

African Centre for Religions, Ethics and Society (ACRES)

The ACRES is located in the Department for the Study of Religions, Leslie Social Science Building, Upper Campus, room LS5.52

Website: <https://humanities.uct.ac.za/religion-ethics-society>

Director and Co-Director: Professor A Ukah (Study of Religions) and Emeritus Professor Abdulkader Tayob (Study of Religions)

African Centre for Religions, Ethics and Society (ACRES) is headed by Professor Asonzeh Ukah as director and Professor Abdulkader Tayob as deputy director. Based in the Department for the Study of Religions. ACRES was established in 2021 as an amalgam of two pre-existing research units. These units were the Research Institute for Christianity and Society in Africa (RICSA) and a research project pioneered and Chaired by Professor Abdulkader Tayob on Islam, African Publics and Religious Values. The latter project is a core enterprise of the NRF Chair in the Department for the Study of Religions. After several years of working in silos, the coming together of these research strands was to give force and impetus to the place of African religions (Indigenous religions, Christianities and Islam) as a transforming and transformative force in African societies. ACRES is a pluridisciplinary think tank of eminent scholars from varying academic disciplines with the mandate to conduct empirical research on the changing character and the transformative potential of religion in contemporary African societies and elsewhere around the world. The undergirding philosophy of practice of ACRES is the rarely acknowledged historical understanding that in the past hundred and fifty years, the greatest, most pervasive, and most far-reaching socio-cultural transformation in Africa has been religious in character. Understanding the multi-faceted implications of this historical fact would shed light on different aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life in Africa and how these are connected to the global arena. The intellectual mandate of ACRES is the mapping out of the modes of religious epistemologies as an engine of socioethical transformation and a (potential) driver of social change in Africa and elsewhere. To this end, ACRES provides a platform for the development of research on the intersection of African religions, projects of development and transformation, moralities in the making and other aspects of social life. Scholars working in the centre investigate how religious knowledge and ethics intersect with other spheres of social experience and life, and further the collaboration and network among researchers in Africa, and at the international level on the critical study of African religions and their ethical doctrines and practices in contemporary society.

