

July to September 2023
APF Prayer and Newsletter



African
Pastors
Fellowship

Impetus.



A heart for
the unreached

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

eVitabu update

"Thank God for
Google Maps"

Helping Uganda's
pastors through a
hidden crisis



From the CEO

Thank you!

Let me take this opportunity to thank all our fantastic supporters who updated their giving by standing order to our new Virgin Money charity account from our old CAF Bank account.

We are especially grateful to those of you who increased your donations. We are enormously grateful for all your support which really does make a huge difference and enables effective ministry through our brilliant partners in Africa.

When we were first contacted by CAF Bank back in early February and were told that due to the increasing volume and size of APF's transfers to Africa they could no longer monitor our account and would close it, we were very concerned that this might mean a significant loss of income and damage our work including eVitabu.

Due to your efforts managing the administrative headache of completing new standing order forms, contacting your bank, or navigating around your internet banking app, our concerns were unfounded. Thank you so much for doing this.

We are also aware that some of you set up a new standing order without stopping your old standing order, understandably expecting CAF Bank to return the original one to you as APF's account closed. In fact, CAF Bank only closed our account in mid-June, weeks later than we were told. This means that several donors may have made duplicate donations. For this we apologise and welcome your contact if you have been affected by CAF Bank's delay.

Finally, in case of any doubt, our new bank details are:

Account name:

African Pastors Fellowship

Sort Code: **82-11-07**

Account Number: **30479282**

Our old CAF Bank account (40-52-40 / 00016972) is now closed.

Again with all our thanks,

Dave

In the UK

Quiz night

A huge thanks to Ian Flanders who organised a brilliant APF quiz night at St Michael's Church, Bishops Itchington in Warwickshire where APF Chair of Trustees Rev Richard Suffern is vicar. Thank you to everyone who attended and made the evening a huge success. In total, an amazing £800 was raised for APF.

If you'd like to run an APF quiz night yourself, get in touch and we'll send you an APF Quiz in a Box pack that contains everything you need for your own event.



Yorkshire Three Peaks Sponsored Walk

APF Chair of Trustees, Rev Richard Suffern, is tackling the Yorkshire Three Peaks to raise funds for APF. Richard will be climbing Whernside, Ingleborough and Pen Y Ghent on 27th July. Please do sponsor Richard by going to his JustGiving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/richard-suffern-1682533098981>

Or, go to [JustGiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com) and search 'Richard's fundraiser for African Pastors Fellowship' to find Richard's sponsorship page. Thank you!



Thank you Dave Howard!

Rev Dave Howard, APF's longest serving trustee, retired earlier this year. Dave joined APF over forty years ago, 'by accident' he says, when he became vicar of the Coventry parish church that APF founders Derek and Jill Blundell were attending. His involvement was cemented after travelling to Malawi with their successors, Ralph and Jane Hanger. Everyone involved with APF would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Dave for everything he has done to support the work of the charity over so many years. As they would say in Malawi, *Zikomo kwambiri Abusa Dave!*

Around Africa



'The Smart Pastor' Conference in Kampala



Women leaders from across East Africa

Uganda

At the time of writing, Dave is in Uganda where he has been networking with many APF partner organisations, running conferences and meeting new contacts. Some highlights include:

- 'The Smart Pastor' Digital Theology Taster Conference in Kampala with denomination leaders and educators.
- Training Church of Uganda clergy on accessing and using eVitabu.
- Meeting with women leaders from Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.
- Meeting with Revd Kephous Ndinywa, National Overseer of Uganda Assemblies of God who invited APF back to train AOG pastors on eVitabu
- Speaking about eVitabu at the International Association of Evangelical Chaplains conference also in Kampala.



