

April to June 2019
APF Prayer and Newsletter



African
Pastors
Fellowship

Impetus.



Danish Baptists in Burundi and Rwanda

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prayer themes

APF news from the
UK and in Africa



and updates to the app, alongside supporting the creation of something called a client relationship management system that will help us manage hundreds or even thousands of eVitabu users from across Africa.



Jonathan with eVitabu users at the launch

After having his first child in February, our other volunteer eVitabu developer, Michael Berry, is stepping back from the project. We're very grateful to Michael for all the amazing work he has done to get eVitabu to where it is now.



Dave

From the CEO

In the October edition of News and Prayer, we reported that we were beginning to look for an additional member of staff to help us with growing charity administration demands.

Being unable to appoint our preferred administrator candidate, however, led us to have a bit of a rethink.

With demand for eVitabu growing daily, we're beginning to explore what it might mean to launch the app across the whole of Africa. With this in mind, rather than re-advertising for an administrator, the trustees appointed one of our volunteer developers, Jonathan Haddock, as APF's new consultant eVitabu developer. We're delighted to welcome Jonathan onto the APF team in a more formal capacity and he is already working closely with Geoff on new features

In the UK

ADVENTure: Bikes for Africa

Following the success of the 2015 Lycra Challenge and 2018 twelve-hour Bikeathon, which together raised more than £5000 for bicycles grants for rural pastors, Dave is proposing to do another long-distance ride this Advent: from Nazareth (in Belgium) to Bethlehem (in Wales) which is about 410 miles. If readers would like to be involved for some or all of the ride or if you would be willing to pledge sponsorship, please drop Dave a line at ceo@africanpastors.org

Sunday Speaking Opportunities

During their interregnum, Dave is supporting Zion Baptist Church, Tenterden, preaching one Sunday morning service a month. Tenterden has become a valuable supporting church for APF. Their previous pastor, Revd Neal Stanton travelled to Africa several times and the church is a generously donor. Dave's preaching ministry is valued by many churches and we encourage readers to consider inviting APF to come and take part in services.



Office relocation update

We've moved. Twice! Firstly, we're very grateful to APF supporter Dave Gollins for letting APF share his office above Macknades farm shop in Faversham, Kent. It's a great office space and the shop's popular café below is perfect for meetings. The coffee isn't bad either.

In other relocation related news, our Projects Coordinator, Geoff, has also moved, but to Herefordshire from where he'll continue to work remotely for APF. Geoff and Christine have two young children and living nearer to the grandparents will be a huge help, especially when Geoff's working in Africa. And now with a South East - West Midlands UK staffing spread, it will be easier for APF to visit supporting churches, meetings and network than it was when we were all based geographically closer to Boulogne than Birmingham, Bristol or Bradford.



Shire Valley Flooding

In February and March, heavy rains and Cyclone Idai brought flooding to the Shire Valley area of southern Malawi badly affecting several communities involved in the Growing Greener sustainable agriculture project. Pastor Lloyd Chizenga, who runs the project and oversees New Life Christian Church (NLCC), explained that around 350 families in Chikwawa and Nsanje Districts had been impacted with crops destroyed, homes damaged and possessions ruined. With match funding from Operation Agri, APF have sent NLCC £600 to buy seed so project participants can replace the crops lost in the flooding.

eVitabu in Sudan



While visiting Khartoum, APF Chair of Trustees, Richard Suffern, presented the Archbishop of Sudan, Ezekiel Kondo, with a tablet for running eVitabu. The Anglican church in Sudan is estimated to comprise around 1 million Christians.

Jubilee Trees

Baptist Union of Uganda General Secretary, Peter Mugabi, and Ugandan forestry expert Bernadette Kabonesa have identified the first church sites in central Uganda suitable for tree planting projects. Using pioneering web-based technology called CQuestr developed by Climate Stewards, they logged the sites and agreed with church members the most appropriate tree species. In years to come the trees will provide income for the churches whilst supporting biodiversity.



Wisdom Bible School

New government regulation on faith organisations mean all Rwandan church leaders now have to be qualified to at least diploma level. But few rural pastors have any recognised qualification which means churches have closed across the country. APF trustee Andrew North travelled to Rwanda in March to meet with Rev Charles Munyamahoro from the Free Methodist Church to explore how APF could support rural pastor training through Wisdom Bible School in Gakenke District, Northern Province. With APF backing, the school is hoping to be able provide extension theology courses that will give pastors the qualifications they need and keep their churches open.



