point. Many members of the chaplaincy, priests and laity, decided to define the celebrations as an Igbo Catholic Community event. Some argued that Cardinal Arinze was an Igbo cardinal who was invited to the Igbo Catholic Community and not the Nigerian Catholic Community. This eventually led to the renaming of the community from Nigerian Catholic Community to Nigerian

³⁹ Dean R. Hoge and Aniedi Okure, *African and Caribbean Catholics Living in the United States: A Study Conducted for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (PCMRT)* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008), 28 – 30.

⁴⁰ Hoge and Okure, *Caribbean Catholics*, Xii.

Igbo Catholic Community. As a result of this, many who were not comfortable with this ethnic consciousness left the community. The website of the USCCB states that there are twenty-two African communities being ministered to by the Catholic Church in the United States.⁴¹ The question ought to be asked, how can these communities help to model for themselves and for their home countries a sense of national consciousness that is inclusive of all ethnic groups in their home countries? It is true that many, if not all, countries in Africa are made up of different tribes with their own unique languages and dialects. However, this cannot be seen as an obstacle toward building a national consciousness. A more pragmatic approach ought to be embraced by these immigrant communities within the context of worship. Liturgies ought to be celebrated in ways that the many languages of each country are appropriated by the worshipping community. For example, Nigerian communities can have eucharistic celebrations that use the major languages of their nation. Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Bini, Urhobo and so on can comfortably be used at different parts of the liturgy to account for the linguistic and cultural diversities of Nigeria.

In an era of unprecedented rise of racism in the United States, exclusivist tribal consciousness ought to be rejected by African immigrant Catholic communities. These communities can take advantage of this moment of grace in the history of the United States to demonstrate what inclusivity ought to look like. By identifying themselves solely by the tribal identity of the majority members, these communities legitimize the colonial narratives of division perpetuated as a colonizing strategy by the colonial powers of Europe.

⁴¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "PCMRT Statistics: Ethnic Communities" Ethnic Ministries, 2018, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/ethnic-ministries/index.cfm>.

On another note, it is important that scholars take time to study these African immigrant Catholic communities in order to understand why they are not experiencing an increase in vocation to the priesthood and religious life as is the case in their respective home countries. While Nigeria continues to have the highest number of immigrant priests and religious working in the United States, currently, there is no vocation among the second generation of Nigerian immigrants. One is forced to ask, are these communities also experiencing the phenomenon of materialism that seems to view priestly and religious vocations as problematic career choices?

5. Nature of African Immigrant Catholicism In the United States

The recently concluded Synod of Bishops on the Family that took place in the Vatican revealed a growing rift in the ecclesiological visions of two hemispheres; the global south, particularly the African Catholic Churches, and the global north represented by Cardinal Walter Kasper from Germany. For Kasper, the church's hierarchy ought to focus on social issues and come up with creative solutions that can lead to a more inclusive vision for all. However, he demonstrated a Eurocentric attitude that at best will accommodate in a minimal manner the dissenting voices of the African hierarchy that seek to be faithful to church teachings and tradition.⁴² To underscore the need to not quickly dismiss the African Church and its contributions to the content and scope of Roman Catholicism in the future, John L. Allen, Jr. has jokingly proposed a book title, "The Rhine Flows into the Tiber Again ... and Hits the

⁴² See Mathew Schmitz, "Don't Listen to the Africans, Says Catholic Cardinal," *First Things*, October 15, 2014, <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2014/10/dont-listen-to-the-africans-says-catholic-cardinal>.

Zambezi!”⁴³ Jokes apart, African expressions of Catholicism are best nuanced by the insights of Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, “We in the Church in Europe, the Church in North America, we suffer sometimes from a lethargy, don’t we? Not Africa! ... The bishops of Africa are prophetic in reminding us that the role of the Church is to transform the culture, not to be transformed by the culture. ...⁴⁴ One thing is certain in African expressions of Catholicism, at least in its approach to ecclesiology and doctrines; there are competing voices, one that seeks to be faithful to what has been handed to them by the missionaries and the universal magisterium of the church – the Roman curia. This group had the dominant voice at the recently concluded Synod of Bishops on the Family. A prominent voice amongst this group is that of Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria, who took a public stance against the views of some German prelates at the synod asking the Catholic hierarchy to consider allowing divorced and remarried Catholics to communion.⁴⁵ The other group calls for African theological and pragmatic solutions to African problems. One would say, this group is interested in a more synodal approach to living

⁴³ John L. Allen, “Why an ‘African moment’ is unfolding in Catholicism,” *Crux*, March 21, 2017, <https://cruxnow.com/analysis/2017/03/21/african-moment-unfolding-catholicism/>

⁴⁴ Catherine Harmon, “Cardinals Kasper and Dolan and the African bishops UPDATED,” *The Catholic World Report*, October 15, 2014, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2014/10/15/cardinals-kasper-and-dolan-and-the-african-bishops-updated/>.

