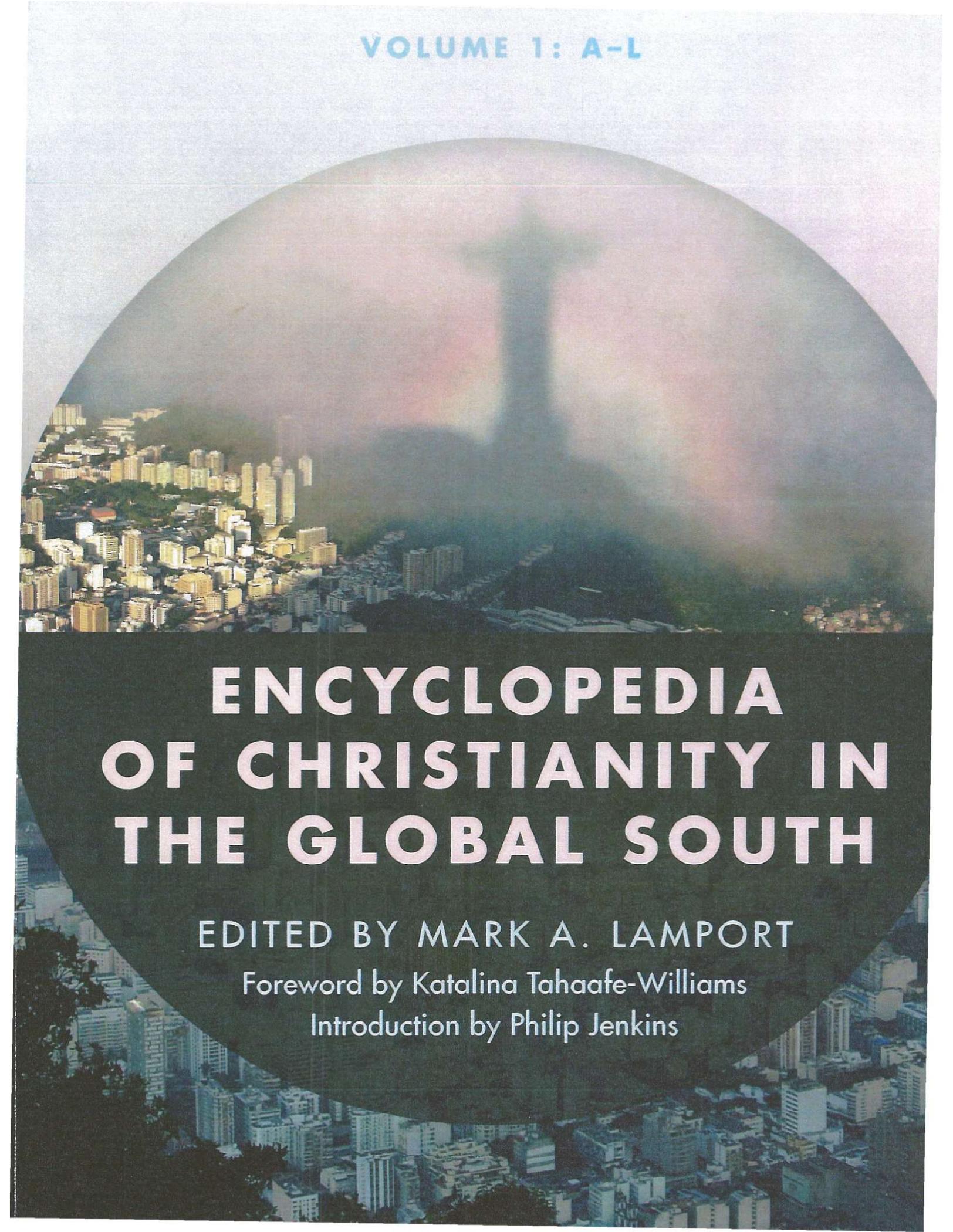


VOLUME 1: A-L

The background of the cover is an aerial photograph of a densely populated city, likely in the Global South, showing numerous high-rise apartment buildings and a mix of urban development. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is centered on the page, overlapping the city view. The text is overlaid on this circular graphic.

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

EDITED BY MARK A. LAMPORT

Foreword by Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

Introduction by Philip Jenkins

## References and Resources

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—A. SCOTT MOREAU

## DIOLA RELIGION

Diola, which translates to "visible beings" (Thomas 1959, 73), includes 10 subgroups famous for their strong religious belief and exercise of egalitarianism (Diatta 1979, 2). They settled in the southern region of Senegal known as the Casamance, on the northern and southern ridges of the eponymously named Casamance River, and trace their origin and religion back to the first uncreated ancestor, the supreme deity they variably call in Diola language Emitay, Ata Emit, Ala Emit, or simply Emit (Niang 2009, 31, 70, 81–82). The first human Diola ancestor(s), according to oral myths told by Diola people, was either a trader who settled in a fertile milieu and became a rice farmer or two sisters who migrated from the Kabu Kingdom in the south to north of the Gambian River (Palmeri 2009, 39–48; Thomas 1959, II:489–491).

