

ACTEA eNEWS

MARCH 2005

The mission of ACTEA is to promote quality evangelical theological education in Africa by providing supporting services, facilitating academic recognition, and fostering continental and inter-continental cooperation.

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1. ACTEA Council appoints new officers

The ACTEA Council is pleased to announce the appointment of its new officers.

Dr Jacob Kibor has been re-appointed as Chair of the ACTEA Council for a second three-year term. Dr Kibor is Principal of Scott Theological College (Kenya).

Newly appointed to the post of Administrator/Director is Rev Joe Simfukwe, Principal of the Theological College of Central Africa (Zambia). Simfukwe's theological training was at Spurgeon¹s College (London) and Morling College (Australia), with pastoral ministries in UK, Zambia, and Australia. Simfukwe has been involved in African leadership development and theological education for more than twenty years.

Dr Douglas Carew, the outgoing Administrator/Director, has been appointed as Deputy Chair. Dr Carew, from Sierra Leone, has also recently been appointed as Vice Chancellor of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. ACTEA¹s gratitude is extended to outgoing Deputy Chair, Dr Onesimus Ngundu, who has served in that position since 2001.

Rev Semeon Mulatu, the first Ethiopian principal of the Evangelical Theological College (Addis Ababa) has served on ACTEA Council since 2000, and is now appointed as the Council's Deputy Administrator/Director.

Dr Rich Stuebing, a colleague of Rev Simfukwe in Zambia, was appointed by the Council to succeed himself as Treasurer.

2. The Evangelical Bible College of Malawi is accredited

ACTEA is pleased to announce the accreditation of two academic programmes of the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM), located in Blantyre, Malawi. EBCoM has been accredited at the secondary level for its Certificate of Biblical Studies (English) programme since 1993, and this programme, currently with 46 students, has now been re-accredited. Additionally, the College's new programme, its post-secondary level Diploma in Theology and Christian Ministry is now also accredited by ACTEA.

The Visitation Team included international representatives from ACTEA; Zomba Theological College (Malawi); Chancellor College, University of Malawi; the Theological College of Central Africa (Zambia); and the Baptist Theological Seminary of Malawi.

Their report concludes, "The Evangelical Bible College of Malawi [originally, Likubula Bible Institute] has a forty-year history of training pastors and church leaders for its five founding and two participating bodies and beyond. Thus, the school has played and continues to play a strategic role in the development of the evangelical Church in Malawi."

EBCoM, along with most ACTEA-accredited institutions, also maintains academic recognition through a national body, in this case through the Board for Theological Studies (a consortium of eight theological institutions coordinated by the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Malawi which validates diplomas awarded by the affiliate institution).

ACTEA congratulates EBCoM upon this significant achievement.

EBCoM can be contacted through the Acting Principal, Megumi Fazakerley at: principal@ebcom-malawi.org

3. New email address for ACTEA

Please note that the ACTEA office in Jos has a new email address. Note that

actea.africa@gmail.com **is no longer valid**. Instead, use: actejos@yahoo.com or sbcunn@hisen.org

4. Faculty development network for Africa begins in Kenya

The Christian Higher Education Faculty Development Network (CHEFDN) has been inaugurated with academics from the leading Christian institutions in Kenya forming a body devoted to the professional development of faculty in Christian higher education institutions in Africa.

The mission of the Christian Higher Education Faculty Development Network is to facilitate the professional development of faculty members of Christian institutions of higher learning in Africa.

Its objectives are:

1. To enhance professional teaching skills of faculty members.
2. To provide a communication structure for sharing professional development resources.
3. To offer faculty development consultancy services.

Active CHEFDN member institutions include:

- Daystar University
- Pan Africa Christian College
- Africa Nazarene University
- Catholic University of Eastern Africa
- East Africa School of Theology
- Kenya Highlands Bible College
- Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
- Nairobi International School of Theology

- St. Paul's Theological College
- Moffat College of Bible

CHEFDN has held a number of faculty development workshops for its member institutions and also offers such services to Christian institutions around Africa.

For more information, contact Chip Kingsbury at: Chip@KingsburyFamily.org

5. International Consultation for Theological Educators announced

ICETE (the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education) takes pleasure in announcing that the next ICETE International Consultation for Theological Educators will be held 7-11 August 2006 in Singapore.

The Consultation is intended for theological educators from throughout the ICETE community worldwide. The Consultation will focus on the implications of emerging global Christianity, the "New Christendom," for evangelical theological education. Further details will be announced as they become available. Institutions that are part of the ICETE constituency, including all ACTEA-related institutions, are urged to begin plans now to be represented at the event.

ICETE's International Consultations offer a unique opportunity for face-to-face professional interaction and reflection among evangelical theological educators globally. The first ICETE Consultation took place in Hoddesdon, UK, in 1980. Subsequent consultations have taken place in: Chongoni, Malawi; Seoul, Korea; Wheaton, USA; Bangkok, Thailand; Katydata, Cyprus; and Unterweissach, Germany. In recent years the events have been held on a triennial basis; the most recent Consultation was at High Wycombe, UK, in 2003.