⁴⁵ John-Henry Western and Pete Baklinski, “Arinze rebuts cardinal’s claim that Catholic faith is unrealistic: ‘Who do you think you are? Greater than Christ?’,” *LifeSiteNews*, October 21, 2015, https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/arinze-rebuts-cardinals-claim-that-catholic-faith-is-unrealistic-who-do-you_

out African Catholicism. This group, though a minority voice within the African Catholic hierarchy, has prominent advocates in the persons of Kevin Dowling, Bishop of Rustenburg, South Africa and Emmanuel Barbara, Bishop of Malindi, Kenya. Reflecting on the Synod of Bishops on the Family, both Dowling and Barbara criticize the synod agenda of addressing European problems and ignoring African realities.⁴⁶ What is interesting about both competing groups is their emphasis on relationality and connectedness – strong motifs in African Catholicism. For the former, relationality and connectedness are expressed in one universal doctrinal position on how to be church in contemporary world as it pertains to the church’s understanding of the Sacrament of Matrimony. This unity in doctrine should be a counter approach to the demands of culture, which they consider to be shaped by atheistic relativism and materialism, products of western societies. They see African Catholicism as being faithful to the traditions of the church both in praxis and doctrines. Fidelity to the magisterium means fidelity to a particular reading of church teachings and praxis that stood the test of the social movements of the past and, in their postulations, can also withstand the test of contemporary materialism. On the other hand, for the latter group, relationality and connectedness are fully expressed by fidelity to the Holy Spirit in reading the signs of the times as expressed in the particular contexts of African churches. In the context of theology and doctrines, this group advocates for an authentically African theology. In the words of Barbara, “If we want to have respect to [for] our African Christian families, we need to work seriously on an African Christian theology of

⁴⁶ Joshua J. McElwee, “African Theologians, Bishops Cry Out for More Expansive Synod Discussions,” National Catholic Reporter, August 11, 2015, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/african-theologians-bishops-cry-out-more-expansive-synod-discussions>.

marriage. ... It's not enough to apply other models that have been there for centuries."⁴⁷

Reflecting further on the doctrine and praxis of the Sacrament of Marriage, Barbara has this to say:

Can we still today speak of a universal form of marriage where the only consent --
 - 'Yes, I do,' coming from a Latin, German culture --- will be sufficient to
 sanction a marriage? ... In the African context, it used to take stages ... There
 used to be involved both families before the marriage will come to be something.
 Is it enough today still to insist in our culture, in our environment in Africa, that it
 is enough that you go in front of the priest or the minister and say, 'Yes, I do?' ...
 It is too simplistic to speak that our African Christian couples can only be taught
 about the good or negative effects of contraception, infertility, or fertility under
 just the category of what is sinful or not. ... It is too simplistic for a culture where
 fertility is one of the most important elements in marriage.⁴⁸

Unlike the global north, where theology is fast becoming the expertise of the laity, in African Catholicism, very few laypeople are trained theologians. However, does this mean that the issues raised above about competing theological views on ecclesiology and doctrine are alien to the vision and praxis of Catholicism by African lay Catholics? The answer is in the negative. While not trained in theology, a form of grassroots theology that is conservative and pragmatic defines African Catholicism as lived out by the laity. It is not a Catholicism that is shaped by the either/or approach of the two camps discussed above, rather; it appropriates both and eliminates the tensions found in both camps. It seeks to be faithful to tradition as it has been received while

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

also intentionally giving it an African face. It is both authentically African and Catholic in its expressions. I recall a conversation that ensued at the 2015 meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America. An African American theologian had expressed frustrations at the expressions of the liturgical celebrations of the Nigerian Igbo Catholic Community at her parish. In her words, “their liturgies are so long and loud. They celebrate as though no other person has claim to the worship space.” Reflecting on her comments, one notices a vibrancy in the ecclesial life of African immigrant Catholics in the United States. Their loudness and long liturgies are to be interpreted within the framework of expressions of life. Unlike the cultures of the global north, where reverence for the sacred is characterized by a stoic presence marked by calculated silence, for Africans, vivaciousness is the mode of respect and expression of gratitude before the sacred.

