

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY

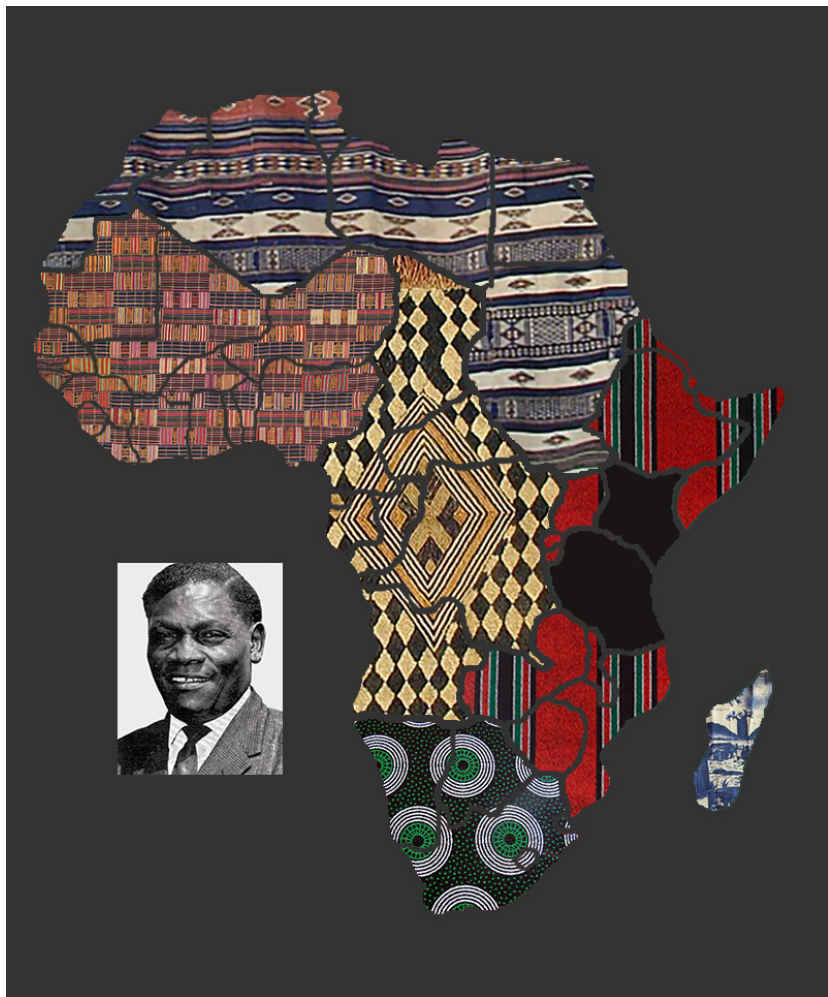
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Focus:

Balya, Moshi, and Waliggo (E. Africa)

Wellington Mulwa (Kenya)

Interview with Jesse Mugambi (Kenya)



A publication of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*

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The *Journal of African Christian Biography* was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Now published quarterly, with all issues available on line, the intent of the *JACB* is to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publicly accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent. Content will always include biographies already available in the database itself, but original contributions related to African Christian biography or to African church history are also welcome. While the policy of the *DACB* itself has been to restrict biographical content to subjects who are deceased, the *JACB* plans to include interviews with select living African church leaders and academics.

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The photo on the cover is Wellington Mulwa. Photo credit: AIC publication.

Aberi K. Balya, Stefano Reuben Moshi, and John Mary Waligo: Faithful African Christian Ancestors

By Prof. Dr. Edison Muhindo Kalengyo

Aberi K. Balya, Stefano Reuben Moshi and John Mary Waligo stand together in the cloud of departed faithful ancestors for the way they lived out their convictions regarding God and society in an integrated way.

Aberi K. Balya (1877-1979) was born in 1877 in present day Kyenjojo district in Uganda. He grew up through the ranks of the Church of Uganda (Anglican Church) to serve as bishop of Sudan and assistant bishop of Uganda, responsible for Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Kigezi. He was conscious of God's character as being holy. As a result, during his ministry, Balya never entered church wearing shoes, convinced that this was the Holy of Holies. His scriptural basis for this action was the story of Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:1-6. He maintained this stance until his death on November 26, 1979. In addition, Aberi Balya was a man devoted to a life of prayer. He had a prayer drum that he sounded daily at five a.m. to pray and to summon the community to pray in their homes. According to Balya, it was improper for birds to begin to "praise God" before he could do so. Below are two biographies of Balya, one by Rev. Canon John Kateeba Tumwine, the other by missionary scholar Dr. Louise Pirouet.

Stefano Reuben Moshi was a man of firsts. He was elected first president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) at its formation in 1963. In addition, Stefano was the first African chairman of the Christian Council of Tanganyika in 1965. Born on May 6, 1906, in Kotela, Mamba division of Moshi district, he first trained as a teacher before enrolling for ministerial formation. Stefano is remembered for standing against excesses and injustices in government. His concern for justice, peace, and good governance went beyond his own home country of Tanzania. He openly and publically condemned atrocities perpetrated by governments in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau. He was

taken ill when on official visit to Germany in 1976. He died on August 15, 1976 in a Nairobi hospital where he had been transferred from Germany. He is buried at his birthplace in Tanzania.

John Mary Waliggo was a uniquely gifted and talented man who loved God, the Church and society. He was born on July 18, 1942 in Villa Maria, Masaka District in Uganda, to very committed Roman Catholic parents who nurtured him into the Catholic faith. The extended seminary education early in his life further rooted him in the faith and led to his eventual ordination in August 1970. Interestingly, Waliggo taught Church History at both Katigondo National Major Seminary (Roman Catholic) and Bishop Tucker Theological College in Mukono (Anglican). He spoke openly against human right abuses in Uganda and at one point had to flee the country out of fear of his life (1983-1987).

