

January to March 2021
APF Prayer and Newsletter



African
Pastors
Fellowship

Impetus.

40th Anniversary Edition

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Zoom + eVitabu
= Growing Greener
Zambia

Remembering the
Early Days

Forty Years
a Trustee



From the CEO

Looking back and looking forward

Forty is a Biblical number. Moses, Elijah and Jesus each fasted for forty days. The Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years. Ezekiel lay on his side for forty days. The rains came down and the floods came up for forty days and nights. Saul, David and Solomon each reigned for forty years and Goliath taunted Israel for forty days before being slain by David. Forty years is a Biblical generation.

APF was founded in 1981 so 2021 marks our 40th Anniversary. It seems timely that we celebrate God's faithfulness throughout that time and look back at APF's ministry and achievements.

Looking back

This edition contains memories and testimony from one of our founders, a long-standing trustee and a grateful beneficiary of APF's ministry in Africa. There are also recent examples of how APF continues to enable effective ministry that brings community transformation through local African churches in Kenya, Zambia and many other nations.

Looking forward

Our lead article highlights the progress being made with eVitabu together with an invitation for you to be among the first to use our new eVitabu sponsorship portal and sponsor an eVitabu user. For less than the price of a paperback book each month, you can give an African church leader access to an library of resources from their mobile phone. Visit:

www.africanpastors.org/evitabu

For our 40th Anniversary, we are praying for 400 eVitabu sponsors.

As ever, thank you.

Dave

Join APF for a 40th Anniversary Celebration!
On Saturday 26 June in Whitnash near Leamington Spa
Including: Brilliant keynote speakers, great food, music and worship, news and videos from partners.

www.africanpastors.org

In the UK

Introducing Anne Lyttle

We are delighted to announce that Anne has been appointed to the Board of Trustees. Having travelled to Africa with APF and seen first-hand the impact of APF's work, Anne is excited to be joining the team. She brings a wealth of experience in leadership coaching, management, counselling, service development, strategic planning and fundraising. Anne currently holds a national position with Women's Aid. Anne will take a lead on developing APF's ministry to and among women leaders in Africa.



In loving memory

APF has benefitted from several bequests in recent years. During 2020 we have received a sizeable legacy from the estate of Marjorie Raynor, as well as substantial gifts offered in memory of Revd Paul Bell and most recently, Anne North. Anne worked for many years with BMS World Mission in DR Congo and was married to Revd Andrew North, one of our trustees. Throughout her life she had a particular passion for ministry to children. We are so grateful to Anne's family and friends for raising £3,500 for APF to sponsor training of children's, youth and Sunday School leaders. Two grants have already been sent to Rwanda.

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An evening with... Lawson Limao

Join APF on **21st January 2021, 7pm** via Zoom (**Zoom ID: 785 739 9308**, no password) for an evening with new APF partner Pastor Lawson from Zambia. Read about how Lawson and APF connected on page five.



Pastor Lawson Limao

Sponsored walks

Three of our trustees turn 70 this year: John Chambers, Dave Howard and Richard Tucker. Congratulations all! A variety of sponsored walks are being planned, including the Yorkshire Three Peaks, 70 x 70 minute dog walks and a canal walk, all of which will be raising awareness and donations for APF. We'll keep you up to date with detail of each of their individual challenges in later editions. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!

Celebrating
40
Years



Growing Greener in Malawi

Learning to make good compost is a life-changing skill in rural Malawi. New Life Christian Church leader Revd Lloyd Chizenga, who runs the APF supported Growing Greener sustainable farming project, explained the difference it is making: "Families from all sites where the Growing Greener project is being held have got much to share about how it has helped lift them from one level to another. Many people involved in the project used to have nothing but now own a cow or a goat. Wider communities have also benefited because they are more food secure. This has had a knock-on effect in their ability and capacity to support orphans, widows, and other highly vulnerable people within their communities." Good compost like the thermal compost pictured above means farmers are less dependent on fertiliser to improve their soils. Fertiliser remains expensive and is hard to find in rural areas despite the renewal of several Malawi government subsidy schemes.

Jubilee Trees Update

Another five Ugandan churches have planted hundreds of indigenous trees as part of the Baptist Union of Uganda's Jubilee Trees project. The project is supported by APF and Climate Stewards.



