

# ACTEA eNEWS

**OCTOBER 2006**

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

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## **1. ACTEA Council meets in South Africa**

The ACTEA Council, the governing body of ACTEA, the Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa, met for its regular business meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 23-25 July.

The Council is composed of one representative from each ACTEA-accredited institution. The Council approved a revised version of the ACTEA Standards for Accreditation at Doctoral Level and initiated a review of accreditation standards for non-traditional programmes (e.g., distance education, modular courses). Other sessions focused on strategic planning, ACTEA's vision statement, and relationships with government educational bodies.

Members of the ACTEA Executive Committee of the Council are:

Dr Jacob Kibor (Chair), Scott Theological College (Kenya) Revd Joe Simfukwe (Director), Theological College of Central Africa (Zambia) Dr Douglas Carew (Deputy Chair), Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (Kenya) Revd Semeon Mulatu (Deputy Director), Evangelical Theological College (Ethiopia) Dr Rich Stuebing (Treasurer)

## **2. Africa Bible Commentary published**

The first one-volume Bible commentary written exclusively by African theologians has been launched in Kenya. Written by seventy contributors from twenty-five countries, the Africa Bible Commentary aims to explain the Bible from an African perspective. It is being published in Africa, initially in English and French, by WordAlive Publishers [www.wordalivepublishers.com](http://www.wordalivepublishers.com) and for the rest of the world by the Evangelical publisher Zondervan. Dr Tokunboh Adeyemo, former General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA), served as the commentary's General Editor.

A sample of the commentary is available at

[www.zondervan.com/media/samples/pdf/0310264731\\_samptxt.pdf](http://www.zondervan.com/media/samples/pdf/0310264731_samptxt.pdf)

This sample includes the forwards, the general introduction to the commentary, a list of the contributors, a list of the brief subject articles contained in the commentary, a

sample subject article on "Scripture as the Interpreter of Culture and Tradition", and the full commentary on the book of James.

### **3. ACTEA Forum announces new discussion group for theological educators**

Readers of ACTEA eNews also receive periodic articles distributed as the issues of the ACTEA Forum. The Forum is an electronic exchange of ideas relating to evangelical theological education. The fifth article of the Forum was recently distributed to all ACTEA eNews readers, in English and in French translation. (Archived articles are available on the internet at the ACTEA website [www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/Forum/](http://www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/Forum/))

The new moderator of the ACTEA Forum is Dr Rich Starcher (Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology). Readers are invited to submit potential articles for future editions to the moderator at [starcher@efcaim.org](mailto:starcher@efcaim.org)

Readers may now also send and/or receive readers<sup>1</sup> comments on ACTEA Forum articles by subscribing to the ACTEA Forum discussion group. To subscribe to the discussion group, simply send an email to [acteaforum-subscribe@moodle.efca.org](mailto:acteaforum-subscribe@moodle.efca.org)

### **4. NEGST Doctoral Programme applications due September 2007**

In January the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology launched a joint doctoral programme in Biblical Studies and Translation studies. This was the happy result of several years of intensive planning and infra-structure development.

The first flight includes twelve students (from five different countries), a core faculty of four, and the support of both biblical studies and translation departments (with fourteen faculty members).

The first eighteen months of study is built around a research colloquium, developing an in-depth study of ethnicity in the biblical worlds and in contemporary African societies. Students (and their core faculty) operate as a learning community, whose central tenet

is to share learning for the mutual benefit of all. Ethnicity is a live issue, not least in Africa, so the curriculum is set up for high relevance.

Quality is a primary concern, which is addressed in multiple ways. \* The library collection has been expanded to 40,000 volumes in a little more than a year; with on-going subscriptions to major technical journals; and on-line access to several major journal archives. \* A stream of international scholars visit for one to seven working days and dialogue with the learning community in their areas of expertise. In the first five months we have hosted (omitting titles and affiliations) Gordon Wenham, Chris Wright, Gordon McConville, Tite Tienou, Alo Mojola, Anastasia Malle, Margaret Muthwii, Elmer Martens, and Willem VanGemeren. \* Students will undertake three international study trips during their four years of study, including a month already spent in Israel from early September to early October 2006.

The second cohort will begin in August 2008, with applications needed by September 2007 for students planning to apply to international organizations for financial aid.

For further information contact the Dean of Doctoral Studies, Dr James Miller, at [PhD@negst.edu](mailto:PhD@negst.edu)

## **5. AIDS Curriculum Survey for theological institutions**

Much is being done by theological education institutions and churches across Africa to educate people about the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. The AIDS Forum\* 'AIDS and Children' working group is conducting a survey of theological schools in an effort to identify their curriculum offerings and others resources they have--or possibly need--on AIDS and on children affected by HIV/AIDS. If you are associated with a theological school and are aware of its curriculum, we need your assistance. The survey is one page in length and will take 5-8 minutes to fill out.