Waliggo served his nation of Uganda in various capacities. In 1989, he was appointed commissioner of the Uganda Constitutional Commission, becoming its General Secretary in 1990. Under his guidance, the draft constitution was completed and successfully debated by the Constitutional Assembly in 1993. Waliggo throughout his life, was devoted to peace, justice, human rights, democracy and development. He helped establish the Uganda Human rights Commission and was an advocate for women's emancipation, child protection, people with disabilities, and other marginalized persons in society. He was relentless in his devotion to the holistic liberation of human beings.

Last but not least, Waliggo is remembered for his love for culture. He is credited in theological circles for fully developing the concept of inculturation and making resources to help understand inculturation available to clergy and laity, theological educators and students. His biography was authored by Fr. Benedict Ssettuuma, Ph.D.

Balya, Aberi K.
1877 to 1979
Church of Uganda (Anglican)
Uganda

Aberi K. Balya is believed to have been born in 1877 in Rwahunga village, Kyaka County in present day Kyenjojo District. His father was Kibesingo, a Muslim by clan, and his mother a Muhindakazi by clan, a princess born in Ankole Kingdom. Kibesingo was an outstanding wealthy person with abundant cattle who is said to have migrated from Kyabukuju, Rubare in present day Ntungamo District.

During his youth, Aberi Balya accompanied his father on a military campaign when Kabalega's Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom was at war with the British. Kabalega lost the war. He was captured and taken into exile while many of his soldiers and subjects were killed. The survivors, including the aged Kibesingo and his son Balya, scattered in disarray. After many years of haphazard moving, calamities, illness, and loss of cattle, Aberi Balya heard the good news that Tooro had a very good Christian king, David Kasagama Kyebambe. After hearing this, Balya quickly came to Kabarole where he found his cousins, Subi and Muragira, who had already taken refuge with King Kasagama. After scrutinizing him, King Kasagama put him in charge of the king's treasury store, servants and guards—a domain known as the Egalian.

Balya was baptized in 1901 and later confirmed. During this time, he learned to read and write and was later selected by missionaries to teach in the Kabarole mixed school. Balya's real call to Christian ministry came in 1903 with a European missionary while he was working as a curate at Kabarole. Like the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 8:6), he heard a voice.

Rev. Johnson sent him to Kyakka Nyakabimba to preach the gospel and then to Ankole after the elders recognized him as an outstanding teacher and were assured that he would offer an efficient service.

On February 25, 1907, Balya married Ketura Byanga and was later posted to Mboga-Zaire, in present day Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 1908, he was transferred to Kitagwenda, in present day Kamwenge District, and in 1909, he was transferred back to Kabarole. In 1910, Balya, together with Rev. Maddox Y. Kamuhiigi and Zabuloni Musana, translated the Bible into Runyoro/Rutooro.

In 1914, Balya was sent to Namirembe for further studies. In 1915, he was posted to Rwengoma, in present day Kabarole District. In 1918, Balya was sent to Bishop Tucker Theological College, Mukono, where he later became a deacon. In 1921, he was posted to Rwengoma as vicar. While there, Balya extended his operations to Bukonjo, Bwamba, and Butuku/Ntoroko in Kasese and Bundibugyo Districts.

In 1922, Balya was again sent to Namirembe for further studies. In 1923, he was posted to Rwano to cover Bunyangabu county in Kabarole District and Busongora county in Kasese District. In 1924, Balya was posted to Butiiti-Mwenge in Kyenjojo District. In 1927, he and Canon Blackledge were selected to be the missionary commissioners announcing the good news of the Uganda Jubilee all over the world. In 1931, he was posted again to Kabarole. Later, he was made canon of Namirembe Cathedral, a position that was not easily attained back then. He worked tirelessly to build St. John's Cathedral Kabarole that opened in 1939. In 1933, his colleague Canon Apolo Kivebulaya died in Boga-Zaire (present day Democratic Republic of Congo) and Balya organized his burial there.

Balya was appointed bishop by the Archbishop of Canterbury on the advice of Bishop Stuart who was bishop of Uganda then. At first, Balya pleaded with Bishop Stuart, saying that he (Balya) was not the right person for this position, giving the excuse of old age and inadequate education, and he humbly rejected the call.

However, after some time Bishop Stuart told him that CMS (Church Missionary Society) London had agreed with his proposal to appoint him bishop and showed him a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Balya then submitted to the call, believing that the vision was from God. Balya was eventually consecrated bishop of Sudan at Namirembe Cathedral in a ceremony that was attended by many dignitaries including the Governor of Uganda, the Kabaka of Buganda and the kings of Tooro, Ankole, and Bunyoro, Bishop Taylor of Northern Rhodesia, Bishop Stuart of Uganda, Bishop Reginald of Mombasa, and many others.

Balya was then enthroned assistant bishop of Uganda in charge of Bunyoro, Tooro, Ankole, and Kigezi, but was also free to serve anywhere in Uganda in consultation with the bishop of Uganda. He thus became the first African bishop in East and Central Africa south of the Sahara.

In 1952, his first wife Ketura with whom he had ten children died. Five years later, in 1957, he married Asita with whom he had two children.