Further information about registration will be forthcoming through ACTEA eNews.

ACTEA is a founding member of ICETE.

6. Africa Christian Textbooks expands to Kenya

Africa Christian TextbookS (ACTS) announces the opening of its newest branch on the campus of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST):

This shop aims to stock the widest range of evangelical Christian books. There are books for the new believer and books for the mature believer. But we are particularly interested in helping students and faculty members in Bible colleges and seminaries to get the books they need for their studies. Hence we have a major emphasis on theological books, many of which are suitable textbooks for courses at diploma, degree or post-graduate level, as well as for library collections supporting such courses.

If a college is within an hour's drive of Nairobi we would be delighted to visit that college and run a "book day". We will bring several hundred titles and display them for a few hours, so that all faculty and students can see (and buy!) a selection of the books we have available in the bookshop (currently we have over 1,000 titles in stock).

Usually such good books are far too expensive for students to buy. But ACTS has negotiated excellent discounts with various publishers which we are able to pass on to those buying. So the prices really have to be seen to be believed! So come and see and believe.

The hours of opening are Monday to Friday, 10 a.m.- 4 pm. For a current price list and other information (or to arrange for the shop to be opened on a Saturday) please get in touch with Stephen Silamo (0735 450156) or Martin Bussey (by e-mail: mkbussey@iconnect.co.ke or by phone on Nbi 782362 or 0733 473311).

ACTS also maintains four branches in Nigeria, at: the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary, West African Theological Seminary, and Samuel Bill Theological College.

7. Keeping up with Africa--Reviews of Recent Books

Bediako, Kwame. *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*. Oxford: Regnum, 1992. xviii, 507 pp, pb, c. £20 [order from PO Box 70, Oxford OX2 6HB, UK]

This magnificent contribution to African theology has an epochal quality about it, generous in its size and scope, magistral in its learning, articulate in its presentation, penetrating in its assessments and even instructive in its limitations. Bediako currently heads a research study centre in his home country, Ghana. With minor editorial revisions, this is his doctoral dissertation submitted in 1983 at the University of Aberdeen. Bediako has increasingly functioned as an African Christian thinker from whom much advanced-level discussion must take some bearings (as did Mbiti in the past).

The impact of this book lies not least in its distinctive interpretive approach. Bediako first offers five chapters on the variety of ways that second-century Christianity evolved its sense of identity in relation to Graeco-Roman culture (Tatian, Tertullian, Justin, and Clement of Alexandria). He then uses this as the background interpretive framework for the following five chapters, addressing the quest in twentieth-century Africa for Christian identity in relation to African traditional culture (Idowu, Mbiti, Mulago, and Kato).

And the limitations of this study? Some will suggest that the question determining Bediako's entire approach may be fundamentally mis-framed, that the defining matrix from which to construct a valid African Christian theology may not be the religious culture of traditional Africa per se (as Bediako insists), but rather the present life of the African Christian community (as Tiénou argued in his doctoral thesis produced the year after Bediako's).

Others will wonder if Bediako only answers half of the question that controls his outlook. So deeply exercised to establish the proper relationship of African Christianity to Africa's traditional heritage, does he sufficiently raise and address the other half of the identity question: how should African Christianity faithfully relate

to its Christian heritage? How is African Christianity to be both authentically African and authentically Christian?

Many will also find Bediako's handling of Kato, both in this book and elsewhere in his writings, curiously off-note. Kato was the first African head of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, and the first from that community to take part in the theological discussions on the continent. Bediako's interpretive grid requires a modern African Tertullian at one extreme: "What hath Jerusalem to do with Athens"; so Kato is commandeered for the role. In Bediako's skilled hands Kato becomes a theological extremist opposed to African culture. Yet whatever Kato's limitations, he simply cannot be responsibly fitted to that mold. Kato was a main-stream evangelical in his beliefs, and a respected Christian leader both in Africa and internationally. He was also heartily affirming of Africa's cultural heritage; "Let African Christians be Christian Africans!" was the theme of one of his most important addresses. The implications of Bediako's portrait in this case are substantively misleading, and the disdainful tone fits awkwardly in a book otherwise characterised by courteous even-handedness.

That apart, this sophisticated and multi-faceted study will richly reward sustained attention for everyone who takes seriously the theological task of African Christianity.

[Review supplied by "BookNotes for Africa", a specialist journal that offers 40+ such reviews per issue on recent Africa-related publications 40+ relevant for theological educators and libraries in Africa and overseas. The subscription rate within Africa is \$8 for four issues (airmail); \$12 to overseas addresses. Send inquiries and orders to: BookNotes for Africa, PO Box 250100, Ndola, Zambia, email: rwstuebing@gmail.com]

"This journal is readable, affordable and essential for effective Christian awareness in the African continent."

Dr Scott Moreau, Editor of Evangelical Missions Quarterly