

April to June 2024
APF Prayer and Newsletter



Impetus.

How African is African Pastors Fellowship?

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Sharing the gospel in Papua New Guinea



From the CEO

Welcome to *Impetus*. We hope you will be encouraged by the stories of faith and ministry from around Africa contained in this edition.

As APF CEO, I'm part of numerous WhatsApp groups of African pastors. These exist for inspiration, discussion, support and prayer. My phone is almost constantly on silent lest the never-ending stream of messages would be too distracting. There are days when the need seems so great and the world such a messy place, that it would be easy to grow weary of trying to do good.

Whether it is a call to pray against drug addiction in Mombasa, or to intercede for grace to triumph over greed in the sordid allegations of impropriety among pastors in Kampala, or heartfelt appeals for so many worthy but under-

resourced causes in Juba, or Dodoma, or Bujumbura... The digital thread of prayer requests goes on and on.

So, I'm grateful for the season of Easter approaching and a sense that, here in Kent at least, there is a hint of Spring and hope for the future. May the words of Isaiah 43:19 be sustaining as we seek to enable effective ministry in Africa: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Thank you for reading, and praying for APF and our partners in Africa.

Revd Dave Stedman

In the UK

Equipped for Digital Ministry



Ten African pastors have so far enrolled and paid for the Equipped for Digital Ministry course being offered in partnership with Spurgeon's College. Several more are struggling with the challenge of raising the required £300 course fee while others have the funds but are finding either the cost of international bank transfers or the process of paying problematic. We're working with Spurgeon's to solve these issues.

Quiz Night

In February there was a fun and successful quiz night in aid of APF hosted by Canterbury Baptist Church. In addition to rounds on African general knowledge and APF specifically, there was an opportunity to sponsor Dave to wear his Ugandan kanzu and Kenyan Maasai sombrero! If you would like to host a quiz night to raise awareness of APF please contact us. Combined with a Sunday preaching opportunity, it would make an especially fun church weekend.



Governance

The APF trustee board has moved from in-person meetings to a hybrid approach with some meetings being exclusively online and others with the option to meet in-person or online. This works particularly well for an increasingly international board which includes Kingston Ogango from Kenya and now Rose Mugabi from Uganda. The trustees met online in early January to agree the 2024 budget and will meet again on the 14th May for the AGM.

New Trustee

It's fantastic to welcome another new trustee to the team. Rose Mugabi joins the Board of Trustees from Pastors' Discipleship Network in Uganda where she serves as Women's Ministry Leader. She brings a wealth of experience in teaching, diversity and cultural insight. Together with her husband,



Peter, Rose runs Cephas Leadership Foundation and before working in pastoral and formational training, they led a church in the urban slums of Nakawa.

Around Africa



Malawi



Central Bible School in Malawi was spotlighted in a recent edition of *Impetus* magazine. The college's library facilities are in need of improvement so a digital tools and training grant has been approved. This grant will equip each of the eight faculty members with a suitable smartphone, allowing them to install and utilise eVitabu as a valuable addition to the college's physical library. To help the effective use of the platform, Dave or Geoff will be conducting online training for the faculty later this year.



Rwanda



The Let There Be Light solar project continues to shine brightly in Kigeme Diocese, Rwanda. By providing reliable light to clergy families and parishes, the project offers numerous benefits: brighter living spaces, opportunities for studying after dark, enhanced security, and even income generation opportunities. We recently sent additional funding to ensure the project's sustainability by replacing batteries for some of the beneficiaries.



Our prayers continue for Rev. Victor Imanaturikumwe (pictured), the Legal Representative of Église Évangélique de la Bonne Volonté au Rwanda

and a passionate advocate for eVitabu. Victor has a plan for competency-based training that complies with Rwandan government regulations for faith-based leaders. He is seeking funding to deliver this training programme and he is also assisting APF in finding a venue for a conference in September.

We also pray for Victor's predecessor, Pastor Japhet Matugoma, who faces an urgent need to relocate his family home due to recent flooding and landslides (pictured left).



Zambia



Pastor Lawson Limau is spearheading the development of an introductory course in theology and pastoral care, drawing from resources adapted from the eVitabu library. Recognising the potential impact of this initiative, APF has awarded Lawson an Africa Training Partner annual grant. This grant will enable him to deliver the pilot course to rural pastors throughout eastern Zambia during 2024.