Rwanda

In May, Dave was in Rwanda where he worked with pastors from the Église Evangélique de la Bonne Volonté Au Rwanda, a small network in the north of the country led by Victor Imanaturikumwe (pictured with Dave above). Pastors from the EEBVR were trained to use eVitabu. He also met with Charles Munyamahoro from Wisdom Bible School and Bishop Assiel from Kigeme Diocese in the south where APF has helped provide solar power in rural parishes.

South Sudan

Morobo Diocese in South Sudan received an APF bike grant. The bikes mean rural pastors can travel to meet people in their parishes far more easily and take more produce from their small farms to market.

Malawi

Following Tropical Cyclone Freddy, funds were provided, in partnership with Operation Agri, to New Life Christian Church to replace crops lost due to flooding in the lower Shire Valley.



eVitabu update

In recent weeks, we launched a large update to our African pastor resource hub and training library app, eVitabu. Our volunteer app developer, Jonathan Haddock, explains some of the biggest changes.

It feels like ages ago now, but back in March I spent a week with Geoff (APF Projects Coordinator) at his home in rural Herefordshire focusing on making some improvements to eVitabu. Thank you Geoff and the Holder family for their hospitality and making me feel welcome!

My priority for the week was to (finally!) finish building the registration process into the app. Previously it was necessary for our partners to fill in a form on a webpage before they could use eVitabu, which was “clunky” but was the quickest we could do prior to the 2018 launch. Unfortunately this step didn’t always work on African devices, which can be configured in some very unusual (to us) ways.

Building in the registration process would make using eVitabu for the first time a much smoother process, and is something APF partners have been asking for for some time. Some readers of *Impetus* may recall I started building this back in 2020!

After much tweaking, and fixing a problem where sometimes the eVitabu user’s profile photo was rotated 90° during registration, work on this feature was complete. I needed to put it through some security testing prior to launch, but I’m pleased to say that integrated registration was available ahead of Dave’s trip to Rwanda and Uganda in May. Feedback was very positive.

I also took time to perform some maintenance on both the app and the website which we use to manage eVitabu. While not the most glamorous chore, this is an important part of the process to make sure eVitabu continues to work well.

My next task is to improve eVitabu’s reporting - hopefully that won’t take me almost three years!



A heart for the unreached

Lerato Lesoetha has a heart for Africa's unreached people groups. Born in Lesotho, one of Africa's smallest countries, she's heading to Chad, one of Africa's largest. She shared with APF something of her journey, which has also included time in Mozambique, Uganda, South Sudan and even the UK where she has been studying.

I was born and raised in Lesotho which is a very small mountainous country surrounded by South Africa. My passion for unreached people groups started about 13 years ago while I was watching a documentary on TV. The documentary highlighted just how so many people living in Muslim countries had never heard the gospel before and since then I have felt a strong call to be amongst African Muslims.

In 2019, I joined an African Inland Mission short-term team working in northern Mozambique. We served a rural Muslim community by teaching literacy, introducing children to Bible stories and training in sustainable farming. I thought this short trip would quench my hunger and I would go back to pursuing my career in international development. In fact, during this trip I saw that indeed "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few" (Luke 10:2). My heart was convicted that I should spend my life labouring in the Lord's harvest.

In 2021, I joined a year-long mission team based in Uganda but working primarily with South Sudanese people. What stood out for me from this experience was the fact that there remain so many unreached people groups and many more who still don't have the Bible translated into their mother tongue.

In September, I will be joining an outreach team based in Oum Hadjar in Chad for a two-year placement. Chad is a large landlocked country in North Africa. It stretches from savannah in the south, through the arid Sahel region and deep into the Sahara Desert to the north. Oum Hadjar is a small town on the bank of the Batha River within the central Sahel belt. The area is sparsely populated. The population of the entire Oum Hadjar Sub-Prefecture is only about 14,500.



Lerato Lesoetsa



Lerato (in a black hat) leading a Bible study in Karamoja, northern Uganda.