Rose Mugabi delivering Maesopsis, Grevillea and Terminalia tree saplings to the new churches in the project



Forestry expert Bernadette Kabonesa training church members on forestry management



BUU General Secretary Peter Mugabi uses Bible passages to talk to church members about caring for creation

Becoming a 21st Century Church

Starting in January, Eaglelite Associates are running a special online course for APF partners called 'Becoming a 21st Century Church'. The Zoom training sessions will help African Christians establish and grow their church's online presence, build church leadership teams, respond in times of crisis, develop strategies for

conflict management and improve their communication skills.

Eaglelite Associates is run by Allan Kakinda and Brenda Abeja from Kampala, Uganda. The training was organised after they led one of APF's online Zoom meetings and many pastors contacted us asking if there could be more training opportunities



Allan Kakinda



Brenda Abeja

Give thanks

- That 2020 was a productive year for APF despite the pandemic.
- That APF did not see a dramatic reduction in income despite fewer church visits.
- That more than fifty grants were sent to Africa for eVitabu, bikes, Bibles, training, scholarships, pastoral care and Covid relief.

Please pray

- Pray that APF's UK-based partners who help fund some of our projects can continue to support our work despite financial challenges caused by Covid-19.
- Pray for APF sponsored training to have impact as it resumes in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia this year.

Zoom + eVitabu = Growing Greener Zambia

In March 2018, we received an email from Pastor Lawson Limao in Zambia. We replied, thanking him for getting in touch but explained we were not looking for new partner church networks at that time. eVitabu and our lockdown Zoom meetings changed all that.

Pastor Lawson leads the small Zambian church network called The Word of God Ministries International. During 2020, he joined us every month online for our Zoom meetings. During one meeting, other pastors talked about how they were using eVitabu, our mobile library app full of resources for African church leaders. Lawson downloaded and installed eVitabu on his own Android smart phone that evening. He was immediately drawn to training from Foundations for Farming about sustainable agriculture. "Rural pastors and leaders need training to do farming God's way in which nature is preserved whilst making farming a profitable venture to undertake" he explained in his APF project application.

Last summer, we agreed to fund his farming project which reached hundreds of farmer pastors from Ila communities in rural parts of Central Province.

This is a great example of how eVitabu can work. Dedicated pastors like Lawson, downloading the app and accessing training materials on their own phones, need very little to make a huge difference in their churches and communities. Access to the library of training resources on eVitabu, and a little APF funding to help with the cost of sharing that training with others, means hundreds of families are now able to feed themselves better, farm more sustainably and know more of the hope they have in Christ Jesus.

eVitabu development continues...

We're working hard to improve eVitabu and make it easier for African leaders to access resources on it. In recent months, our eVitabu developer Jonathan Haddock has been working hard to add new features our partners in Africa have requested. These include:

- SD card support so more resources can be saved offline by users
- Simplifying app registration
- Bug fixes
- Making it easier for us to add new resources on the app

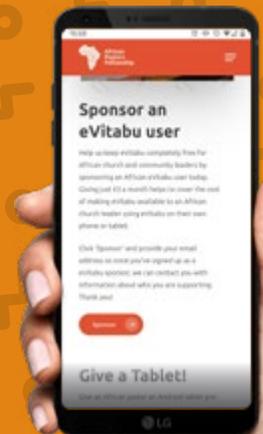
All this is costly but you can help...

Please pray

- Pray that the eVitabu user sponsorship campaign would be successful in its vision to see 400 sponsors added during this 40th anniversary year.
- Pray for the APF staff team as they continue to develop eVitabu, adding new features and making the app work better for African users.
- Pray for Dave Stedman and Geoff Holder as they work with partners in Africa to grow the network of people eVitabu, for Jonathan Haddock as he develops the app and for Rossalynne Wanjiru who is helping us upload new content from Nairobi.