Balya was a member of the Church Missionary Society in London all his life. The Queen of Great Britain honored him with the Order of the British Empire and he was awarded the certificate of honor from the Ugandan Government. He attained the highest dignity when he acted as bishop of Uganda when Bishop Stuart retired. Bishop Brown, who was to replace Stuart, delayed for seven months, so during this time Balya acted as archbishop of Uganda. Balya installed Bishop Brown as archbishop of Uganda on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the archbishops of Kenya and Sudan.

Balya's prayer drum sounded at five a.m. daily because he felt that no bird should pray to God in the morning before him. In his daily prayer, Balya always remembered that he had been chosen by God and did not rely on his own will but on God's. He believed that he had been captured by the Lord just like St. Paul was captured by the Lord on his way to Damascus. In his lifetime, as a minister of the church and a bishop, he never entered the church with his shoes on for he believed it was the Holy of Holies just like Moses when he encountered God in the wilderness.

Balya retired in 1960 at the age of eighty-three and moved to his home area of Bunyonyi - Kihumuro where he continued to preach the gospel at the church he had built there and in surrounding churches.

On November 26, 1979, Balya passed away at the age of 102 after an illness (jaundice). He was accorded a state burial on November 30, 1979 at St. John's Cathedral Kabarole. The burial service was conducted by Bishop Dunstan Nsubuga assisted by other diocesan bishops and attended by many dignitaries including Godfrey Binaisa, the president of Uganda.

Many institutions that he helped establish have been named after him. These include Bishop Balya Theological College, Bukuuklu, Kabarole; Bishop Balya Parish, Bunyonyi, Kabarole; Balya House at Kyebambe Girls Secondary School, Kabarole, next to St. John's Cathedral; Balya House at Bishop Stuart University, Mbarara; Balya House at Nyakasura School, Kabarole; Balya Road at Fort Portal town, Kabarole; Balya House at Bweranyangi Senior Secondary School, Bushenyi; and aly House at Uganda Technical College, Kichwamba, Kabarole.

John Kateeba Tumwine

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This story, received in 2010, was written by Rev. Canon John Kateeba Tumwine who was director of Global South Institute at Uganda Christian University and coordinator of regional theological colleges in the Church of Uganda.

Balya, Aberi Kakyomya and Ketura Byanga

b. 1881

Church of Uganda (Anglican)

Uganda

[TORO]

Rt. Rev. Aberi Kakyomya Balya was born at Matiri in eastern Toro. As a child he was taken to Bunyoro by Kabarega's armies. He was brought up in Kabarega's

enclosure because his aunt was one of Kabarega's wives. He returned to Toro in 1896. He served in the Mukama's enclosure where he started to receive Christian teaching. He was baptized by the Rev. A. B. Fisher in 1901 and confirmed by Bishop Tucker in 1903. His first teaching appointments were in Kayaka and Nyakabimba. In 1905, he went as a teacher to Kyagaju in Ankole. In 1907, he married Ketura Byanga, also a church teacher, who had been in the service of the *Nyina Omukama* (Queen Mother). The same year, he was sent to Mboga (now in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) where Apolo Kivebulaya had worked. In 1908, he was transferred to Kitagwenda on the Toro/Ankole border, and was the first Anglican teacher to make any headway there. From 1910 to 1911, he and two others worked with the Rev. H. E. Maddox on the translation of the Bible into Runyoro/Rutoro. He then went to Bishop Tucker College, Mukono, and qualified as a lay-reader. On his return, he was posted to Ngoma, sent by the *Nyina Omukama*, and worked up towards the Ruwenzori, concentrating on the Bakonjo. After a further period at Mukono, he was ordained priest in 1922 and returned to Ngoma, this time concentrating on Butuku. In 1923, he was put in charge of Busongora, a huge area in southern Toro, where he again worked among the Bakonjo. From 1931 to 1934, he was again at Mboga and was there when Apolo Kivebulaya died. In 1934, he was appointed vicar of St. John's Church, Kabarole. The following year, he was made a canon of Namirembe Cathedral. In 1938, he was appointed an honorary life governor of the CMS. In 1947, he was consecrated assistant bishop with special responsibility for Western Uganda—the first East African to be consecrated by the Anglican episcopacy. In 1952, he was awarded the O.B.E. In 1960, he retired to Bunyonyi, sixteen miles from Fort Portal. In 1964, when the Lost Counties were returned to Bunyoro, he was invited to preach the sermon at the service of thanksgiving. In 1966, he played a prominent part at the coronation of the new *Mukama* of Toro.

Louise Pirouet

Notes (short form; see [List of Sources \(https://dacb.org/stories/uganda/pirouet-appendixa-sources/\)](https://dacb.org/stories/uganda/pirouet-appendixa-sources/) for complete citations):

Based on his own information.

This biography, written by Dr. Louise Pirouet, was included in “Appendix A: Biographical Notes,” on pages 371-2 of “The Expansion of the Church of Uganda (N.A.C.) from Buganda into Northern and Western Uganda between 1891 and 1914, with Special Reference to the work of African Teachers and Evangelists” (PhD Thesis: University of East Africa, 1968). Pirouet published this thesis as *Black Evangelists* (London: Rex Collings, 1978). However, *Black Evangelists* does not reproduce the detailed biographies, complete with references to sources, found in Appendix A of the thesis. Print copies are available at Africana Section, Makerere University Library (U 02 P57); The Centre for Christianity Worldwide, Cambridge; and a microfilm copy at the School of Oriental Studies, London. [information from Angus Crichton]

Moshi, Stefano Reuben
1906 to 1976
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tanzania

Stefano Moshi was a Tanzanian clergyman, elected first president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) (ELCT), at its formation in 1963.

