



DACB News Link

For the Friends of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*

Director Travels to Nigeria for *DACB*

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In February of this year, project director Dr. Jonathan Bonk spent ten days in Nigeria promoting the *DACB* and developing contacts among church leaders and academics. He presented the dictionary to representatives at the University of Calabar and at the University of Ibadan where, in particular, he met the acting head of the Religious Studies Department, Rev. Dr. Gideon Adebandede Oladele Oshitelu, the eldest son of late prophet Dr. Joshua Oluowo Oshitelu, the founder of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide. Dr. G. A. Oshitelu has authored a book on the African church fathers whose stories will be integrated into the *DACB*.



Banner for DACB consultation in Port Harcourt.

The five days spent in Port Harcourt were extremely fruitful. Dr. Protus Kemdirim, *DACB* Nigeria coordinator and liaison coordinator at the University of Port Harcourt, had brilliantly organized the *DACB* consultation at which some sixty participants from universities and major seminaries in eight different Nigerian states—Enugu, Rivers, Imo, Delta, Abia, Benue, Osun and Abuja—were present.

Dr. Bonk met with leading academics and Anglican church leaders as well as with leaders in the Catholic church, among whom were Rt. Rev. Dr. A. O. Makozi, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Port Harcourt, and the Very Rev.

James Moti, dean of the Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA). Thanks to the influence of Bishop Makozi, the *DACB* was placed on the agenda of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). Dr. Bonk also spoke to a delegation from the Methodist church, under the leadership of Rt. Rev. Yobe, Bishop of the Methodist Diocese of Bori.

According to Dr. Bonk, his journey was very "satisfactory from the standpoint of both the immediate and long term objectives of OMSC and the *DACB*, and from a personal point of view." ■

How is the *DACB* growing?

As of June 1, 2003, the collected biographies in the *DACB* number six hundred and ninety-five, distributed among our four main ecclesiastical categories: Catholic, Orthodox Protestant, and Independent (with some overlap in numbers as certain stories appear in more than one country index). Stories of Protestants are the most numerous (439), followed by the Orthodox (166), then the

Independents (81) and the Catholics (69). Among the Protestants, biographies of Anglicans dominate (210).

The countries best represented biographically are Ethiopia (176), Nigeria (121), South Africa (77) and Sierra Leone (70). The countries with between 20 and 40 stories include Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania

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From the Director

Good News from Congo!

Some 87 volunteers scattered across the continent of Africa actively facilitate the research and writing of stories for the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*. The challenges faced by some of these "DACB Liaison Coordinators" can be formidable, and yet they do not lose heart.

One such person is Anglican priest Rev. Yossa Way, acting dean of the Institut Supérieur Théologique Anglican (I.S.Th.A.) in the war-ravaged Ituri province of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. His letter of November 18, 2002 is a poignant reminder that the *Dictionary* is a quintessentially African project — *about* Africans, *for* Africans, and *by* Africans.

Dear friends at OMSC,

My warm greetings in the Lord. I hope that you all are doing well. Today at our Seminary I showed the CD-ROM about the *DACB* on my computer and everybody was very interested. My computer is working very well. Each of our students in the last class is writing one biography. They are ten. I hope that before the end of this academic year I will send you at

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How is the DACB growing?

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and Uganda. Cape Verde, DR Congo, Sudan, Swaziland and Zambia feature between 10 and 20 biographies. Numbering fewer than 10 stories are Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sénégal, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

Unfortunately, stories have yet to be received from several countries, including: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mayotte, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Réunion, Saint Helena, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Somalia, Togo and Western Sahara.

Included in the tally are 25 stories of leaders in the ancient church in northern Africa. In addition, the fledgling French version of the DACB contains 16 stories. Some of these are translations of English articles, while a few were originally written in French.

Of course, these numbers beg the question: how does the DACB story database grow? Initially, information about the

DACB is disseminated during the project director's annual trips to different African countries since 1998. Word also spreads through the channels of traditional church structures (such as the Anglican church and the Catholic church), schools and missions organizations. As the DACB is a grassroots undertaking that is not powered by large funds, its momentum is dependent upon the strength of its vision and the commitment of those affiliated with the project, namely our Africa offices and DACB regional coordinators as well as our 87 participating institutions and liaison coordinators in 19 countries. Each DACB office or institution is a center which spawns more growth as coordinators inspire or even require their students (and, sometimes, staff) to write stories and communicate the vision to leaders and academics in sister or neighboring institutions.