Kate Colman, Peter and Rose Mugabi and Dave Stedman

Uganda conference

The north-east region Baptist overseer, Bishop Sam Eibu, invited APF to provide teaching and encouragement for pastors and wives around the theme 'Shepherds Marriage Renewal' as part of their regional church leader training programme. More than 150 couples attended the three-day event in February. The APF team included CEO, David Stedman, Next Leadership Co-Founder, Revd Dr Kate Coleman, and BUU General Secretary, Revd Peter and Rose Mugabi. Topics included a biblical foundation for marriage, money, sex, parenting, conflict resolution and domestic violence.



Let There Be Light (Rwanda)

The first Anglican pastors from Kigeme Diocese, southern Rwanda received solar power installations in February and March. Using income from mobile phone charging services and savings from no longer needing kerosene, the churches involved in the project will pay RWF 15,000 (£13) per month back into the scheme. Within two years they will own the systems outright and the funds will be used to finance solar power units for other rural clergy. This project replicates APF's successful Let There Be Light solar initiative in Morogoro Diocese, Tanzania and is being overseen by Bishop Assiel Musabyimana.



eVitabu in Kenya

Another 25 tablets for running APF's eVitabu app were distributed to influential Kenyan church leaders representing over a thousand churches from Covenant Church International, Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. The event was coordinated by Revd David Kereto at Narok in Maasailand. A day's training was delivered by Dave Stedman and a small team of Nairobi based IT experts. The tablets were provided with funding from George Verwer at OM Special Projects and promise to add value to existing ministries around leadership development and pastoral formation.

Revival in Pokot

In Kenya's Wild West, cattle rustling is a way of life. There are probably many reasons for this: cultural belief, the availability of guns, commercialisation of cattle raiding, politics, poverty, illiteracy and exorbitant bride prices.

Like several other indigenous people groups in western Kenya, north-east Uganda and South Sudan, the Pokot believe that all the cattle on Earth belong to them.

If a Pokot man came to a dairy farm in the UK, he would seek to reclaim what was rightly his. If he wanted to impress his girlfriend, he'd bring her a rustled heifer. Taking cattle from others is not considered theft but returning a chattel from a custodian. When Pokot people visit Eldoret, the nearest city, this is 'going to Kenya'. The Pokot people live on the margins and are considered an unreached people group.

Revd Ezekiel Kamar is a Church of Uganda priest with a passion for church planting and evangelism to unreached people groups. He is also one of APF's eVitabu pilot users.

Back last April, Ezekiel was speaking to a gathering of around 300 local men at the village of Alale, deep in remote West Pokot County. As part of his preparation, he told us that he'd downloaded some resources from APF's eVitabu app, including a sermon outline from Acts 4 on the important role Barnabas played as an encourager, that was written by APF CEO, Dave Stedman. Ezekiel explained that he used Dave's sermon outline to help him structure his teaching and had adapted it using illustrations and examples meaningful in the Pokot context.

Ezekiel told us that toward the end of the address he'd noticed a large, venomous snake close to where he was preaching but moving towards the congregation. Instead of allowing the snake to cause alarm, however, he moved towards it, stood on its head and continued to preach.

Amazed by what they had heard and seen, Ezekiel said there had been an incredible response. Every single person accepted the invitation to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. People brought charms and other magical items to be burnt. The next Sunday more than 400 new people attended services at the local church.

Using a holistic curriculum that combines African Christian teaching with personal and employment skills, Ezekiel and his team are discipling Pokot families in ways that complement their rich Pokot cultural heritage.

The church even gives seed and agriculture training so new Pokot believers have an alternative to cattle rustling for livelihoods. At APF, we're always excited to hear stories of how eVitabu is being used by church leaders

to see God's kingdom come in Africa. Although we're hesitant about repeating claims we cannot easily verify, especially those involving remarkable consequences, Dave is confident that Ezekiel's account is accurate. 'Recently, I've heard of several similar accounts of extraordinary mass conversions among the Pokot,' he explained. 'It is great to hear how eVitabu is contributing to a wider move of God's Spirit in Kenya.'

Historic connection

Between 1982 and 1987, APF Chair of Trustees, Revd Richard Suffern, lived in Pokot working with the Anglican church's Christian Rural Service based at Kodich Polytechnic.



