

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,  
the **VIDC** would like to invite you the following event:

## **The Heavens over Africa Of the Blessed (?) Influence of Evangelical Churches in Africa**

### **Presentation and Discussion**

with

#### **Paul Gifford**

Prof. emeritus, School of Oriental and  
African Studies (SOAS), Univ. London

#### **Wahu Kaara**

Director Kenya Dept Relief Network;  
Nominée for the Nobel Peace Prize

#### **Helmut Nausner**

Superintendent a.D., Protestant-  
Methodist Church Austria

#### **Moderation:**

Renata Schmidtkunz, Austrian  
Broadcasting Cooperation (ORF)

**Tuesday, May 4th 2010,  
5 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

**Venue: Albert-Schweitzer-Haus,  
Schwarzspanierstraße 13  
1090 Vienna**



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welcoming you.

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## Background

The so-called „Evangelical“ or „Pentecostal“ churches are the fastest growing religious movements in the world, from south America to south Korea. Their areas of proselytism are the poorer regions of this world. The use of modern communications technology and the use of various local religious traditions and the promise of prosperity and health are among the tools that constitute their enormous success.

Originating in Pietism, Pentecostalism today often has a very strong political component. Its representatives are trying to pressure local politicians of African states, so see their religious beliefs forget into worldly law. During the administration of George W. Bush, aid-agencies of evangelical churches had a large influence on the political and economical development of many African states through funding by USAID. A specially founded Bureau for “Faith Based Organizations” offers Churches the help they need to acquire aid-money.

Where does this religions movement originate from? Which political ideology is behind it. Why are they so successful? Which political powers are supporting it behind the scenes? How does it influence the societies, concerning HIV/Aids or homosexuality? Whose sphere of influence are they aggrandizing with their network of denominations? Are politically and economically conservative circles in the USA using these churches as a tool of power?

## Program

- 5:00      **Walter Posch, VIDC – Address of Welcome**
- 5:15      **Helmut Nausner – „The Origins“**  
Evangelicalism in Europe and in the „New World“
- 5:45      **Paul Gifford – „From America to Africa“**  
About the beginnings of Evangelicalism in Africa, Proselytism and the success of Pentecostalism
- 6:15      **Coffee break**
- 6:45      **Wahu Kaara – „Society and Religion in Africa today“**  
About African Churches today and their influence upon society and politics
- 7:15      **Discussion**
- 9:00      **Drinks and Refreshments**

**Moderation:** *Renata Schmidtkunz, ORF.*

**Language:** *English and German with simultaneous translation.*

## Panel

### **Helmut Nausner**

was born in Srednie Siolo, Belarus, and studied theology at the Methodist seminar in Frankfurt, Germany and became pastor in different cities in Austria, starting 1959. Already in his early years, he was very interested in ecumenism and became head of the "ecumenist youth council". (...) 1983 he became Superintendent of the Methodist church, which he remained for 18 years. Helmut Nausner is also president of the coordination board of Christian-Jewish cooperation. Until a short while ago, he was an active member and the press secretary of the "ecumenist council of Austrian churches". He lives in Vienna.

### **Paul Gifford**

was born in Wellington, New Zealand, is Professor emeritus for African Christianity and was deputy head of department at the institute for science of religion at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. His field of expertise covers Christianity, recent developments of African Christianity and its socio-political role and Africa's new Pentecostal churches. He has written several books, for example *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya* (2009), *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (2003), *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (1996), *The Religious Right in Southern Africa* (1988). Paul Gifford lives in Senegal.

### **Wahu Kaara**

is executive director of the "Kenya Debt Relief Network", which campaigns for economical justice and in the face of globalization. Prior to her current position, she was MDG-program coordinator of the "All Africa Council of Churches". 2005 she was nominated for the peace Nobel Prize and was a candidate for the Kenyan presidential elections. Together with Brazil's Lula da Silva she called *Global Call to Action against Poverty* (GCAP) into life. Wahu Kaara works with the topics of human rights, poverty, privatization, governance, and gender equality. Wahu Kaara lives in Kenya.

### **Renata Schmidtkunz**

Studied protestant theology in Vienna and Montpellier/France. Since 1990, she is editor, moderator and movie-maker in the Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation (ORF). She is hosting the political discussion show "Club2", moderates the science-show "Radiokolleg" (ORF Radio, Oe1) and "Im Gespräch" (Oe1). Latest Films: „Meine Geschichten erzähle ich mir selbst – der Schriftsteller Michael Köhlmeier“ („I tell my own story to myself – Author Michael Koehlmeier“) (ORF/3sat 2009); „Tel Aviv – Leben zwischen Himmel und Hölle“ („Tel Aviv - Life between Heaven and Hell“) (ORF/3sat 2009); „Alles was recht ist! 90 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht“ („All that is right! 90 years of women's suffrage) (ORF/3sat 2008).

### **We are looking forward to welcoming you!**

This event is a cooperation between VIDC and SADOCC.

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**Abmelden**

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