Please write Dr Dick Stellway at [AIDS@viva.org](mailto:AIDS@viva.org) for a questionnaire form.

\*The AIDS Forum is affiliated with Viva Network [www.viva.org/wwdp](http://www.viva.org/wwdp), a Christian networking organization working to enhance the Christian response to children at risk.

## 6. Two teachers available for short-term service

ACTEA eNews passes along these two announcements by teachers willing to assist African theological schools on a short-term basis. Interested institutions should contact these individuals directly.

\*\* Alan and Jean Chilver<sup>1</sup>'s full-time work, in Nigeria and Africa, in theological and Christian education and pastoral training at various levels up to post-graduate over the past 45 years has come to an end. They now are both available to help out for short periods of up to a maximum of three months, in teaching in theological and pastoral training institutions where there is genuine need. Their preferred fields for teaching are in Old Testament and Biblical Theology, general Biblical studies and Christian Education. Alan<sup>1</sup>'s experience as Administrative Secretary of the Theological and Christian Education Commission (TCEC) of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) might also be of use. Jean<sup>1</sup>'s training is in nutrition and as a research scientist with a PhD from Cambridge; however, she has recently been involved in the production of Christian Education materials for use in churches. Alan has modern languages and theological degrees from Cambridge and London.

They are willing to teach in English at whatever level of instruction is needed, although their most recent experience is in first and second degree work. They would expect to cover their own travel expenses to and from the institution and general feeding costs while at the institution, but hope the receiving group would consider providing accommodation and (possibly but not necessarily) some form of transport if they had to live off-campus. But financial arrangements can be dealt with on an individual basis; so please do not let financial considerations prevent a request.

Any interested party should contact Alan & Jean directly by e-mail at [alan.chilver@onetel.com](mailto:alan.chilver@onetel.com)

\*\* Mature seminary graduate and his wife respond to God<sup>1</sup>'s call to equip African pastors. On each of their three African mission trips, they have been told that the greatest need in Africa is theological training for pastors. Now that Rick has completed his theological education and Bonnie has likewise been equipped, they want to share

what they have learned with African pastors. You can learn what they want to teach, their background, their professional qualifications, and what seminary classes they have taken by going to their web page at [rick.oakes.googlepages.com/sendme](http://rick.oakes.googlepages.com/sendme).

## **7. Revised edition of "African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective" now available**

Dick Gehman, formerly lecturer and principal at Scott Theological College in Kenya, has just produced a thoroughly revised edition of his African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective, first issued in 1989. It is published by East African Educational Publishers and costs 850 Kenya shillings (about \$13.00US). The new edition is the fruit of considerable further research by the author into the available literature, resulting in a substantially enlarged treatment of several issues. Like its predecessor, it is a vital resource for anybody teaching courses on African traditional religion.

[from Mwalimu, April 2006]

## **8. Keeping up with Africa--Reviews of Recent Books**

Stinton, Diane B. *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology*. Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2004. 303 pp, pb, \$25

Diane Stinton<sup>1</sup>'s book represents a major contribution to the study of current African Christologies. Stinton is professor of theology at Daystar University, Nairobi, and her book is the result of her doctoral work at the University of Edinburgh. Stinton combines a thorough understanding of published studies of African Christology over the past half-century with current ethnographic research in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana. To this she has added a set of in-depth interviews with leading African Christological theologians (Bujo, Ela, Mugambi, Nasimiyu, Oduyoye, and Pobee). Inclusion of findings from focus groups and participant observation ensure that this is not simply a survey of what the professional theologians are saying; rather it is thorough study of what Africans of many social and educational contexts are thinking and saying about Jesus.

Stinton begins her presentation with a historical survey of the development of Christologies in Africa. She then examines the sources of African Christology, which she

identifies as the Bible and other Christian tradition, African culture, and African religions and culture. The heart of the book is her analysis of four over-arching images of how Jesus is understood by African Christians: as Life-giver (including Healer), Mediator (including Ancestor), Loved One (including Family Member and Friend), and Leader (including King or Chief). Her understanding and explanation of how Africans understand Jesus is clear and comprehensive, though occasionally her categorizations appear forced.

Though she is primarily descriptive of how African Christians understand the person of Jesus Christ in their lives, she also provides a measure of evaluation, her primary criteria being whether or not Jesus is <sup>3</sup>significant to life in Africa today<sup>2</sup>. Her evaluation might have been stronger had she taken more into consideration the degree to which the most widely held images of Jesus correspond to biblical images of Jesus, though she does emphasise the importance of Scripture controlling Christological images. Her own sympathies are clearly with a Christology of social engagement, and she emphasises relevance and innovation as primary values in theological thinking.

Besides providing an excellent study of the state of Christological thinking in Africa today. This book is recommended as essential reading for anyone wishing to become acquainted with the state of Christology in Africa, and as a primary resource for anyone teaching Christology in Africa at any level.

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

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

***Dr Scott Moreau, Editor of Evangelical Missions Quarterly***