The main goals of our team will be to live relationally with the community. We will be learning Chadian Arabic and seeking to reach some unreached Chadian Arabs who live across the area. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, we will disciple and encourage the formation of house churches. Our team will also be engaged in English teaching and sustainable agricultural training. This is so important in this area as people's livelihoods are badly threatened by desertification. Throughout our time we will be working closely with the Evangelical Church of Chad.

At present I am in Canterbury where I am finishing an MSc in Conservation and Rural Development at the University of Kent. As soon as I have submitted my dissertation, I will go home to Lesotho to be with my family for a few weeks before I leave for Chad in September. I am sure my studies will be very valuable as I serve the rural communities living around Oum Hadjar.



“Thank God for Google Maps”

By Revd Dave Stedman

At time of writing, Dave is in Uganda where he's been working with the Church of Uganda, Somali Christian Fellowship and other long-term APF training partners. He reflects on the exponential growth in digital technology in Africa and the opportunities and challenges it presents for ministry.

Delegates arriving for the APF African training partners conference at Papaya Guest House announced happily on arrival, "Thank God for Google Maps!" The couple had travelled from Mukono to get there, a distance of less than 20km all within the Kampala metropolitan area, yet they found the venue with digital assistance.

I immediately reflected that in nearly twenty years travelling the length and breadth of East Africa – on tarmac highways, maram roads, dusty tracks and dodging potholes – I've never seen my driver or fellow passengers refer to a roadmap for directions. We just head in the general direction of our destination and make friends along the way.

I've been lost in urban centres and sugar cane plantations, I've broken down 'deep in the village' and deep in the Rift Valley. Finding the way or mechanical assistance was always a social event, accompanied by smiles and a lot of indiscriminate arm waving. "Just branch at the big tree and continue!" We always reached our destination, sometimes several hours late, but we got there.

It struck me as significant that even in Africa some are now seeking a digital solution in preference to asking their neighbour. At another conference the wife of a senior official passed the time taking 'selfies' during a rather dull Zoom presentation. 'Michael', a Somali convert to Christianity living as a refugee in Kampala, has launched a YouTube channel targeting Somali youth with the gospel. In Rwanda, churches and Bible schools that remain closed due to government regulations have found creative ways to continue using digital platforms to teach and for fellowship.

It is estimated that by 2025 there will be at least 685 million mobile phone subscriptions in sub-Saharan Africa. That means, statistically at least, there will be a mobile subscription for every adult.¹ Urban youth in Nairobi spend more time 'on screen' every day than any comparable group globally (7 hours, 40 minutes).²

The mobile phone banking service Mpesa has transformed how business is conducted throughout Kenya. In 2019, 87% of Kenya's GDP was transacted using Mpesa and similar mobile banking platforms.³



Africa is changing and the change is rapid. The changes also have huge implications for mission and ministry. What does it mean to be an African pastor in the smartphone era? How is APF responding?

Digital Tools

When we launched eVitabu in 2018, little did we know that a pandemic was coming that would accelerate the use of digital solutions globally to enable communication, training and church online. eVitabu continues to position APF ahead of the curve by offering a digital tool to resource African pastors across the continent. eVitabu currently reaches an estimated 1.5 million believers with contextualised materials that enrich faith, resource ministry and contribute to healthy Christian communities.

Increasingly APF receives requests for phones, tablets and laptops to be used as ministry tools and we invite you to consider donating your used devices to help us respond to such requests.

Digital Training

Having a device is one thing; using it effectively is another matter. For example, at our conference for Church of Uganda clergy in June, two major training needs were identified. First, there were leaders who wanted to learn how to unleash the full capacity of the phone in their pocket. They wanted training on using office apps, advice on protecting themselves and others online and help developing a digital strategy for their church or community organisation. Another group needed much more basic support such as learning how to navigate a touch screen or discovering that a smartphone can be used for much more than just Facebook, text messaging or mobile money. As APF seek to identify and release African Training Partners in every African country we work in, the ability to teach such skills is an increasingly important pre-requisite.