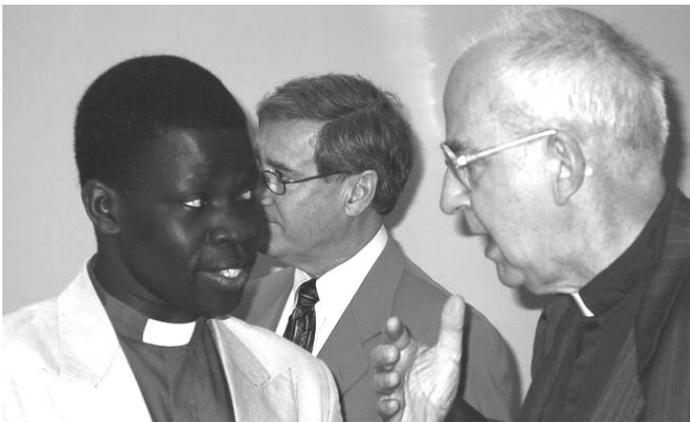
Our hope is that a steadily growing number of African institutions and leaders will, in the spirit that animated St. Luke (1:1-4), commit themselves to this vision of recording the history of the African church before it is lost to human memory. ■

Good News from Congo

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least ten biographies. Last week I did a lecture about the DACB in another protestant Seminary in Bunia. Maybe you will get some letters from them.

Yossa



Rev. Yossa Way in conversation at OMSC (Dr. Bonk in background).

With the collapse of civil authority in Bunia in early May, communication with Rev. Yossa Way was lost. As news of the savagery, murder and rape marking the Hema/Lendu conflict trickled through to this continent, we despaired for his life. But on May 31 we were overjoyed to learn that both he and his son had escaped the carnage, making a harrowing 125-mile journey on foot through the forest to Beni, where humanitarian groups

gave the weary survivors food and medicine. Rev. Way writes:

.... Unfortunately some people died in the forest. My house was completely looted. I especially regret losing my computer and the printer.... My family is in Kumuru and they are safe. They don't know where I am or what happened to me. I am leaving next Tuesday to join them and some of our students who are in Aru. I need your prayers because I will go by bus on the road where the LRA (Ugandan) rebels are active.

Many people have died in Bunia, killed by militias on both sides. Even when the UN soldiers will be in the town next week, they may try to control the town but the surrounding areas won't be calm for a long time because there are a lot of arms in the region and each group is getting ready to attack the other(s). We still need your prayers.

It is both inspiring and humbling to be in partnership with such persons! Given their commitment to the enterprise, we dare not lose heart (2 Cor. 4). I hope that as you read this newsletter, you will be as encouraged as we are by the steady progress being made, thanks to men and women like Yossa Way!

Jonathan Bonk, Project Director

P.S. If you would like to support the work of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, make your check payable to OMSC, but designated for Project Luke/DACB. All gifts are tax deductible.

**Your questions and suggestions are welcome! Write to us at
DACB@OMSC.org or use the address on the back.**

DACB Story: Andrew Kaggwa, Uganda Martyr d. 1886

Andrew Kaggwa was a member of the Nyoro tribe, traditional enemies of the Ganda. At an early age he was captured and carried off as a slave by a party of Ganda, raiding the border country of Bugangadzi. He was a handsome, well-built boy and was therefore presented to the King as part of his share of the spoils. Placed among the royal pages, his cheerfulness and kind-heartedness made him a favourite with his fellows. The King sent Kaggwa to his factotum, Toli, a Muslim Madagascan who had visited France, to learn how to play drums acquired from the explorer H. M. Stanley. At this time Kaggwa also became a Muslim. Toli, however, also acted as a carpenter for the Catholic missionaries and it is likely that he introduced Kaggwa to them. In any case, Kaggwa joined the Catholic catechumenate in June 1880. He also seems to have attended Bible classes, given by the Anglican missionary, Alexander Mackay.

Kaggwa, now aged about twenty-five, was appointed the King's master drummer and eventually bandmaster. He was given a plot of land at Natete, not far from the capital and built a house there, in which, after his marriage, he lived with his wife, Clara Batudde. He was baptized on April 30th 1882.

Two years later, Bubonic plague broke out at the capital, and Kaggwa cared for dying and abandoned catechumens in his own enclosure. Since the Catholic missionaries had left Uganda at this time, he also instructed, baptized and buried those he took in. Other Christians followed his example. Mutesa I died in October 1884 and was succeeded by Mwanga, who reappointed Kaggwa bandmaster but also gave him the title Mugowa, with authority over the entire militia from which the bandsmen were drawn.

Among the many converts made by Kaggwa at court there were several future martyrs. One was James Buzabaliawo, another bandsman, whom Kaggwa instructed in the Catholic faith as well as in music, and who became Kaggwa's chief assistant. When the storm of persecution broke on May 25th 1886, the king was at Munyonyo, a royal enclosure, built on a hill beside Lake Victoria, not far from the capital. It was here that Charles Lwanga and the Christian pages were sentenced to death, in spite of the vain attempts of the Catholic missionary, Siméon Lourdel to see

the king and stay the execution.