Sponsor an eVitabu user

1. **On your phone, tablet or laptop, go online and visit:** www.africanpastors.org/evitabu
2. **Click on the 'Sponsor' link button in the 'Sponsor an eVitabu user' section.**
3. **Complete the secure online payment form to set up your sponsorship direct debit. Just £5 per month, less than the price of a paperback book, will give an African church leader access to an entire library of books and training resources.**
4. **You will be allocated an African church leader already using eVitabu to sponsor.**
5. **You'll receive an email telling you a little about who you are sponsoring including their name, where they live and their ministry background.**
6. **Your monthly sponsorship will be used by APF to make eVitabu better for the person you are sponsoring and hundreds of other users all over the continent of Africa.**





Remembering the early days

Although this year marks 40 years since APF formally became a registered charity, the story began nearly ten years earlier. Jill, wife of APF founder Derek Blundell, remembers APF in the early days:

In the 1950s, Derek had been called to serve God after hearing a message from Isaiah by a missionary from Morocco. Following his ordination in 1961, Derek and I served in churches in Liverpool and Bath. While he was minister of a church in Bath, the family was offered a sabbatical and we went with our children to work for three months alongside Bishop Sylvanus Wani (pictured) in Madi-West Nile Diocese, Uganda. The Bishop shared the problems he faced with few pastors adequately trained or equipped for ministry.

On our return we approached several mission agencies to ask for their help. In those days they all replied: "We are sending agencies and unable to help train the indigenous pastors". However, as we shared our experiences and the needs of the African church our congregation in Bath decided to help, providing funding for a pastor from West Nile to train in a Bristol theological college and spend his vacations with us. The African Pastor Fund was launched.

After moving to an inner-city parish in South London, Derek contacted other Christians with a heart for Africa which broadened APF's support base, enabling a number of pastors to train in the UK over the years. With Idi Amin in charge these were unsettled, difficult days in Uganda. It emerged that many rural pastors desperately needed bicycles to work effectively, but none were available. A generous response from supporters enabled APF to provide bikes for the African church.

By 1980, APF had grown considerably. Derek spent six weeks in East Africa finding out about the needs of pastors and saw how many rural pastors lacked proper training and were ill equipped for their work. On his return, a small group of supporters met for discussion and prayer in our vicarage. They recognised the need for APF to become a registered Charity and became its first Trustees. Realising it was impossible for Derek to develop APF and run a busy parish at the same time, they asked us both to resign our posts and take on the work full time. This step of faith required us all to depend wholly on God.

In August 1981 we were "sent to Coventry" which was an ideal base for APF, being centrally situated and providing easy access for us to travel and promote the work. Karibu House provided an office and home for us and for visiting African pastors and church leaders. By this time, the Fund had become a Fellowship and the work

extended across several East and Central African countries. In 1977, following the murder of Archbishop Janani Luwum by order of Idi Amin, Bishop Wani became Uganda's new Archbishop. He was the first of APF's patrons.

By the mid-1980s, costs at UK colleges had soared and other agencies now provided African church leaders with more advanced training. Our Trustees decided that APF should return to its roots and focus on providing basic training and equipment for pastors within their own countries. This was done by sponsoring week long in-service training courses led by a team of national and international trainers with pastors and spouses coming together in their local areas. In addition, APF provided relevant books, where possible in local languages, and bicycles for which pastors made a nominal donation.

Over the years Derek and I were privileged to work alongside many church leaders. It was wonderful meeting African Bishops and their wives in Herne Bay during the 1998 Lambeth Conference at a reception which APF hosted as we retired. I remember with joy joining with them in their enthusiastic singing of *Hallé, Hallé, Hallelujah!*

Praise God for APF's ongoing work in this technological age! May it continue to meet the needs of grass root pastors enabling them to work effectively in Africa's remote and rural communities.

Forty Years a Trustee

Revd Dave Howard has served APF as a trustee since the outset. Here, he reflects with gratitude and looks forward with optimism

APF was born out of a vision which God gave Derek and Jill Blundell in 1981. In those days there were two sorts of Christian overseas agencies: overtly mission societies who went out to convert, and relief organisations that provided aid. The genius of APF's vision was realising that supporting the indigenous church could be more effective in spreading the gospel. Amazingly, no-one was doing that!

My own involvement in APF was by accident. I became vicar of the parish in which APF founders Derek and Jill were active members. My commitment to APF was cemented when I travelled to Malawi sometime later with their successors, Ralph (pictured above) and Jane Hanger. A pastor told us he had walked "40 miles" (meaning a very long way) to attend some training. Ralph noticed that he had not brought his Bible and the pastor explained that as there was only one Bible for his entire church congregation it was better to leave it behind for their use than to bring it with him. This struck me deeply. Resourcing marginalised but dedicated church leaders like this man remains a driving force for my involvement as a trustee.