Danish Baptists in Burundi and Rwanda

In this article, **Morten Kjær Kofoed**, International Leader of the Baptist Union of Denmark, shares his work with some of the most vulnerable communities in Burundi and Rwanda.

“Dignified empowerment of the poor and Kingdom work. This is how we describe our engagement in Africa.”

Since 1928, the Baptist Union of Denmark (BUD) has been present, first in Burundi and later on in Rwanda, with the Good News for our African brothers and sisters. We adhere to holistic mission and consider mission and diaconal work as two sides of the same coin. In partnership with churches from the Baptist Union of Burundi and the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda – two networks that APF also works with – we support training of pastors and evangelists; we build churches and we do a wide range of development projects that all bring dignity to the least privileged and glorifies our God. It is our vision that all the pastors we train will be able to benefit from the resources available on APF’s eVitabu app.

One thing having most impact in our work currently, are the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). Through the VSLAs we have seen great impact and transformation! Based in the local congregations, the VSLAs work in the local communities and embrace all vulnerable people, no matter their religious affiliation. In short, the groups are self-managed, they save money together, they provide loans and offer a social fund where

needy people can apply for support in difficult times such as sickness in the family or the death of a relative. Normally participants get a return on investment of over 30% of their savings which is pretty good. But when we visit and talk to the participants, what they value even higher than the financial inclusion and empowerment is the sense of fellowship, the raised self-esteem and the belonging to a caring and loving group of people. This is where churches can make a real difference for the most vulnerable.



As children and illiterate women are the most vulnerable in Burundian communities, we include and embrace them in all our work. The churches establish care groups and literacy groups and include marginalised and broken people in the fellowship and community. Together we raise and dignify the people by offering them education, trauma-healing and helping to organise them in associations with a long-term goal of continuous support within groups. We have had remarkable results. Children remain in school and women can support their children with school work. Family relations have been restored and deeper engagement in church is seen. We believe the church can have an impact in all aspects of people’s lives. When honouring them and God we can do great things!

We also engage in food security projects, prevention of HIV/AIDS, prevention of gender-based violence and family planning. We do it both by training and education but also by addressing the root causes, often related to broken relations with self, with others and with God. By empowering people and restoring relations, we see great impacts and we see that God and his Kingdom are being honoured.

Facts.

Established in 1837, the Baptist Union in Denmark (BUD) currently has around 5,000 members in 53 congregations. Today we have overseas mission partnerships in Burundi, Rwanda and Myanmar. BUD’s main partners in Burundi are the Baptist Union of Burundi with some 40,000 members and the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda with some 50,000 members. BUD also work closely together with Dutabarane – a network of Protestant churches in Burundi fighting HIV/AIDS and poverty. Dutabarane’s member churches have a constituency of almost 1 million Christians.

APF Dates

2nd April – Dave speaking at Sandwich Rotary Club

7th April – Dave speaking at Anglican churches in Maghull, Liverpool

13th - 27th April – Geoff in Uganda and Malawi

26th April – Dave at Tearfund Church and Community Mobilisation trainers' meeting to introduce eVitabu

28th April – Dave speaking at Whitstable Baptist Church

5th May – Dave speaking at Zion Baptist Church, Tenterden

12th May – Dave speaking at Strode Crescent Baptist Church, Sheerness

15th May – APF's AGM at 2 Church Close, Whitnash, Leamington Spa

2nd June – Dave speaking at Braebourne Baptist Church, Maidstone

9th June – Dave speaking at Zion Baptist Church, Tenterden



Check out our videos on YouTube

It's easy to show one of our videos at your church, small group or at a fundraising event. Just go to **YouTube.com** and search for African Pastors Fellowship. There are another two videos being edited now so make sure you subscribe to our channel so you don't miss out.

Our latest video showing eVitabu in action in Morobi refugee camp is now available. Find it on YouTube.

www.africanpastors.org

Weekly Prayer Themes April 2019 to June 2019

31st March to 6th April

Rwanda

Many hundreds of churches (and other places of worship) remain temporarily closed due to changes in government legislation around building regulations, noise pollution, governance and theological education. While it is hard to disagree with the desire to ensure churches are properly maintained and well managed, the arbitrary enactment of the law has adversely impacted some of the most marginalised church communities. This week, please pray for church movements such as Église Évangélique de la Bonne Volonté (Japhet Matugoma and Victor Imanaturikumwe) and Word of Life (Emmanuel Gatara) as they seek to invest limited resources and enable churches to reopen. Pray especially for Free Methodist Pastor, Revd Charles Munyamahoro, as he seeks to gain academic certification for his local training in the Gakenke and Rulindo regions which serves rural Baptist and Free Methodist leaders.