African immigrant Catholics express their catholicity via an African way. They do this by embracing the intersectionality of two worlds, or what Aniedi calls “living in two homes.”⁴⁹ Dressed in African attires with delicately decorated hats and headgears, elaborate embroideries on their clothes, prepared African dishes to be served after their liturgical celebrations, celebrations and exchanges of pleasantries before, during, and after each liturgical celebration are pathways of making present to themselves and to their host American ecclesial communities who they are and what they bring to the table of fellowship and encounters. African immigrant Catholics may not be trained theologians, but they embrace a very pragmatic theological vision that seeks to reconcile two worlds, that of the receiving global north and that of their home

⁴⁹ Aniedi Okure, “The African-Born & The Church Family in the United States,” March 26, 2011, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/resources/upload/COLLOQUIUM-2012final.pdf>.

countries in Africa. They may not be outspoken in the theological discourses of the day on matters like receiving divorced and remarried Catholics, or accepting of gay married couples to the fullness of the sacramental life of the church. However, their focus has been to carve a space for hybridized identities for themselves via their expressions of Catholicism. As the name concretely alludes to, Catholicism is not uniformity; it is recognition of the tapestries of expressions of faith in Jesus Christ lived in the different parts of God's world.

Community is at the heart of African immigrant Catholic religiosity. In a world that is experiencing the collapse of community consciousness and a denial and rejection of our connectedness to each other and the world around us, African immigrant Catholics can offer the Catholic Church in the United States an alternative model, one that focuses on the healthy aspects of community. However, it ought to be stated also that African immigrant Catholics need to work towards overcoming ethnic consciousness and praxis. The God who calls all to become one people invites all to see their differences as pathways for collaboration and not division (Galatians 3:27 – 29).⁵⁰

6. Conclusion

Immigration creates the possibilities for graced encounters among peoples of different cultures, races, ethnicities, histories, religions, and worldviews. As the African adage goes, wisdom lies not in the aged but in those who venture out of their homelands. African immigrant Catholics carry with them, a rich memory of the diversity of human experiences. They bear

⁵⁰ Biblical texts are taken from Donald Senior and John J. Collins, eds., *The Catholic Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

witness to the Pentecost event, the very source of the church's foundation – the meeting of peoples and cultures.⁵¹

Successes attributed to African Immigrant Catholics in the United States are not possible without acknowledging the generosity of the host communities. The generosity of American Catholics expressed by their opening of their parish doors to welcome African immigrant Catholics to their churches should never be forgotten. It points to a prophetic statement for African migrants to emulate. On the other hand, the vibrant expressions of African Catholicism by African migrant Catholics can serve as an example for the host communities as a pathway for the revitalization of Catholicism in a society that is fast becoming secularized. Every encounter between members of two churches is a missionary encounter. Today, Africa has become a missionary church to many parts of the world both in the formal sense of sending trained missionaries and in the informal sense of migration of peoples. African immigrant Catholics should make a conscious effort to always be aware of their own cultural and faith habits while maintaining an open mind towards the religious other whom they are encountering in their new home. Though many may describe them as aliens who have nothing to offer to their new homes, I beg to differ. Appropriating the insights of Maria Lugones such encounters should be grounded in a “playful attitude.” For Lugones, “the playful attitude involves openness to surprise, openness to being a fool, openness to self-construction or reconstruction and to construction or reconstruction of the “worlds” we inhabit playfully, and thus openness to risk the ground that

⁵¹ Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *People on the Move*, August 2006, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/pom2006_101/rc_pc_migrants_pom101_the-challenge-migr.html#II.

constructs us as oppressors or as oppressed or as collaborating or colluding with oppression.”⁵² In their playful attitude in their new home, African immigrant Catholics in the United States should yield the advice given by Lara Trout who argues that “habits are body-minded patterns of behavior by which human organisms intelligently interact with their physical, social, and internal environments.”⁵³ By consciously critiquing their African cultural, social, and religious habits as well as those of the host communities in the United States, African migrant Catholics can help birth-forth a new form of Catholicism that addresses the signs of the times in ways that inclusivity, openness, dialogue, and love of God and humans are fully embraced as markers of the church for the third millennia.

⁵² Maria Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 96.

⁵³ Lara Trout, *The Politics of Survival. Peirce, Affectivity, and Social Criticism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 27.

Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1958.
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books, 2003.
- Adogame, Afe. *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*. London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States. "Mission Statement." <http://www.acccrus.org/index.php/about-acccrus/mission-statement>.
- Aihiokhai, SimonMary. "An African Ethic of Hospitality for the Global Church: A Response to The Culture of Exploitation and Violence in Africa." *Filosofia Theoretica. African Journal of Philosophy, Culture, and Religions* 6, no. 2 (2017): 20 – 41.
- . "Embracing the Pragmatic in African Indigenous Religions: New Perspective for Interfaith Dialogue." In *Christianity and Culture Collision: Particularities and Trends from a Global South*, edited by Cyril Orji and Joseph Ogonnaya, 151 – 163. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.
- Allen, John L. "Why an 'African moment' is unfolding in Catholicism." *Crux*. March 21, 2017. <https://cruxnow.com/analysis/2017/03/21/african-moment-unfolding-catholicism/>.
- Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon. "Auxiliary Bishop L. Smith." <http://www.archdpx.org/auxiliary-bishop-peter-l-smith>.
- Bujo, Bénézet. *Foundations of An African Ethic. Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality. Translated by Brian McNeil*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001.