Born into a Christian family in Kotela, Mamba division of Moshi district, on 6 May 1906, he went to school at Gonja where his father was teaching. His family moved to Kotela where he continued his education until 1922.

That same year he began teaching in a local school, remaining there for four years. In 1927, he did a two-year course at the Marangu Training College. He later taught at the college while studying for the London University entrance examination. He obtained admittance but chose instead to enter the theological college in Lwandai in Tanga, Tanzania. He was ordained pastor on December 26, 1949. Between 1952 and 1953, he studied at the Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the United States. He returned to Tanzania and continued to work as a teacher, later becoming principal of the Marangu Teacher's College.

In 1955, he left the teaching profession to concentrate on the work of the church. He was elected assistant and later vice president of the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika (which later became the Northern Diocese). He became president in 1958. In 1962, he was also elected president of the former Federation of Lutheran Churches of Tanganyika. When the various Lutheran Church groups in the country united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanganyika (ELCT) in 1963, Moshi was elected the first head of that body.

The membership of the ELCT is estimated at nearly 800,000 and until 1970, the church managed several schools and hospitals before they were taken over by the state. As head of the ELCT and bishop of the Northern Diocese (having been consecrated in 1964), Moshi was a powerful force at home and abroad. He did not pretend to support the notion of "not mixing religion with politics" and often spoke against government injustices, as in a 1974 speech to church leaders in Dar-es-Salaam when he reiterated the church's condemnation of atrocities perpetrated by big powers as seen in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and elsewhere in the world.

A man of tremendous energy, Moshi served in many organizations. He became a member of the Christian Council of Tanganyika (CCT) in 1960 and was elected its first African chairman in 1965. He also served as vice-president of the Commission of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation and as president of the All-African Conference of Churches for many years. Between 1959 and 1961, he was a member of the Chagga Council and the Moshi Town Council. Moshi was instrumental in the historic meeting of East African churches representatives in Moshi. This was where the East Africa Venture Company, producers of the church organs Target and Lengo, was established.

In 1970, in recognition of his services, Gustavus Adolphus College and Concordia Seminary, both in America, each awarded him a doctorate of divinity.

Moshi was on church business in Germany in 1976 when he became ill. He was flown to Nairobi, Kenya, for treatment and died in a hospital there on August 15, 1976. He is buried in Kotela, his birthplace in Tanzania.

(No author)

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Waliggo, John Mary

1942 to 2008

Catholic

Uganda

John Mary Waliggo was born into a large family of eighteen uncles and aunts on July 18, 1942, at Villa Maria in the Masaka district of Uganda to Mr. Kiwanuka Kabirinange Bajjabegonza and Mrs. Martha Lwandago Nabatanzi. His grandparents were named Ggubya and Mukambwe. He was the last to be born into a family of seven children, with three boys and four girls. The family grew to nine children when two more were adopted. His parents, and especially his mother, were zealous and committed Catholics. Together with his maternal grandmother, Veronika Munakutanyiga, they gave him a balanced education in human, cultural, and religious values.

In 1950, Waliggo was taken to Villa Maria Primary School to start his primary education and he remained there until 1956. In 1957, he entered Bukalasa Minor Seminary for his secondary education, completing it in 1964. From 1964 to 1966, he studied philosophy at Katigondo National Major Seminary, and from 1966 to 1970, he studied theology at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, where he was exposed to the international community. It

was in Rome that his leadership qualities and his sense of love for the unity of humanity led him to become the secretary of *Omnes Gentes*. In 1969, he became president of the student union and of the pontifical universities in Rome. During this period, his understanding of African theology developed, along with a strong pan-African sensibility. He completed his studies in 1970, receiving a licentiate in theology. He returned to Uganda, and was ordained in August of 1970 by Bishop Ddungu at Bisanje, Masaka Diocese. Soon after ordination he was sent to Cambridge University in England, where he obtained a doctorate in history in 1976, returning to Uganda in 1977. Earlier, from 1972 to 1974, he had taught church history at Katigondo National Seminary.

After his return, he served in various parishes, namely Butende, Bethlehem, and Kabuwo, all the while teaching church history at Katigondo National Major Seminary and at the Protestant Theological College in Mukono. He went into a short period of exile on the Ssesse Islands in 1977 and into a long exile in Kenya from 1983 to 1987, after having condemned human rights abuses in his country. During his exile in Kenya, he taught at the Catholic High Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA) where he headed the department of church history. He also founded the *Quarterly Theological Journal of African Christian Studies* and acted as its editor for some time. In addition, he founded the CHIEA theological education by extension program for people who lived around Nairobi. In December of 1987, he returned to Uganda.

In 1989, he was appointed commissioner of the Uganda Constitutional Commission, becoming general secretary in 1990. He worked hard to have the draft of the constitution completed and debated in the Constitutional Assembly in 1993. From 1994 to January of 2001, he was the chairperson of the Uganda National Diocesan Priests Association (UNDIPA), and he also served as a member of the Uganda Bible Society. At the time of his death, he was working for the Uganda Catholic Secretariat on the Justice and Peace Commission. He was also teaching history at Nkozi Catholic University, and he was the Uganda Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition, he chaired the Uganda Media Council, and founded CACISA, the Centre for African Christian Studies. The journal *Horizont 3000* recognized his work on justice, peace, human rights, development, and democracy, and awarded him the Continental Award in Vienna on May 10, 2000. The missiological institute, Missio Aachen, recognized him as one of the 100 leading theologians in the world. Having completed thirty-eight years in the priesthood and more than forty years of academic life and

dedicated service to humanity, he died on April 19, 2008. He was buried in the cemetery of Bukalasa Minor Seminary on April 24, 2008. A very large crowd was in attendance, and some said that they felt they had buried an ancestor. [1]

