

HOKMA HOUSE

(AN EDUCATIONAL & RESEARCH ORGANIZATION - NIGERIA)

INSTITUTE FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

AN INAUGURAL CONFERENCE

13-14 SEPTEMBER 2016

SOCIETY FOR AFRICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

... *shaping a new life, identity and thought (LIT)*

A PROSPECTUS

Traditional and contemporary African life-experiences largely occur independently of the critical systems of thought, which are capable of giving rational meaning and social significance to actions and actors alike. Where aspects of African life are subjected to a rational inquiry or analysis, such exercises often *proceed* from (if not torn between) 'the twin virtues of empathy and objectivity' (E. W. Fasholé-Luke, 1976), with regard to the 'traditions' which enshrine them against the onslaught of 'westernization', 'modernization' and the late grand urbanizer: 'globalization'. Admittedly, too, where African experiences are disparaged by critics under the illusion of a value-free 'objectivity', such act has produced a sense of disillusionment about the subject matter itself, thus further reinforcing the old defensive mechanisms against their public engagement. Both split stances appear to be approaches that are often taken by 'insider' and 'outsider' investigators and contemplators of African life, past and present.

Whatever may be said about current practices or emergent patterns of African life, in their sheer diversity and evolution, there is a need to create newer interdisciplinary ideational frameworks, which are based on the multi-dimensionality/-disciplinarity of knowledge for their correct analysis and understanding. Such need shall have the aim, *inter alia*, to examine critically the major areas of African life to be correlated to and re-created under given or new systems of thought; or African institutionalized beliefs and practices to be re-signified in order to achieve and secure their true intent. Thus, beyond merely affirming and or criticizing expressions of African life and modes of thought, is the greater need to establish critical affirmations of the daunting task ahead for SALT.

The mission and purpose of SALT are encapsulated by the five major areas below. In its bid to serve an emergent African democratic society, by anchoring the full spectrum of social life and practice in contemporary Africa to a robust framework of wholesome critical thought, and the pursuit of truth in life, SALT shall strive to accomplish the following tasks as it serves the African academia, ecclesia and the new African community-in-society:

1. **Engaging with African issues past, present and future in a multi-disciplinary context;**
2. **Giving focus, depth and direction to contemporary African discourses;**
3. **Exploring new mission frontiers in the expanding knowledge economy, which would promote integrated human flourishing on the continent;**
4. **Serving as a catalyst for contemporary African (Christian) communities' critical engagement with the world;**
5. **Forming a Christian theological resource-base for realizing a new social ordering of society for Africa, and new social offers for African citizens.**

SALT CONSULT GROUP

Under the above parameters, SALT initially will operate via a Consult Group of leading scholars and professionals, until a substantive leadership is formed alongside it. Representation on SALT Consult is open to qualified individuals, and recommendations—including self-nominations!—are welcome.

SALT Consult Group, in conference with and as directed by Hokma House, shall have the primary task of planning and participating in each SALT program. It shall also function in the capacity of advisement for future meetings, and related matters.

MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS FOR SALT

SALT shall endeavor to probe *and* problematize central issues within African life and society—or, rather, explore how such issues should define *and* shape African experience and thought well into the future. These issues—largely educational-professional, socio-economic and religio-political in nature—invite critical investigations into their subject-matters, esp. where they truly advance the knowledge and

understanding of African life and thought in new directions. One may thus explore Africans' varied life-experiences, critically and rationally, from the standpoint of the myriad issues which frame them. SALT also seeks to develop and nurture new thinking on African life—and Africa *per se*—such as would foster holistic knowledge; or the integration of key areas of human life, and their engagement by the Christian faith: intellectuality, law, politics, economics, business, work, marriage, family, human sexuality, social productiveness, morality/ethics, nature and environment, tradition and culture, communication, recreation, personhood, community, art/music and civics.

SALT 'CURRICULUM' INTRA AND EXTRA

As part of its service to and engagement with its represented publics, SALT shall work at both the intra-mural and extra-curricular levels. Thus, its 'programme' for shaping a new life, identity and thought (LIT) for Africa and Africans shall be assured a good measurable progress and success via mutual exchanges which take place between SALT and its representatives, memberships, sponsors, and the prime publics being served.

SALT REPRESENTATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Representation or membership of SALT is open to bona fide Africans and non-Africans whose work relates in significant ways to African life or experience and thought in their sheer diversity and profundity; such ones shall seek to be devoted to forming a critical Christian theological resource-base for realizing Africa's new social ordering of society. The broadest level of involvement and or participation @SALT is by representation: from individual to corporate/institution. Future areas of enlarged and select participation shall include registered membership at all levels within SALT.

FROM SALT TO SUMMIT VIA CAST FORUM

SALT *and* Summit: SALT shall form a major backbone and critical mass to Hokma House's Africa Summit, which shall hold every 4-5 years (or as determined). Both conferences shall seek to foster faith's historical transformations and critical or holistic perspectives on issues germane to Africa's achieving full progress in the world, by addressing foundational issues of human civilization, in tandem with engendering new formations of a humane culture and society. These joint exercises form an integral part of Hokma House's CAST (Christianity and African Society Today) Forum. Both SALT and Summit shall be guided by the *Concept Proposal* (© 2013) designed for this purpose by Hokma House.

@SALT: WHAT'S AHEAD AND HOW *NOT* TO MISS IT!

Note: Documents for the special sessions below are available on the Downloads page @ www.hokmahouse.org

1. Plenaries—Panels—Presentations by commissioned/main speakers
2. SALT Symposia
3. Call for Individual Papers and Panel Proposals: open! February-May, 2016
4. Formation of SALT Consult Group
5. Special session on review of Socio-Economic & Political (SEPol) Forum (Abuja, 2014)— Africa's Development and Democracy: The cultural, religious and economic stakes today
6. Special session on Dot.Edu Forum: 'Integrating Knowledge across Disciplines for Holistic Progress'
7. Special session on CAST Forum: SALT and Summit: revisiting the *Concept Proposal* (© 2013)
8. Future SALT Journal and Monographs/Series
9. Pre-register by 31 May (if you need an entry visa to travel or desire airport shuttle service)
10. Pre-register by 31 May (if you want to present a paper or propose a panel)
11. Pre-register by 31 May (if you want to participate in a special session: 2 max!)
12. Pre-register by 31 May (if you need help with housing—on a priority basis and as available)
13. No-penalty to register @venue—but on-campus accommodation not guaranteed!
14. Final registration at the venue is required of all attendees
15. Attending SALT is exclusive of other organized Hokma House's conference/seminar meetings
16. All communications and transactions on SALT is by email: hokmahouse.conf.2000@gmail.com; meetings@hokmahouse.org; for official enquiries: hokmahouse@gmail.com
17. Download from www.hokmahouse.org all relevant forms and info (e.g. Registration & Participation Form, Official Guide) on SALT

COMMENDATION

I am really excited about [this] initiative, the SALT - great acronym and noble goals to shape the future of things to come through critical engagements and intellectual discourses. The Society of African Life and Thought is not only a great idea in and of itself, but also inspirational as an acronym that is also a great metaphor, for who Christians are, and the primary calling to every believer, called to be the SALT of the earth! May the Society prosper and be truly the SALT of the earth for our societies.

Prof. Joseph Galgalo, The Vice Chancellor, St. Paul's University, Kenya

The future must look clearer, brighter, better and nearer after all of this!

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