———. *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and The Dialogue between North and South*. Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997.

Bulawayo, NoViolet. *We Need New Names*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013.

Busby, Margaret. “We Need New Names by Noviolet Bulawayo.” Independent. June 7, 2013.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/we-need-new-names-by-noviolet-bulawayo-8647510.html>.

Éla, Jean-Marc. *African Cry*. Translated by Robert J. Barr. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005.

———. *My Faith as An African*. Translated by John Pairman Brown and Susan Perry. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009.

Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Gappah, Petina. *An Elegy for Easterly*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

Gautier, Mary, et al. *Bridging the Gap: International Priests Ministering in the United States*. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2014.

Harmon, Catherine. “Cardinals Kasper and Dolan and the African bishops UPDATED.” The Catholic World Report, October 15, 2014.

<https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2014/10/15/cardinals-kasper-and-dolan-and-the-african-bishops-updated/>.

Hinga, Teresia Mbari. *African, Christian, Feminist: The Enduring Search for What Matters*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017.

Hoge Dean R., and Aniedi Okure, *African and Caribbean Catholics Living in the United States.*

A Study Conducted for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers

(PCMRT). Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008.

———. *International Priests in America. Challenges and Opportunities.* Collegeville,

Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006.

Lugones, Maria. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions.*

Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

Magesa, Laurenti. *What is not Sacred?: African Spirituality.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis

Books, 2013.

McElwee, Joshua J. “African Theologians, Bishops Cry Out for More Expansive Synod

Discussions.” *National Catholic Reporter*, August 11, 2015.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/african-theologians-bishops-cry-out-more-expansive-synod-discussions>.

Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy.* Maryknoll, New

York: Orbis Books, 1995.

Okereke, Joanna. “History of the African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the

United States.” *African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United*

States. Accessed May 21, 2018. <http://www.acccrus.org/index.php/about-acccrus/history>.

Okpalaoka, Chinwe L., and Cynthia B. Dillard, “(Im)migrations, Relations, and Identities of

African Peoples: Toward an Endarkened Transnational Feminist Praxis in Education.”

Journal of Educational Foundations 26 (Winter – Spring, 2012): 121 – 142.

- Okure, Aniedi. "The African-Born & The Church Family in the United States." March 26, 2011.
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/resources/upload/COLLOQUIUM-2012final.pdf>.
- Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. *People on the Move*. August 2006.
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/pom2006_101/rc_pc_migrants_pom101_the-challenge-migr.html#II.
- Presutti, Carolyn. "US Catholic Churches Recruit African Priests." VOA. November 23, 2015.
<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-catholic-church-recruit-african-priest/3071204.html>.
- Reader, John. *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.
- Schmitz, Matthew. "Don't Listen to the Africans, Says Catholic Cardinal." First Things. October 15, 2014. <https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2014/10/dont-listen-to-the-africans-says-catholic-cardinal>.
- Senior Donald and John J. Collins, (eds.). *The Catholic Study Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Trout, Lara. *The Politics of Survival. Peirce, Affectivity, and Social Criticism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "African American Bishops." Accessed May 25, 2018. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/resources/african-american-bishops.cfm>.
- . "Ethnic Ministries." Committee on Cultural Diversity. Accessed May 20, 2018.
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/ethnic-ministries/index.cfm>.

- . “PCMRT Statistics: Ethnic Communities.” Ethnic Ministries. 2018. Accessed June 15, 2018. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/ethnic-ministries/index.cfm>.
- . Promise to Protect. Pledge to Heal. 2010. Accessed May 25, 2018. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/2010-International-Priests.pdf>.
- . “The Subcommittee Mandate,” Pastoral Care for Migrants, Refugees and Travelers. Accessed May 20, 2018. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/index.cfm>.
- Vitali, Ali, Kasie Hunt, and Frank Thorp. “Trump referred to Haiti and African nations as ‘shithole’ countries.” *NBC News*. January 11, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com>.
- Western, John-Henry, and Pete Baklinski. “Arinze rebuts cardinal’s claim that Catholic faith is unrealistic: ‘Who do you think you are? Greater than Christ?’.” *LifeSiteNews*. October 21, 2015. <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/arinze-rebuts-cardinals-claim-that-catholic-faith-is-unrealistic-who-do-you>.
- “Who are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamist group?” *BBC News*. November 24, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501>.