7th April to 13th April

Burundi

Burundi remains one of the world's poorest nations, struggling to emerge from a 12-year-ethnic-based civil war. Since independence in 1962, the country has been plagued by tension between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority. Official results from a referendum in May 2018 show that people voted overwhelmingly for constitutional reforms that could allow President Nkurunziza to stay in office until 2034. The campaign leading up to the vote, however, was marred by violence and voter intimidation. Burundi records one of the world's highest malnutrition rates and life expectancy for both men and women is just 50 years. Please pray for Revd Silas Ntukamazina as he seeks to lead the Baptist Union of Burundi with scarce resources through turbulent times.



14th April to 20th April

Kenya

On 15th January, an upmarket hotel and office complex in the Westlands district of Nairobi was attacked by Al Shabab terrorists. The loss of 15 lives serves as a reminder of Kenya's vulnerability to extremist ideologies. Despite significant economic development and improving infrastructure, Kenya sits at the cusp of ideological divides. Its northern border is shared with Somalia. Please pray for the security of both Kenya and Somalia and for the ministry of the gospel especially in major urban centres. Pray also for APF's Kenyan partners including the Africa Inland Church (Shadrack Koma), Central Rift Baptist Association (Simon Laboso), Diocese of Kirinyaga (Joseph Kirunya), Grace Calvary Christian Ministries (Edward Amwayi), New Covenant Church International (David Kereto) and Renewal Ministries (Daniel Odour Gwara).

21st April to 27th April

Uganda

Due to its central location and links to Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tanzania, Uganda serves as a hub for a lot of APF activity. The capital, Kampala, is a colourful and vibrant mix of dust, noise, traffic, professional middle-class development and urban poverty. President Museveni has been in power for more than 30 years but pop-star turned politician Bobi Wine's appeal to the youthful population has set up a tinderbox political scene. Issues such as FGM, gay rights and a government minister's recent comments about Uganda's 'curvy women' being a 'tourist attraction' are all hot-topics. Please pray for APF's extensive network of partners across Uganda, in both urban and rural regions. Please especially pray for Peter and Rose Mugabi, committed to leadership and community development through their strategic offices with Baptist Union of Uganda and Pastors Discipleship Network respectively.

28th April to 4th May

Malawi

Heavy rainfall earlier in the year caused serious flooding to regions around Chikwawa and Nsanje in the Shire Valley. APF partner, New Life Christian Church, has many of its 290 congregations in this region. Thousands of people have been displaced, properties damaged and crops will have been affected. Bishop Lloyd Chizenga, founder of NLCC, sent the following message: "Pray with us as most of our farmers in East Bank lost their crops following heavy rains ... Pray for them. People need blankets and seed to replant their fields." The Growing Greener project was established in Malawi more than three years ago. It has had a substantial impact increasing yields and improving food security but there is only so much a project can do against increasingly erratic and extreme weather events like this linked to climate change. Please pray for our friends in Malawi: for homes, families and smallholdings to recover quickly from this shock.

5th May to 11th May

South Sudan

Although APF has no existing partner currently living in South Sudan, we work closely with Pastors Alex and Harriet Sokiri who live and serve the communities within the expansive Morobi refugee camp in northern Uganda. Most of the displaced people, estimated to be in the region of at least 500,000 people, are South Sudanese, fleeing civil war. Using eVitabu, Alex and Harriet have pioneered ministries such as church planting, reconciliation, sports evangelism and an agricultural programme to bring change in the camp. Please pray for Alex and Harriet as they continue to sacrificially serve in very challenging circumstances, and as they use APF funding to disburse local language Bibles and bicycles to church leaders in the camp.