South Sudan



- In recent weeks, APF approved a grant for the Saints Revival Committee in Aweil district to procure and distribute 600 local language Bibles.
- Alex Sokiri of New Nation Church in Juba writes seeking support for the church school. Founded for orphaned and underprivileged children living near the church, the school currently serves children in three classrooms. However,

the classroom block front facade remains incomplete. With rainy season approaching, Alex is urgently seeking assistance to complete the front part of the school building to ensure the safety and well-being of the students.

Tanzania



Due to the ongoing demand for their teaching ministry, Heavenlight and Kesiah Luoga have been awarded an African Partner Training grant for 2024. This grant will help them to conduct training workshops throughout the year,

both locally and regionally. Recognising Heavenlight's desire to expand his reach, APF has also approved funding for video recording equipment so Heavenlight can record training videos for social media and eVitabu. This includes a high-quality camera phone, basic lighting equipment, and a tripod.



So much has been happening in Uganda that we needed to dedicate an entire spread...

Growing partnership with PDN

The Pastors Discipleship Network (PDN) in Uganda has received an APF grant to help them host a youth leaders training conference later this year. This exciting development coincides with PDN's construction of a new university campus, Cornerstone University, in partnership with American funders. Cornerstone University will offer a comprehensive curriculum ranging from certificate programs to master's degrees, with a unique focus on integrating Digital Theology into all courses. Dave is actively supporting the PDN/Cornerstone team by contributing to curriculum development and will participate in some teaching.

Bibles to Bushenyi

Pastor Rukundo Abel, who leads the YWAM training center in Jinja, spearheads the "End Bible Poverty Now" initiative. Recognising the need for access to scripture, APF approved a grant in January to distribute 100 local language Bibles to churches in Bushenyi district.



Bishop Lee Rayfeild Leadership College

Reverend Charles Okidi leads Bishop Lee Rayfield Leadership College (BLRLC), a Church of Uganda institution in rural northern Uganda. Despite the college's basic infrastructure, Charles has a visionary plan to use technology to enhance training of clergy and lay leaders. Recognising this potential, APF recently awarded BLRLC a digital tools grant to kickstart the design and development of a college website.



BLRLC classroom block

Connecting with Somalia

During Dave's visit to Uganda in December, he met with Philip Onen and Lt Paul Koyoa in Kampala. Philip runs the Community First Project which reaches some of the 40,000 Somalis living in the city with the gospel, vocational and IT training courses. Paul is an officer in the Ugandan army medical corp. as well as being an army chaplain and Regional Director for the International Evangelical Association of Chaplains. Together with APF and others within Somalia, we are working together to reach Somalis for Christ. One important aspect of this ministry comes through Christian leadership training for Ugandan civilian and military personnel serving in UNSOM (the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Somalia).



Tree planting in Bulogo

Walubo Jude Tadeo is a force of nature in Bulogo. Since 2018, he has been tirelessly planting trees for a greener future, exceeding a remarkable 50,000 trees planted. From eucalyptus and mahogany to mango and avocado, he's diversifying the landscape for a flourishing ecosystem. Jude's dedication extends beyond environmental efforts. He's also planning pastor training conferences, providing management and support to the Bulogo Women's Cooperative, and launching vocational training courses – all thanks to an APF annual African Training Partner grant.



Walubo Jude

Bible commentaries

APF supporters have donated both new and used Bible commentaries to APF. These have been sent to Uganda using our preferred shipping agent, Salabed. Our good friend Peter Mugabi will sift through the books, making use of some for personal study and donate others to rural bible schools and the networks of pastors he serves through Cephas Leadership Foundation.



Peter Mugabi

Sharing the gospel in the highlands of Papua New Guinea

APF partner Walter Rutto from Kenya is in Papua New Guinea to support ministry training. As an African Christian leader, he brings an invaluable level of cultural insight into this deeply animistic and traditional culture. Here's his latest update.

Dear friends,

I'm writing to you from the heart of Papua New Guinea, having travelled inland to a remote village nestled in the foothills of Western Highlands Province. Today, I had the privilege of sharing the message of God's kingdom with a community deeply rooted in traditional farming culture.

My sermon, based on the parable of the sower in Luke 8:1-15, resonated deeply with the villagers. They readily connected with the story, easily recognising the four types of hearts described when receiving the gospel 'seed'.

Our discussions delved into the challenges they face and where cultural practices sometimes conflict with the gospel. Amongst deep poverty, there are heartbreaking stories of how local women have been burned alive after being accused of witchcraft.

These practices, like "stones and thorns" in the parable, can choke the growth of faith. We explored the insidious nature of these practices, symbolised by the birds snatching away the seed, representing the influence of the enemy.