His Vision and Program

In a letter he sent to his nephew in Rome, in 2002, he explained how he had learned to write out a "long vision" and program for his life, and how he checked off the goals as he reached them. Toward the end of his life, he had only reached about one third of his goals, but thought it was far better to have more goals than one could achieve, than to not have a program for his life. [2]

His Legacy

Waliggo believed that people should be liberated. For him, liberation "is the total freeing of humankind from enslavement and obstacles to full self-realization in the ten vital human dimensions: spiritual, religious, moral, mental, cultural, economic, political, physical, social, and personal." [3]

He wanted the human person to be liberated holistically. He rejected any form of dualism and dichotomy, believing that people had to be liberated according to their nature as complex beings at the physical, spiritual, and supernatural levels. This also called for holistic evangelization, in which every dimension of the human person has to be evangelized. All aspects of society and all peoples were to be evangelized as well, without discrimination. As a researcher, Waliggo was able to pioneer many projects, but his great achievements were in the articulation of his ideas and in the development of a vision for the church and the nation in the area of holistic development.

Waliggo loved peace and he worked hard to make all Ugandans and Africans understand that it was not only a gift and a duty, but also a human right. He loved justice and human rights and spent a lot of his time developing these themes and giving papers on these issues. When he died, the local newspapers reported that an icon of peace and human rights had passed away. His efforts led to the development of the current Ugandan constitution, which can truly be credited specifically to his work. He can also be credited with the establishment of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, the emancipation of women in

Uganda, and the protection of children, people with disabilities, and marginalized communities. [4]

Holistic liberation demanded that he develop a love for the environment. He developed a good ecological theology by combining the African and the Christian worldviews regarding responsibility for the natural environment. He encouraged people to plant trees and to preserve the natural African "pharmacy." He developed the concept of the right to a clean and healthy environment and wrote:

In our study of theology, especially the theology of creation, we have not yet reached the stage of seeing the entire cosmos and environment as part and parcel of the human person. The theology of stewardship of the goods of this earth is still weak. We often regard environmental matters as secular issues, which have little to do with our theology and Christian leadership. Are we right? [5]

Waliggo abhorred the suffering that exists in Africa and called for an integral form of evangelization that would create free and mature Christians who would act out of conviction and maturity in order to bring about holistic liberation after the model of Jesus Christ. [6]

He was able to read the signs of the times with a universal perspective. He had a reflective and intuitive mind, and was always ready to reflect on situations in order to evaluate them and to find lasting solutions. Whenever a situation arose, he had already tried to ask the pertinent questions about what needed to be done. In so doing, he helped the church and state in Uganda to be more open and accommodating, for he was a very active priest and citizen, and was involved in the affairs of the church and the nation. He developed the major pastoral letters of the Uganda Episcopal Conference. [7]

John Mary Waliggo loved his culture, his clan, and his family. He was actively engaged in African culture and used it as a basis for service to the church and the nation. He also used African culture to develop his vision of both church and state using his rich cultural heritage and wisdom from his culture, clan and family.[7a] He fully developed the concept of inculturation and gave courses on it to laity and clergy, defining it as:

the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of the Christian life and

doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good News are even dynamic and changing to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavor to make Christianity truly "feel at home" in the cultures of each people. [8]

He thought that it was a vital process for the church, and that it was crucial to the ownership, permanence, and relevance of Christianity anywhere.

His purity of heart could be seen in his dedication to the good of all, especially the marginalized, the defenseless and the victimized. He spent a lot of time and resources helping many needy people to be successful, self-realized, and fulfilled. He struggled to ensure that the image of God in everyone would not be tarnished, and wanted to enable people to live as true children of God. His enemies may have hated him for his political affiliations, but none of them doubted his great love and capacity to help those in need. By the time of his death, he had educated over twenty-two Catholic priests, several religious men and women, and many lay people. He paid the medical bills for all the elderly in his village and he supported many elderly priests. [9]

Waliggo was one of the greatest promoters of the emancipation of women in Ugandan history. He wrote a book entitled *Struggle for Equality: Women and Emancipation in Uganda*. He worked to empower women in their struggle for justice, equal rights, and opportunities in the affairs of their nation and their church. [10] He struggled for the rights of the marginalized, the oppressed, the defenseless, and the internally displaced. He thought that in Africa in particular, there was a need to liberate women and children from oppressive cultural practices. If nothing was done in that area, there would be a real crisis in the church. [11]

Many children in Africa are denied basic education, rest, leisure time, and play because of the prevalence of child labor. He fought violence against children in its many forms: rape, segregation, xenophobia, and child labor. He called upon the church and state to ensure that children would be guaranteed certain rights: an adequate standard of living, food, clothing, shelter, and access to health care. He fought against abortion, which was becoming common due to disoriented and unethical population control programs, and taught that children must be given the chance to develop physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. [12]

Waliggo was fully aware that in Africa as well as in the globalized world, many people and many religions must live together. He was convinced of the need to learn to live together and to understand each other primarily as children of the same God, all being in the same human family, and having a common destiny. He lamented the weakness of the ecumenical movement in Africa and the near absence of religious dialogue. [13]

He expected good governance in both church and state, which explains his interest in political affairs. He called for adequate training of leaders and worked for democracy in both institutions, having developed a "theology of democracy." [14]