12th May to 18th May

Tanzania

Recent news headlines from Tanzania have reported on the continued spread of HIV/AIDS, the murder and mutilation of six children in what are alleged to be incidents related to 'witchcraft' and the rise of drone technology in mapping and logistics. The range of topics is indicative of the complex and often confusing issues facing African communities. We thank God for wise and trusted partners in Tanzania who teach with integrity and authenticity and address the real needs and questions of their peers. This week, pray for Revd Amos Nkini (Lutheran), Pastor Heavenlight and Keziah Luoga and Pastor Timothy Saulo (Pentecostal), and Emmanuel Mhina (Anglican Diocese of Morogoro). Please pray for the safe delivery of the reprinted Swahili New Testament commentary sets and their successful distribution to leaders at training events facilitated by these brother and sisters.

19th May to 25th May

DR Congo

Despite concerns raised by the African Union, 24th January was an historic occasion for DR Congo as Félix Tshisekedi was sworn in as President. Although complaining of feeling unwell at the inauguration, Tshisekedi took over from outgoing President Joseph Kabila in the first peaceful handover of power in the country's history. Tshisekedi is only the fifth president of DR Congo since it gained independence from Belgium in 1960. APF's activity in DR Congo is mainly in the east where Rwandese and Ugandan partners cross the border to train pastors around Kivu and Goma. The Congo Pastors Fellowship is overseen by Revd Bertin Mwanya and received funds for local language Bibles in 2018. Pray that links such as these can develop and that better political stability would create an environment that allows churches and communities to flourish.

26th May to 1st June

Staff and Trustees

Please pray for our UK staff: David Stedman, Geoff Holder and Michelle Anderson. Give thanks for the success of eVitabu, and pray for the planned future up-scaling. Give thanks that finances have enabled Jonathan Haddock to continue to develop the app on an occasional, part-time paid basis. This will help reduce risk around eVitabu and speed its anticipated reach more widely across Africa. Please also pray for our board of trustees, especially Richard Suffern (Chair) and John Chambers (Treasurer). There is a need to strengthen and diversify our UK team so pray too that the way would be opened to appointing more trustees, especially with experience in Africa or in media, publicity, IT and fundraising.

2nd June to 8th June

Key Projects

Please pray for on-going projects such as Let There Be Light in Tanzania and Growing Greener in Malawi. Pray too for projects still in the planning or early stages such as Daily Bread solar Bakery and Jubilee Trees in Uganda, plus Let There Be Light in Rwanda. In 2019 annual training grants have already been allocated to partners in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in addition to bicycle and Bible grants to partners in Burundi, Malawi and South Sudan.

9th June to 15th June

eVitabu

eVitabu has become the flagship project of APF, a resource for which APF is becoming increasingly well known. We have received interest and invitations for partnership from churches, individuals and agencies in UK, Europe, US, Canada and Latin America. There is also significant interest from organisations and denominations in Africa. We have had to pause while we invest in app and admin developments to cope with the anticipated uptake. Please pray for wisdom to know which opportunities to pursue and skill in prioritising steps to ensure the sustainability of eVitabu. Above all, please pray that eVitabu fulfils its potential as a training tool to enable effective ministry among marginalised church leaders in Africa.

16th June to 22nd June

Key Partners

APF enjoys good relations with a variety of partner agencies in UK and abroad. This week we pray for some of those with which we have especially close ties such as Revd Dr Kate Coleman and Revd Cham Kaur-Mann, Co-founders of Next Leadership. Pray for Kate and Cham as they launch the Role Model Leadership Academy in Uganda with delegates attending from BUU, PDN and numerous other APF contacts. We also pray for Caroline Pomeroy and Adrian Frost at Climate Stewards with whom we are working closely to establish the Jubilee Trees project. The pilot project was begun in March with Ugandan churches planting trees. Finally, please pray for Alison, Andy and Rachel at Yeomans, a Christian marketing agency that has recently helped us with an eVitabu PR campaign and is currently working on targeted funding bids to help grow our pastor training budget.

23rd June to 29th June

Supporters

As Dave and Geoff visit churches in UK we come across many people who have faithfully supported APF in prayer and financially for many years. We give thanks for these generous people. We are also excited that there are new individual donors signing up and giving from local churches has increased. We have also benefitted from substantial legacy bequests which have made a big difference to our financial security and capacity to plan ahead. Initiatives such as those prompted by APF Champions like Julia Lettey in Bristol are wonderful expressions of our 'fellowship' in the gospel and solidarity with the church in Africa. Please pray for God to bless our existing supporter base and to raise up new and enthusiastic supporters to strengthen our capacity to enable effective ministry that result in community transformation through local African churches.

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

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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Text APFG30 to 70070 to make a mobile donation

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