APF has changed over the years but meeting the needs of the local church in Africa has always remained the focus. As the world has changed, some of those needs have changed, but APF has adapted to meet them. In the early days, APF sent books and sewing machines to pastors and their wives, provided training courses and, of course, the thing with which APF became synonymous: bicycles. APF was the first to see that such basic help could transform the lives and ministry of pastors.

The aim remains the same – to equip pastors to be the best they can be in their ministries under God. Now that many pastors in Africa have access to the same mobile internet technology we enjoy in the West, APF is responding with exciting new projects like eVitabu, whilst continuing to provide basics like bikes, local language Bibles and solar power. It is sobering to think that when APF was founded, mobile phones were still several years away in the UK! APF members can be proud that once again, under God's guiding and providing hand, we are pioneering ways of enabling African pastors to fulfil their Christian ministries.

Please join with us in giving thanks to God that, 40 years on, APF is still fulfilling its God given vision. We are grateful to the various directors who, over the years, have brought their differing gifts to bear on the work; to supporters without whose generous donations and prayer support the work could not have flourished, and to our dedicated African partners who give so much of themselves to their ministries.

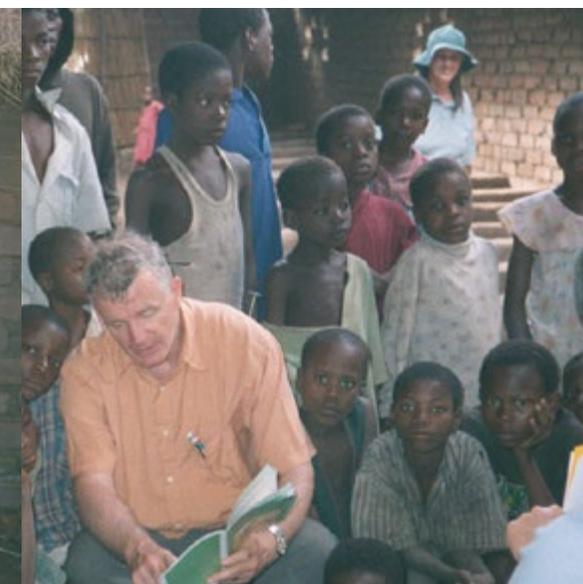
And above all, we thank our gracious heavenly Father who has been faithful to this work even when times have been tough. We join with St Paul in his words of thanksgiving: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ".

Please pray

- Give thanks for APF's extensive network of partners in Africa who often work with few resources and little access to training or materials.
- Pray that as APF continues to serve these dedicated but marginalised leaders, we would help them fulfil God's call upon their lives.
- Pray for the current APF Board of Trustees: Revd Richard Suffern (Chair), John Chambers (Treasurer), Revd Dave Howard, Revd Andrew North, Andrew Richardson, Revd Richard Tucker and our newest trustee, Anne Lyttle.



Malawian pastor who walked "40 miles" barefoot to attend APF training.



Ralph and Jane Hanger. Ralph was APF Director between 1998 and 2010.



Jane Hanger leading training for pastors' wives at Imbnaseni, Tanzania



Ralph Hanger leading training at Biharamulo, Tanzania



Pastor's wife Edith in Kisumu, Kenya with a solar cooker. Pastors' wives' projects were a big part of APF's activities. Edith used her solar cooker for a wedding cake business.



Pastors with commentaries of New Testament books in Swahili, published by APF.



Looking through Safari children's Bible story books published in local languages by APF.



Jane and Revd Ian Enticott (centre) with Julius and Grace Twongyeirwe. Ian was APF Director between 2010 and 2014.

Enduring Partnership in the Proclamation Task

by Dr Julius Twongyeirwe Proclamation Task



Dr Julius Twongyeirwe

My wife and I first learnt of APF in early 1998 when APF's then Director Ralph Hanger and his wife Jane were visiting Uganda. At that time, we were preparing to take a one-year study in London and my wife Grace was expecting our third child. The Hangers guided us as we wrestled with the various implications of having our child in Uganda or the UK. Our bonds of friendship grew stronger once we were in the UK and a co-workmanship developed between the organisation I led in Uganda called Proclamation Task and APF in the area of training pastors. We undertook a number of training events in Kampala and often made upcountry trips together in a close fellowship of joint service.