Waliggo loved the church and the priesthood, and was convinced that deep love for God, the church, and the priesthood would lead to serious commitment to a life of service. Profound love would help one make the sacrifices that were necessary for the development of vision and ideas that would in turn lead to a crucial liberation of the mind. At his silver jubilee he said in Luganda:

Twasalawo ne bannange, emyaka giyise mingiko nti tweyagarire mu bwa faaza, tulage abantu bonna nti buwooma, tetusaana kubeeramu nga abalimu olwempaka, tulye embaga, tuselebratinge, tugambe nti we tuli tumaanyiwo era walungi. Ebizibu byamu tubikweke, tubirinyirire tugenda nga tubijjawo. (We decide to enjoy the priesthood, to show others that priesthood is wonderful. We should not live it as if we were forced into it. We know where we are and we are sure it is beautiful to be there. That is the reason why we must celebrate; we push down the difficulties of the priesthood, trample them underfoot and gradually seek to overcome them). [15]

Waliggo called for authentic African theologies that could provide a way of understanding faith and of creating principles on which African Christian identity could be constructed. This needed to be a theology that could develop good models and a new language for expressing the Christian faith intelligibly. Such models would help to produce meaningful Bible translations into the local languages, ensuring an African Bible-centered faith and a relevant application of universal canon law. All of this called for theological research, and for the training and education of true African theologians. [16] Waliggo was convinced that if the church had the right vision, an ethos of living out the solidarity that is demanded of the children of God, and submitted her priorities to the light of the

gospel, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then Africa would overcome much of her suffering. Africans would be saved holistically and would live with the dignity that the Creator wishes for all who are made in his image.

Waliggo had an open mind that delved into every field of study for the good of the church and of society. As an intellectual and a keen researcher, he loved knowledge and the people who loved knowledge. He sought to support students and even sponsored scholarship, hoping that Africa would generate her own knowledge contribution to the world. He disliked the narrow-mindedness, shallowness, and ignorance that often led to fundamentalism, bigotry, fanaticism, despotism, cruelty, and violence.

In order to promote the study of African Christianity and culture, he and a few other intellectuals founded the Center for African Christian Studies (CACISA) with the vision and mandate of having a fully liberated and fully inculturated Christianity. The ultimate aim of the center is to promote liberation and inculturation through the active participation of professionals, scholars, Christian leaders, and politicians. Topics such as good governance and democracy, peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation, gender issues, good leadership, ecumenical study, and constitutional inculturation are studied there. CACISA aims to critically engage leaders and citizens in order to holistically transform society, and the vulnerable in particular, through Christian and African values. The center is a facility that provides a research and educational framework for the promotion of the critical engagement of society in religious, socio-economic, and political issues in view of liberation and inculturation.

Waliggo was also a brave and prophetic man. He believed that prophetic witness was an essential part of the Christian mission and of being the church. He always said that when the church ceases to be prophetic, it ceases to be itself and largely abandons its mission. If it is not prophetic, it risks succumbing to the status quo and quietly condoning evil. He was not afraid to speak his mind and to denounce evils in both church and state. He was fearless and uncompromising in the exercise of his prophetic witness, and willing to accept the consequences of his actions. He wrote: "One cannot imagine a church today without active prophetic witness. It is such witness that will show the love and care of church leaders and of the church as a whole, for the suffering and the oppressed of this continent. It is through such witness that human solidarity can be promoted for the transformation of this world." [17]

He courageously spoke out against the atrocities of Idi Amin while in exile, and denounced the abuse of human rights by the Obote II regime, for which he suffered a second exile. He constantly denounced all human rights abuses and fought for the freedom of the press, encouraging it to denounce all atrocities truthfully.

Waliggo loved Uganda and Africa, and dreamed of a God-fearing country where everyone would be free and feel at home. [18] He listed the following eleven points as goals and ideals for his country: Uganda as a God-loving and God-fearing nation, true patriotism, criticism that leads to improvement for others, respect of the sovereignty of the people, holistic development, a country with a strong culture of peace and civilization based on legality and non-violence, openness to positive globalization, openness to wider solidarity, prioritization of children, concern for national security, a nation that remembers and forgives. [19]

In essence, he was a gifted, principled man who had a deep love for God, for the church and for all people. Here is another quote from a letter to his nephew: "A few of us should forget having big cars, big houses, big everything, and concentrate on the development of ideas, thoughts, and vision for our church and for society. This will make a real difference. We need very deep love for our church, deep love for Africa, and deep love for Uganda to be able to do so." [20] His creed could be summarized as the belief in the liberation of all people in Jesus Christ. He loved justice and hated evil, and his basic goal in life was to work for justice and liberation in a spirit of total freedom in Jesus Christ. This man of incredible energy, courage, and bravery lived his life fruitfully and selflessly as a committed citizen and as a dedicated priest and theologian in the service of God, the church, his nation, and humankind. May his life inspire many people to work for humanity and to build the kingdom of God.

