

World Christianity Studies & Asymmetrical Dependency (WCSAD) Working Group

Monthly Table Talk

Women in World Christianity: Facts, Figures, Challenges, and Opportunities with Dr. Gina Zurlo

Date: Thursday, October 17th, 2024
from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (CET)

Location: Online via Zoom

Registration: To register, please email
David B. Smith (dsmith@uni-bonn.de).

The central role of women in Christian communities worldwide is undeniable. Kenyan theologian Philomena Mwaura stated, for example, that "the Church in Africa has a feminine face and owes much of its tremendous growth to the agency of women." The point of departure is that women have been the most active participants in Christianity across time and place. And yet, women's contributions in church and society are often elided from history and sidelined today. This table talk puts social science research into conversation with gender and World Christianity studies to ask a guiding question: Where are the women in World Christianity? Building off of Dr. Zurlo's latest book, *Women in World Christianity: Building and Sustaining a Global Movement* (Wiley-Blackwell 2023), this presentation will share findings related to gender gaps in church membership, participation, and leadership. Like women's history, engaging in sociological research on women requires new perspectives, methods, and sources to identify the nuances of their commitment to faith and service. This presentation and discussion will cover the assumptions and theories undergirding this project, methods and sources used to create this dataset, findings, and areas for further research on women and gender in World Christianity.

Pre-Circulated Readings: Gina A. Zurlo, *Women in World Christianity: Building and Sustaining a Global Movement* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2023), Introduction (pp.1–10) and Chapter 1 (pp.13–34).

Gina A. Zurlo, Ph.D. is currently a Visiting Scholar in World Christianity at Harvard



Divinity School (Cambridge, MA, USA). Her research interests include history, quantitative studies, sociology of religion, and gender studies. She is the co-author of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd edition (Edinburgh University Press, 2019) and editor of the *World Christian Database* and *World Religion Database* (Brill). She has recently authored three books: *Global Christianity: A Guide to the World's Largest Religion from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe* (Zondervan, 2022); *Women in World Christianity: Building and Sustaining a Global Movement* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2023); and *From Nairobi to the World: David B. Barrett and the Re-Imagining of World Christianity* (Brill, 2023). She was named one of the BBC's 100 most inspiring and influential women of 2019 for her work in quantifying religion and non-religion worldwide.