

Seminar – Easter Term 2026

“I have a Testimony” Autoethnography, Faith, and Decolonial “Self” in African Pentecostalism

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Dr Chammah J. Kaunda is an Academic Dean at Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS), UK. He is also Professor Extraordinarius at the University of South Africa. He is an affiliated Research Fellow with the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) and the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide (CCCW). Previously, he worked at Yonsei University, Korea. Kaunda has published over 150 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. Additionally, he has co-edited over 10 volumes and authored four monographs. His recent book is *Decolonial Pentecostalism: A Post-Nicene Theology from Africa* (T&T Clark, 2026).

Abstract: This presentation is grounded in autoethnography as a decolonial methodological gesture to explore African Pentecostal testimony as a source of lived theology through the lens of the decolonial “self.” I will examine how my testimony and embodied practice have evolved from my childhood rural worldview rooted in an African, Bemba – to be more precise, indigenous spirituality – to an urban Pentecostal spirituality, understood as a relational, Spirit-shaped, and historically situated site of reflection that resists inherited epistemologies while articulating decolonial subjectivity. I will highlight that while “the self” in African Christianity is relationally autonomous and embodied, it participates fully in communal (union of) life. Thus, I will seek to demonstrate how personal testimony and embodied practice serve as “a window” into collective faith discourses, showing that there is no sharp separation between “the self” and the community of faith within African Christianity. With this approach, I seek to demonstrate how an African-centred account of local Pentecostal faith expressed through an individual testimony, historical, and spiritual realities intersect in World Christianity.