During my journey, I was struck by something strange: the village graveyards were notably grander and better constructed than the houses. I asked about this and discovered this was to appease spirits of the dead and prevent them from tormenting the living. This stark contrast between the physical and spiritual realms highlighted the ongoing struggle between animistic beliefs and the message of Christ.

The day ended with a joyful celebration as many stepped forward to accept Christ into their hearts. These warm and welcoming people even expressed a desire for me to stay and continue sharing the gospel.

On my return journey to the city of Mount Hagen, my kind host, Benji, surprised me with a freshly roasted sweet potato. It was delicious.

I now continue working with Christian Union Bible College in Mount Hagen. The college is currently running its training program with students from various churches and while the program is progressing well, many learners struggle with key biblical concepts.

These challenges include ingrained beliefs in polygamy, male superiority, and the influence of evil spirits in daily life. This week, we'll be exploring the concept of marriage through the scriptures.

Please pray for accurate interpretation while I am here. Please also pray for better translation of resources. The current English-language course material used by the college poses a barrier for many students. Training resources really need to be translated into Tok Pisin, the widely spoken local language.

Thank you for your continued prayers as I take this journey, sharing the light of the gospel and witnessing the transformative power of faith in communities in Papua New Guinea.

In Christ,

Walter



Walter with students at Christian Union Bible College in Mount Hagen, PNG

How African is African Pastors Fellowship?



APF has worked hard in recent years to amplify African voices. Through eVitabu and by empowering “African Training Partners” to lead and develop resources within their own communities, the charity is deeply committed to representing the African church. But is there more to do? Dave reflects on opportunities to further contextualise our work and plans for an increasingly African-led future for the charity.

Since joining APF, I've encountered raised eyebrows, especially when introducing myself as CEO. “But you're not African!” is a common response.

This sparked an important question: **How African is African Pastors Fellowship?** How far is our mission and strategy contextualised and reflecting the priorities and perspectives of African pastors?

Sitting in my home office in Kent, scrolling through photos of past African visits and praying over a map of the continent, I have questioned the long-term viability and ethics of a UK-based charity claiming to serve the modern African church. While we have real depth of relationship, trust and fellowship with our African partners, is there room for APF's ministry to be further contextualised and African-led?

Hearing African Voices:

For several years now, APF has aimed to amplify African voices. We create opportunities for African church leaders to share their resources and news through the eVitabu app and *Impetus* newsletter. We also invite African pastors to visit the UK, attend international conferences, and participate in cross-cultural exchanges like Walter Rutto's current teaching experience in Papua New Guinea. These initiatives exemplify the enriching exchange of knowledge and experience that defines African Pastors Fellowship.

Providing Contextualised Resources:

Our commitment to resourcing the African Church extends beyond simply making literature available in local languages. We strive for enculturation, encouraging resources prepared and delivered by those deeply embedded in the African cultural experience.

I vividly recall the profound learning experiences at the feet of Ugandan and Kenyan pastors, receiving unique interpretations of biblical stories. This is why we seek more African contributors to eVitabu and are exploring the creation of an African app development team to enhance the platform, even discussing potential partnerships with African mobile network providers to generate sustainable funding at no cost to users.

Releasing African Training Partners:

A key strategic priority is empowering "African Training Partners" (ATPs): individuals or organisations called to serve their peers, deliver training, and pioneer community projects that embody the coming of God's kingdom on earth. These partners are diverse, ranging from denominations and colleges to individuals uniquely positioned to reach marginalised communities.

Previously, APF's activity in Africa depended heavily on the presence of the Director. Today, thanks to our ATPs, there's ongoing activity throughout the year. We're also transitioning from making multiple small grants to annual grants, enabling our ATPs to plan training programmes with confidence. A major conference in Africa is planned for September to further explore this vision and formalise the partnerships with our ATPs.

Towards a More Representative Board:

While our board has always provided excellent governance and support, it has lacked diversity. We are actively seeking African trustees, both from within Africa and the UK African diaspora. We welcome recent additions like Kingston and Rose and hope this shift towards a more truly African APF continues.

Ultimately, my aspiration is to appoint an African Director for African Pastors Fellowship. Now, that's a thought!



Untrained pastors find hope through Africans Teaching Africans

In Uganda, Ssemanda Joshua Robert, a pastor with a heart for the poorest, has dedicated himself to equipping untrained pastors from across the country. Despite his own impressive qualifications, including 15 years of ministry and a master's degree in theology, Joshua prioritises empowering those with limited access to theological training.