Image: Neil Palmer CIAT (Creative Commons Licence)

Digital Theology

We are all being shaped by the rapid advance of digital technology, and it has become an important topic for theological reflection globally. Theological reflection around the use of technology is arguably even more vital in Africa, however, where society has leaped from an oral tradition into the digital age so fast. How does technology impact our understanding of who we are in Christ? What does this mean for our sense of belonging to the Body of Christ? How can we share the love of Christ with our neighbours both physically and digitally?

As a simple example, look at the cartoon (right) and reflect on whether what you see is good or bad (or both). I find this cartoon provides a wonderful discussion starter in APF's 'The Smart Pastor' digital theology workshop which has been very warmly received in Bible colleges, universities and amongst networks of Christian leaders in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda recently.

Thank God for Google Maps? Maybe. What is certain, however, is Africa is changing as the internet becomes 'embedded, embodied and everyday'⁴ across the continent. APF is uniquely well-placed to seize the moment and continue its pioneering ministry to enable effective ministry in the digital age.

¹ GSMA, *The Mobile Economy – Sub-Saharan Africa* (2019) www.gsma.com/mobileeconomy/sub-saharan-africa

² One Hope, *Global Youth Culture Report* (2020) www.globalyouthculture.net

³ Drescher, Jesper, *Digital Africa, Investing in Africa's Most Untapped Source* (Pasadena, CA, Best Seller Publishing, 2020)

⁴ Hine, Christine, *Ethnography for the Internet, Embedded, Embodied and Everyday* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2015)

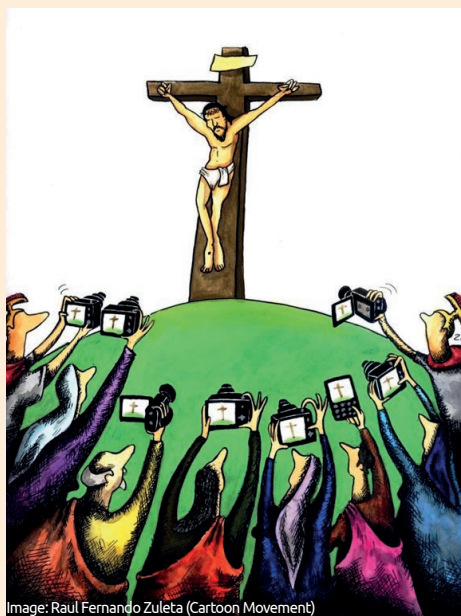


Image: Raul Fernando Zuleta (Cartoon Movement)

A large photograph of Peter Mugabi, a man in a dark suit and tie, speaking into a microphone. The background is dark with some green light patterns. The title is overlaid on a red banner at the bottom of this image.

Helping Uganda's pastors through a hidden crisis

Peter Mugabi is a former General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Uganda. He knows far better than most the pressures dedicated pastors in Africa face as they try and balance huge ministry demands with simply making ends meet. Peter now runs Cephass Leadership Foundation, an organisation that supports grassroots Christian leaders with leadership coaching, spiritual direction and mentoring. He writes:

There is a gap in psycho-social help for pastors in Uganda who are serving in a very difficult social environment. Stress, depression and mental health challenges are becoming more common among pastors and young Christian leaders. God has called Cephass Leadership Foundation to answer this need by providing a wide range of services that support those who are called to lead the church in Uganda. These include leadership coaching, mentoring, workshops for married couples, skills and business development programmes, leadership hubs and schools ministry training.



Last year, we worked with 158 pastors equipping them in discipleship, biblical counselling and training in good governance across four districts. In addition, we helped 54 young leaders through training on ministry competencies and best practice. Young leader trainings were held in schools, camps, and conference sites located in Mukono, Jinja and Kampala districts.