As APF marks its 40th anniversary, we look back with great joy, celebrating this longevity in ministry with visible marks of successful partnership among us. As our long-standing friends and co-workers, we join in to celebrate these four decades of APF, acknowledging how such a God-sustained enablement has indeed been marked by resilience, sacrifice and great devotion to ministry and the ministers in Africa. May God flourish the work of APF for many more years to come.

The Hangers home in Coventry, which also served as their office, became home for us too. It served as a very refreshing stopover whenever we visited the UK. We drew so much encouragement from our relationship with APF, enough to keep us focused and progressing in training pastors and their wives for effectiveness in local church ministry.

With APF and other like-minded cheerers, Proclamation Task has thrived with increasing numbers of trainees per year. We always structure training programs carefully and use our experience to provide the best approaches for indigenous teaching in Uganda. With the PT Institute now offering formal courses, the seminars and informal training at local church level have been anchored well.

Please pray

- Give thanks for the testimony of long-standing APF partners such as Julius, who has benefitted from sincere 'fellowship' over many years and thrived in ministry.
- Pray for the many others who sent us articles for this edition of Impetus remembering many years of partnership with APF but we did not have space to include. Remember especially Pastor Lloyd Chizenga in Malawi.

Online Church Services in Kenyan College



By Revd Abraham Koech
Chaplain at Koitaleel Smoei University College, Kenya

Koitaleel Smoei University College (KSUC) is part of the University of Nairobi. KSUC has two campuses, one at Mosoriot and another under construction at Nandi Hills, Kenya. The main courses offered include Education, Commerce and Business Administration among others. We currently have over 300 students and believe the student population will keep on going up every year. Hopefully we will soon receive a charter from the Kenyan government meaning the college can run its programs independently.

I have been the chaplain at KSUC since December 2019 and I enjoy serving the Lord here. My contract has been renewed and the work designation has changed slightly to Lecturer/Chaplain. It is my prayer that through my ministry here many will come to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I would like to thank APF so much for inspiring me to begin online church services at KSUC.

The inspiration came from an APF online gathering in July 2020 which I attended. We had a wonderful time of fellowship and prayers with other APF partners from across Africa through Zoom. I had never taken seriously the importance of online meetings before. After the meeting I said, "Why should we not begin online Church services at the university using Zoom? If we can have a meeting online, why not Church online." Our students and staff had been at home since March, due to the pandemic so reaching them with God's word online became crucial. I shared the idea with a number of people at the university and they supported it. We began the services without delay.

The university IT officers were willing to help me with facilitating the online services and helped students and staff get a web link and login to the services in good time. Many students would join the services online along

with most of their parents and siblings from different parts of the country and everyone actively participated. The university staff also joined the services.

The link to join the services was sent through the students and staff WhatsApp groups. The services always lasted one hour every Sunday and included praise and worship, prayer, hymns, testimonies, encouragements, scripture readings, a sermon, and an offering. God gave me the grace to preach in these services.

I am so grateful to God for APF as without the inspiration from the APF Zoom meetings I wouldn't have started Sunday services at KSUC. I am also so thankful to the university for supporting this ministry.



Revd Abraham Koech

I believe that online platforms have a great role in expanding God's kingdom in Africa and in the wider world now and in the future. I pray that pastors will seize the opportunity and start spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this way. In Africa today, a big number of people have mobile phones with access to the internet. Reaching them online has become easy. Through the internet a local church pastor is connected not only to his local area but to the entire world. Let's take up this challenge today in obedience to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Mathew 28:19-20).

Please pray

- Give thanks for the African partners who have been able to network together online during 2020.
- Pray for new initiatives that have arisen from online gatherings including Lawson's farming project in Zambia, the partnership with Eaglelite Associates in Uganda and Abraham's online church ministry in Kenya.
- Please pray for those African partners who have not been able to use Zoom, asking that they continue to 'feel' connected and be supported.
- As face to face contact restarts and APF personnel return to Africa in 2021, pray especially for Dave Stedman as he prepares to visit Kenya and Uganda in January and February.

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

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