"I have trained pastors throughout Uganda," Joshua explains, "and I've witnessed God using our team to open the eyes of countless church leaders." This dedication became tangible in 2014 when Joshua assumed the National Coordinator role for Africans Teaching Africans (ATA).

ATA addresses a critical need in Africa, where Joshua says only 15% of pastors have any formal theological training. Their solution is a simple curriculum designed especially for pastors in rural villages and urban slums. The programme's impact is evident in the stories of young pastors like Nsubuga John and Jude Ssekyanzi.

John, a pastor from an informal settlement outside Kampala, shares, "Before ATA's training, I didn't know how to interpret the Bible. I blindly followed everything the preacher said." Thanks to ATA, John says he can now "read and study the Bible carefully."



Pastor Nsubuga John

Jude, unable to afford Bible college fees, found hope with ATA. "The program opened my eyes to God's Word and ministry," he says. "It also made me aware of the dangers of false teachings used for personal gain."

A key barrier to effective training is the lack of affordable Bibles in local languages. Many pastors arrive at ATA sessions empty-handed. "We've been helping leaders own a Bible, but the need remains immense," Joshua explains.

"In Uganda, a Bible in your own language is a powerful gift. We greatly appreciate the support we've received from APF donors to buy Bibles for rural pastors in remote Ibanda District, and we keep praying for your continued support."



Pastor Jude Ssekyanzi

Joshua emphasises the consequences of inadequate ministerial training and oversight. He shares the story of Vincent, a young man misled by a church that taught that God does not forgive and that Christians must avenge everyone that hurts them so they feel the same pain they have caused. Through Joshua's guidance, Vincent now seeks proper theological education.

"We need to save such young men," pleads Joshua, highlighting the urgency of equipping future leaders.



An ATA training session in action led by Joshua Ssemamda Robert



From scorching sun to spiritual growth

News from Oum Hadjer, Chad

APF are following Lerato Lesoetsa from Lesotho as she ministers to women in the remote town of Oum Hadjer in Chad. In her latest update, she told us about oppressive heat and violent dust storms, a miraculous healing and the joy of ice cubes from her new solar powered refrigerator.

"Greetings from Oum Hadjer, Chad" says Lerato where the cooler winter season is now giving way to sweltering heat. Between March and May, temperatures climb towards 40 degrees Celsius. The heat isn't the only challenge. "During this time we also experience very violent dust storms called Habub" she says.

Despite the harsh climate, she explains that her Chadian neighbours always maintain a positive outlook, expressing gratitude to God with the phrase "*Alhamdulillah*" meaning "Praise be to God" even during challenging times.

Solar Power and a Changed Life

Recently, Lerato's daily life has been significantly improved thanks to the installation of a solar refrigerator. "We don't have to prepare meals from scratch everyday and we get to have ice cubes for cold water."

Seeking a Jesus Movement in Chad

Lerato yearns for a powerful movement of the Holy Spirit amongst Chadians in Oum Hadier. She started "Operation Fish Oum Hadjer" in January, aiming to identify women receptive to spiritual conversations and prayer within the community. She explains that the initiative has fostered her own personal growth in faith and says she's become more attuned to the Holy Spirit's guidance on "who to approach and which houses to visit."

One such encounter occurred six weeks ago at the Quranic School of a woman named Almahakim, who was suffering with heart problems. With her permission, Lerato offered prayers for her healing in Jesus' name. "A week later we went to check on her and she told us that she was healed through our prayer" Lerato says. "She was so happy and invited us to pray for her younger sister who had malaria. We pray that the Lord would do other signs in our town to the glory of His Name."

Ramadan and Sharing Our Faith

Soon, Chadians in Oum Hadjer will join with Muslims all over the world and embark on a month-long period of fasting

and prayer known as Ramadan. This holy month is traditionally marked by home renovations, repainting, and a general emphasis on cleanliness. During Ramadan, "many people are more ready to have deep spiritual conversations" explains Lerato. "Many of our neighbours have never been friends with Christians and we value every opportunity to speak with them about Jesus (Isa Al-Masih)". The daily fast is broken each evening with community feasts, presenting further opportunities to connect and share faith together.

In preparation for Ramadan, Lerato has embarked on a time of prayer herself. She explains she is praying that God would "fill us with more boldness to share our faith, and that He will show dreams and visions of Jesus to our neighbours. Please pray for hearts to be open to the truth of Isa Al-Masih."



Lerato Lesoetsa

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

Giving to APF

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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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