We met with over a hundred couples, and provided mentoring and support. Church ministry takes a heavy burden on relationships so we work to help them rekindle relationships and balance the pressures of ministry and family life besides breaking down traditional gender stereotypes.

“I have found these prayer breakfasts helpful because of peer learning. In these discussions there is openness and I find many solutions to my issues as I hear from the trainers and from my peers.”

Naphtali Makosya



“As a young couple we struggled with communication. This communication problem was also present in our leadership in church. But after our counselling sessions with Cephas, we have mastered the art of listening well and not only is our marriage thriving but our leadership in general is better. We are grateful for Cephas.”

Jacob and Lillian Eyeru



“ The Lord has inspired me and given me guidance in my career and ministry path through Cephas. May God bless this ministry and allow it to touch many more young people like me who are growing without parents. **”**

Bridget, Kampala (pictured right)

“ Our students really needed to hear what you had to say about dysfunctional relationships in homes between parents and students, students and their step siblings. **”**

**Teacher at Kyambogo
College School**

“ I lacked knowledge on team formation. I didn't know which parameters a good leader used in selecting, orienting, and preparing new team members. I had made many mistakes and entered conflict before... After training, I have been equipped in team member selection, I have applied this knowledge, and now I have a very solid team that is making a difference. **”**

Pastor Thomas Kigeyi



I'd like to thank African Pastors Fellowship and all of our faithful partners for your support that has enabled us to make a difference among pastors and emerging leaders in Uganda.

So many lives have been touched and many more have been impacted beyond the conference halls and office meetings. This all would not be possible without your generous support.

The battle for healthy leaders today continues and we must stay the course. Every pastor and emerging leader needs and deserves training, coaching and help. Thank you, again, for your generosity.



Peter and Rose Mugabi

For Prayer.



Revd Kephous Ndinywa | National Overseer, Assemblies of God Uganda

"Please pray for the introduction of eVitabu to 12 regional overseers and 12 digital natives [young leaders] in November and use of the app throughout our 450 churches in Uganda and 15 churches in eastern DRC."

Grace Kaziba | Faith Babies Home and Iganga Baptist Church, Uganda

"Please pray for the 43 children we care for most of whom have suffered abandonment, abuse and trauma due to parental neglect, disability or witchcraft."



Emmanuel Gatera | Word of Life Ministries, Rwanda

"Give thanks that I have completed a PhD in Theology. Please pray for the cohort of 20 theology students I teach and mentor through WhatsApp and Zoom due to continuing church closures in Rwanda."

Chantil Imanaturikumwe | Église Evangélique de la Bonne Volonté Au Rwanda

"I am running a women's farming cooperative in the mountains north of Musanze involving around 35 women growing beans, carrots and other crops for sale. Please pray for the women involved and their families."



Walubo Jude | Teachers Without Borders, Uganda

Please pray for Jude who is an invaluable friend and helper to APF in Uganda. Pray for his ministry as national director of Teachers Without Borders, leadership of community projects and for his political aspirations.

Manzi Jonan | Kampala, Uganda

Jonan is a businessman, rugby coach, pastor and entrepreneur. He is launching VineApp to resource his church members with Christian media. Pray for Jonan as he launches the app and for the new partnership with APF.



Harriet Sokiri (South Sudan), Rose Mugabi and Allyce Jossy (Uganda), Kesiah Luoga (Tanzania) and Hellen Rutto (Kenya)
Give thanks for this wonderful group of women who recently participated in the Africa Training Partners Digital Theology workshop in Kampala. Pray for them as they share their learning with the women, children and church networks they serve.

The vision of APF is to enable African Christian leaders, of all denominations, to minister effectively in thriving local churches that serve flourishing communities.

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Giving to APF

If you would like to donate to APF, please visit www.africanpastors.org/donate where you can make a one-off gift or set up a regular donation. Alternatively, post a cheque to our address or use one of the services below:

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Please consider donating £2 to cover print and postage costs. Thank you.

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