Emitay is the creator of the first human ancestors. Elders, priests, and prophets transmit beliefs in the deity's involvement in Diola daily life from one generation to another. Many of these religious leaders, especially the priests and prophets, mediate the divine will to the people by serving their respective communities as rainmakers, healers, and administrators of justice. These activities often take place in sacred edifices that function in many ways as extensions of sacred space; namely, as sites of divine condescension and accessibility or shrines where sacrifices and rituals are performed to meet community needs. Religion permeates all dimensions of life. In the precolonial period, the Diola primarily farmed rice known as *oryza glaberrima* for subsistence, which they supplemented on a smaller scale with other crops. Rice is a sacred gift from Emitay to sustain life and therefore must not be sold for personal profit. Rice is so sacred that farming it requires the performance of a highly ritualized process, a meticulous set of rituals that mark each stage in the farming process from tilling and planting to harvesting the rice fields.

Diola priestly and prophetic activity often spikes to address crises such as drought, illness, and colonial occupation, which are often seen to be divinely orchestrated to punish some individual or communal transgression such as failure to perform appropriate rituals. Just as the God of Jewish and Christian Scriptures sends disasters to elicit human repentance for some individual or communal wrongdoings, so does the Diola supreme deity. As in Christianity, Diola "religion has sacraments of spiritual purification at birth and has rituals of confession and of offering prayers with wine" (Baum 1990, 375).

Officiating religious leaders, whether they are priest-kings, queens, or prophets, are servants of the people, endowed with divine power but equal to any community member. Although more men served as religious leaders, women's prophetic activity increased during the French colonial occupation of Senegal. The most famous of these women prophets are Queen Sibeth of Siganar and Aline Sitoé Diatta of Kabrousse. The latter, born in the 1920s, told French colonial officials who arrested her that the Diola supreme God sent her to proclaim the oracles of the deity. She sacrificed a black bull (Baum 2016) to reinforce Diola's treasured praxis: "a communitarian ethic" that emphasizes an egalitarian communal life based on mutualism in thought and deed (Darbon 1985, 131–132).

Because of the missionary presence in the region, beginning in the mid-1800s many Diola people converted to Christianity. In spite of Diola conversions to Christian faith and indications that they have abandoned their traditional religion, many are returning to some form of their faith practices, which still permeate their life and thought. Demographic evidence shows that 1% of Senegalese people practice African traditional religion, which includes Diola religion, with 94% being Muslim and 5% being Christian. These percentages are misleading, because the Senegalese people, regardless of religious affiliation, practice some form of African traditional religion.

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"This encyclopedia is a beautiful, thorough, needed contribution . . . and I hope many Christians, all over the world, will use it." —**From the Afterword by Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury**

"A comprehensive and far-reaching presentation of the most important development in world Christianity in our time. The contributions here put us well on the road to reconceptualizing how to think of world Christianity amid such seismic shifts and how we might interact with its many facets. This is a work I will return to again and again in the coming years." —**Robert J. Schreiter**, CPPS, Vatican Council II Professor of Theology, Catholic Theological Union at Chicago

"Covering voices of Christianity in the Global South, this encyclopedia critically appraises transitional and transformative moments for world Christianity. The entries in this book illuminate the face of Jesus Christ who shines on the thousand rivers, similar to a famous analogy in Buddhism of one moon reflecting in a thousand rivers. These volumes will be invaluable for those wishing to explore the present reality and future of Christianity." —**Kwang Sun Choi**, Honam Theological University and Seminary

"The *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South* is an essential resource for scholars who are engaged with the transformation of the Christian religion wrought in modernity. This encyclopedia is focused on the growth of the Christian faith in the Southern hemisphere, including the African subcontinent and Brazil. Those readers interested in the future of an ancient tradition will find themselves informed and interested by this significant scholarly achievement." —**Carole M. Cusack**, The University of Sydney

Christianity has transformed many times in its 2,000-year history, from its roots in the Middle East to its presence around the world today. From the mid-twentieth century onward the presence of Christianity has increased dramatically in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and the majority of the world's Christians are now nonwhite and non-Western. The *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South* traces both the historical evolution and contemporary themes in Christianity in more than 150 countries and regions. The volumes include maps, images, and a detailed timeline of key events.

The phrases "global Christianity" and "world Christianity" are inadequate to convey the complexity of the countries and regions involved—this encyclopedia, with its more than 500 entries, aims to offer rich perspectives on the varieties of Christianity where it is growing, how the spread of Christianity shapes the faith in various regions, and how the faith is changing worldwide.

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