Benedict Ssettuuma

Notes:

1. Benedict Ssettuuma, *The Thief on The Plane*, (Kampala: Angel Agencies, 2009), 105-110.

2. *Ibid*, 90-91. For the text of "My Vision and Program in Life," please visit <https://dacb.org/stories/uganda/waliggo-john/>.
3. John Mary Waliggo, "The Struggle for Liberation: A Challenge to Christianity," manuscript, p.1. Also quoted by Professor Anthony Bellagamba, "Response to the Paper of Rev. Dr. Laurenti Magesa," in L. Namwera et al. (eds), *Towards African Christian Liberation*, (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1990), 66, 1-7.
4. Cf. Benedict Ssettuuma, *Inculturation as Liberation in the Writings of John Mary Waliggo*, (Rome: Liberit, 2005), 1-290. See also *The Thief on the Plane*, 57-62; Waliggo, "Peace, the New Name of Development," (lecture at Aga Khan School, Kampala, 26th Febuary, 2000), 1-2, unpublished manuscript; Waliggo, "The Religious Leaders' Response to Violence," AFER 43 (Aug.-Oct. 2001), 186.
5. Waliggo, "The Mission of Human Rights Protection and Promotion as a Moral and Ethical Challenge to Students of Philosophy/Theology and Christian Leaders," 20, unpublished manuscript.
6. -----, "African Christology in a Situation of Suffering," in *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, ed. Joseph R. Schreiter, (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1991), 171. See also Waliggo, "Christianity and Liberation in Africa," in *Towards African Christian Liberation*, Leonard Namwera et al, eds. (Nairobi: Paulines, 1990), 45.
7. Ssettuuma, "John Mary Waliggo: True African Theologian," in *The Waliggo* Vol 1\1, 4-25.
- 7a. Cf. Peter Kanyandago, John Mary Waliggo: "The Theology of John Mary Waliggo," in Benezet Bujo and Juvenal Ilunga Muya (eds), *African Theology: The Contribution of the Pioneers* Vol 2. (Nairobi: Paulines, 2006), 218-219.
8. John Mary Waliggo, "Making the Church that is Truly African," 12.
9. Ssettuuma, Communications with My Uncle Fr. John Mary Waliggo, Letters, 1-45.
10. Waliggo, "The Religious Leaders and their Response to Violence," 179-188.
11. -----, "The Challenges of Contemporary Africa to the Religious Women," 12.
12. -----, "The Rights and Duties of Children, Teachers, School Managers" (Paper given at the Teachers' Summit View Kyengera S.S.S. July 31, 1999, 1-3. Unpublished.
13. -----, "The Challenges," [cf. note 11], 11.
14. -----, "The Role of the Christian Churches in the Democratization of Africa," 60-65.

15. -----, Speech at Priestly Silver Jubilee, Bisanje, on August 26, 1995.
16. -----, "Analyzing the Church in Africa," 6-7; Waliggo, "History and Development of African Theologies and How to Teach Them in Major Seminaries," 10-16. [??]
17. -----, *A Man of Vision: Archbishop Joseph Kiwanuka*, (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 1991), 27.
18. -----, "The Uganda We Want," 7. Traditional society has a lot to offer in this regard. The task is simply to help people extend the patriotism they give to a kingdom, chiefdom, tribe or clan to a wider brotherhood of the nation. This should eventually lead to a greater brotherhood that embraces the entire human family of God.
19. -----, "The Uganda We Want," 7.
20. Cf. Ssettuuma, *The Thief*. [no page given]

For a bibliography of works by Waliggo and the text of "My Vision and Program in Life," please visit <https://dacb.org/stories/uganda/waliggo-john/>.

This story, received in 2010, was written by Fr. Benedict Ssettuuma, a diocesan priest from Masaka Diocese who holds a doctorate in missiology from Urban University Rome. He teaches pastoral theology and missiology at St. Mary's National Major Seminary, Ggaba. He is also the chairperson of the board of directors of the Center of African Christian Studies (CACISA), a *DACB* participating institution.

Wellington Mulwa and *Harambee*: Leading the Church in Partnership with Western Missionaries

The following article, an exclusive piece recently written by F. Lionel Young for the *DACB*, presents the life story and legacy of Bishop Wellington Mulwa of the Africa Inland Church, a pioneer in the era following Kenyan independence. In contrast with Moderator John Gatu (see *JACB* April 2017) who called for a “moratorium on foreign missionaries,” he did not wish to see missionaries leave the country and believed instead that the church could be strengthened by working in partnership with Western missionaries.

Michèle Sigg

Mulwa, Wellington
1918-1979
Africa Inland Church
Kenya

Bishop of the Africa Inland Church

Wellington Mulwa was elected president of the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in 1970, and became the first bishop of the AIC when he assumed the title in 1973. During the 1970s, Mulwa was the leader of the largest Protestant denomination in Kenya. He came into power after a prolonged power struggle with the African Inland Mission (AIM) following Kenyan independence in 1963. In 1970, the mission agreed to hand over most of its properties and powers to the church. Mission officials handed the legal documents over to Wellington Mulwa in the presence of the vice president of Kenya before an outdoor assembly attended by more than a thousand people on October 16, 1971.¹ The bishop was a personal

¹ The source material is largely drawn from the Africa Inland Mission International Archives (AIM) in Nottingham, Great Britain, the Billy Graham Center (BGC) in Wheaton, Illinois, (largely dispersed in the private papers of Peter Stam and Sidney Langford, Collection 81, boxes 70-87), and interviews conducted by the author.

friend of President Daniel arap Moi (1924 -) who was educated by AIM missionaries, and has remained a lifelong member of the AIC.² Under Mulwa's leadership between 1970 and 1979, the AIC in Kenya grew from 300,000 members to an estimated 1.5 million followers, with 3,000 churches and 1,400 pastors.³

The work and ministry of the influential bishop has been expunged from the official histories of the mission due, in part, to his contentious relationship with influential members of the AIM community. The two standard histories of the AIM, both written by former missionaries, mention his name only in passing and provide scant information about his life or ministry.⁴ One of the most influential members of the mission community who served in Kenya during Mulwa's rise to power, referred to the death of the bishop as an answer to prayer, likening it to the story of "Ananias and Saphira where God stepped in" and removed the leader of the church from power.⁵ Another mission official who attended the bishop's funeral wrote that AIM missionaries saw in Bishop Mulwa's death God's "sovereign hand" stating that he and others were "tremendously relieved."⁶ After his death in November 1979, leaders of the mission community seemed content to bury his legacy.