On the following day, Mukasa, the chancellor, reminded Mwanga that Kaggwa was still at liberty. The king replied that he could not afford to lose his chief drummer. To this, Mukasa replied that Kaggwa was the principal Christian instructor of the king's pages and other servants, and that he would not eat until he had been given to him in order to dispose of him himself. Mwanga acceded to the request, but was too ashamed to give the news to Kaggwa personally. When the chancellor's messengers came, Kaggwa was prepared. He had been to receive the Eucharist at the mission in the morning and had returned to his post at Munyonyo. "Give up the Christians in your house", demanded the emissaries. "There is only one", replied Kaggwa, "I am myself a Christian". Arrived at the chancellor's house, he was interrogated by Mukasa, and berated for having even taught catechism to Mukasa's own children. "Take this man away and put him to death", commanded the chancellor. "Bring me his arm to prove that you have done your work. I will not touch food until I have seen it."

The executioners sought to delay matters, expecting the king to send a reprieve at any moment. Kaggwa, however, urged them to kill him quickly and take his arm to the chancellor. Throwing him down, they cut off his arm with a knife. Kaggwa's only sound was to cry "My God". They then beheaded him and cut his body into pieces. Christians reverently buried his remains at the spot where he died. This is not far from the modern Catholic Major Seminary of Ggaba. For many years a simple cement slab and cross marked the site. This was later replaced by a modern shrine church, built over the grave. Andrew Kaggwa was beatified by Pope Benedict XV in 1921. He was declared a canonized saint by Pope Paul VI in 1964.

The author, Dr. Aylward Shorter M.Afr., is Emeritus Principal of Tangaza College Nairobi, Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

For the complete article and the bibliography, please visit the DACB Web site at www.DACB.org.

DACB People: Dr. Protus Kemdirim, Regional Coordinator

Dr. Protus Kemdirim, DACB Regional Coordinator for Nigeria, is a senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Port Harcourt, as well as national secretary of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) and editor of *The Catholic Link*. Resourceful, determined and energetic, he is well known and respected, not only among Catholics but in Anglican and Methodist circles as well throughout southeastern Nigeria. The DACB consultation in Port Harcourt in February 2003 was a success thanks to his dedication and brilliant organizational skills. An exacting mentor, he is highly regarded by his students. His wife, Marie Nkechi, works as executive assistant to a bank manager. They have three children, Emmanuel (age 10), Chinonye (age 7) and David (age 5). ■



West Africa Office: Creating a Working Model

The DACB West Africa office, established at the Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Research in Akropong (Ghana) under the direction of Dr. Kwame Bediako, is pioneering what could become a working model for future Africa offices.

The DACB was initially introduced during the director's trip in February 2002 in a workshop which launched the project on a local level. When the office opened later in the year, their first initiative was to follow up on the contacts made at the original consultation, inviting them to become DACB participating institutions.

The ACMC office then set up a series of quarterly "working

sessions" with the purpose of training the appointed coordinators to oversee the researching and writing of biographies in their institutions. These working sessions also serve to encourage and support the coordinators who can ask questions and address particular challenges as they arise, both on a practical and theoretical level.

The outcome of each carefully planned session is very practical. The goal is to produce biographies for the DACB, to establish a list of potential subjects for future research and to collect and record data on living subjects before the information on these noteworthy individuals disappears. ■

News from our Regional Coordinators

West Africa (Akropong, Ghana)

The first working session for DACB liaison coordinators took place December 5, 2002 and brought together 21 participants from two churches and five theological institutions. The purpose of this session was to discuss the overall method for managing the DACB project in Ghana. At the second session, held on March 27, 2003, coordinators reported on the progress of DACB work in their institutions and committed to working on specific stories which had been brought to light in the first session. The third working session is scheduled for June 26, 2003. It is our hope that we shall be able to forward several written biographies to you at that time. Four institutions have officially signed on as participating institutions but please continue to pray that more institutions will be enthused to participate in the DACB project. ■



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Nigeria

Before the end of the year, Dr. Protus Kemdirim will attend several conferences in Nigeria and abroad on behalf of the DACB. In July 2003, he will present a paper on the DACB at the conference for the Social Science Academy of Nigeria in Abuja and in August, at the conference of West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI) at Harvesters Theological College, Warri-Delta State. In September, Dr. Kemdirim will travel to Cairo to promote the DACB at the conference for the Pan African Association of Catholic Exegetes (PACE). ■

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Southern and Eastern Africa

In February this year, Dr. Jurie van Wyk facilitated a DACB co-sponsored oral history workshop attended by 22 participants, held in Nairobi, Kenya. The DACBSEA office has made contact with 616 institutions throughout southeastern Africa. As a result, 39 participating institutions from 13 countries have joined the work of the DACB. ■

Dr. Jurie van Wyk, DACBSEA Regional Coordinator
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How you can support the work of the DACB:

- Sign up online for the free DACB newsletter.
- Tell colleagues and anyone with a potential interest about the DACB.
- Support the DACB financially.
- Become a Participating Institution (institutions in Africa) or an Affiliated Research Institution (institutions in Europe with significant archives of interest to DACB-related researchers).
- Use the DACB by incorporating parts of the Web site or selected information into your training programs.
- Give us your feedback and recommendations by letter or e-mail on ways to improve the DACB.

Dictionary of African Christian Biography

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