Research Guide: Selected African Religious Sources

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Encyclopedias and Surveys


“Important ideas, practices and persons in humankind’s religious experience from the Paleolithic past to our day.” Religion in its theoretical, practical, and sociological dimensions. African religions are covered in depth.


This monumental work has been developed since 1913 by a large number of scholars. Volumes and supplement fascicles have been published sequentially over time. There are detailed fold-out maps, charts, and photos.


Updates The Contemporary Islamic Revival, 1991. Includes 1,246 annotated entries organized geographically, with author, title, and subject indexes.


Research review dealing with traditional and Christian movements in the last one hundred years, with a focus on rural areas.


This is a chronological treatment by appropriate time periods arranged by regions and countries. The last chapter is on “Ecumenical Perspectives.” See the name and subject indexes.

Indexes and Abstracts

Note: Religion is also covered in the humanities indexes such as Humanities Index, British Humanities Index, and in the anthropology indexes such as Anthropology Plus, and also try the Web of Knowledge.

*ATLA Religion*. Chicago: American Theological Library Association, 1949-. Online

Indexes international periodicals in religious and theological studies.

*Francis (Humanities & Social Sciences)*. Nancy, France: Institut de l’information scientifique et technique, 1984-. Online

Covers 4,200 journals; abstracts for 80 percent of records, subject descriptions are in English and French.

*Index Islamicus*. East Grinstead, West Sussex, UK: Bowker-Saur, 1976-. Online

Includes North and West Africa, Sudan, and East Africa.
See also Haddad above.

- Includes books, dissertations, unpublished papers, articles, films, and videotapes. General, regional, and country coverage (3,187 entries for Africa). Ethnic groups, subjects, and authors are indexed.


- This massive work includes anything produced by the missions, even dictionaries and Bible translations. Five volumes for African mission literature, from 1053 to 1940. Author, person, and subject indexes in each volume.

- Divided into history and social analysis; African traditional religion and religio-cultural analysis; African theology, old and new guards; Black South African theology.

**Atlases**

- It is mainly text, but includes many maps and photographs.

- This impressive work might better be described as an historical overview in book format with maps, graphics, and photographs. There are eight sections arranged by historical period and geographic area.

- This work puts Africa and the diaspora in geographical perspective, especially in the first chapter on historical geography. Note the glossary and bibliography arranged by topics and regions.

**Afrocentric Sources**

- Six essays illuminate aspects of the Afrocentric view of religion, such as the African influence on Judaism.

- An Afrocentric history covering most of the world.

**Internet Portals**

(http://uiuc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=8144&sid=51953)

*Africa South of the Sahara: Religion*. In-depth Bibliography of Sources from Stanford University.

*Internet Sacred Text Archive: African Religions*. Good Collection of Primary Sources.

*Wabash Center: Religion in Africa*. Very In-Depth Collection of Sources on Religion in Africa.