Some of the material for this article has been extracted from F. Lionel Young III, "The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, 1939-1975" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Stirling, 2017).

² Andrew Morton, *Moi: The Making of An African Statesman* (London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1988), 10, 33-37.

³ Gideon Mulaki, "The Late Bishop Wellington Mulwa," *The East African Standard*, November 26, 1979.

⁴ Kenneth Richardson, *Garden of Miracles: The Story of the Africa Inland Mission* (London: Africa Inland Mission, 1976), 257. Dick Anderson, *We Felt Like Grasshoppers: The Story of Africa Inland Mission* (Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994), 40.

⁵ Erik S. Barnett, interview by Paul Erickson, tape recording, January 23-24, 1995, BGC Archives (Wheaton), Collection 510, T-3. The expressions of joy over the death of Mulwa by some members of the mission community are also recounted in Jones Maweu Kaleli, "Theoretical Foundations of African and Western Worldviews and Their Relationship to Christian Theologizing: An Akamba Case Study" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1985), 367-69.

⁶ "Confidential Report to Council on February 14, 1980 by Peter Same of Recent Africa Trip," AIM Archives, BGC Center (Wheaton), Collection 81.

Early Life and Ministry

Wellington Mulwa was born in 1918 in Mukaa, Kenya, located about fifty kilometers south of Machakos, a principal town in Kenya that served as the British administrative center before the completion of the Uganda Railway. The region around Machakos known as Ukambani (“Land of the Kamba”) became one of the strongholds of the AIM and the AIC in Kenya. In 1929, while attending the AIM mission school at Mukaa, Mulwa experienced an evangelical conversion when he “recited the words of the gospel concerning Jesus on the cross” and “confessed that he was a sinner who needed to be saved.”⁷ Educated at mission schools, he received his post-secondary education at Alliance High School, an institution founded in 1926 by an alliance of Protestant missions working in Kenya. Alliance High School was an important academic institution, gaining a reputation for providing exceptional education for Africa’s emerging elites, including figures like the famed writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1938-) and the first Kenyan to be elected to parliament, Eliud Mathu (1910-1994).⁸

After completing his studies at Alliance in 1940, Mulwa served for one year as a teacher in his hometown of Mukaa, before taking up positions in the Kenyan government. In 1946, the AIC church leaders of Mukaa invited Mulwa to return as a teacher. However, after the invitation was revoked by the AIM “missionary in charge,” he accepted another government post in the Department of Education.⁹ In 1956, Mulwa accepted another position with AIM, to become the deputy principal of the Kangundos Teachers’ College.¹⁰ In 1960, Mulwa was awarded a scholarship to study at All Nations Bible College in London. He

⁷ Ed Arensen, “Rev. Wellington Mulwa,” *1st Anniversary of the Africa Inland Church, 15 October 1972* (Kijabe, Kenya: Africa Inland Church, 1972), 49.

⁸ Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence*, 34; David B. Barrett, et al., *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973* (Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel House Publishing, 1973), 24; J. Stephen Smith, *A History of the Alliance High School* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973).

⁹ Richard Gehman, “The Spreading Vineyard: The Growth of the A.I.C. Kenya” (unpublished manuscript), Richard Gehman Papers (Florida), 572.

¹⁰ Arensen, “Rev. Wellington Mulwa,” 49.

returned two years later to be ordained as a pastor in the AIC.¹¹ Mulwa was following in the footsteps of other Africans like Jomo Kenyatta (1897-1978) who won the admiration and respect of his compatriots by acquiring education and spending time abroad.

During the 1960s, Mulwa excelled as a pastor and church leader in the AIC heartland of Ukambani, and was soon elevated to serve as the chairman of the Machakos Regional Church Council of the AIC. Missionaries described him as a strong leader, a capable administrator, an effective fundraiser and a captivating speaker who knew how to make people laugh. AIM missionary Dorothy Hildebrandt, who served as the bishop's personal assistant in the early 1970s remembers him as "a strong natural leader" who wanted "to move the church ahead."¹² AIM missionary Jonathan Hildebrandt (husband to Dorothy) worked closely with Mulwa in the 1960s and 1970s, and recalled that he was "able to push up giving in the whole region."¹³ Another AIM missionary said of Mulwa that he "could get up and talk and preach. And he was a preacher. And he could have his audience in stitches, with telling stories about Africa and the difference between the whites and the blacks."¹⁴ Mulwa was also an outspoken critic of the mission's reluctance during the 1960s to Africanize the mission after independence in Kenya.¹⁵

Moving the Church Ahead

During his tenure as leader of the AIC, Mulwa poured his energy into strengthening and expanding the work of the AIC. Through his bold, assertive leadership, he would more than live up to his given name of "Wellington." One

¹¹ "Life History of the Late Bishop W. E. Mulwa," prepared for his funeral, n.d., 1979, BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81.

¹² Dorothy Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014 (Florida).

¹³ J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014, (Florida).

¹⁴ William Barnett, Papers of William John Barnett, BGC Archives (Wheaton), Collection 248, T9.

¹⁵ "New Organization of the Africa Inland Church in Relation to the Africa Inland Mission-Kenya, Prepared by the AIC Sub-committee for Presentation to the Joint AIM/AIC Sub-committee, 28 January 1970," BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81. Mulwa's critical comments are recorded at length, though he is referred to as Kitui. The minutes list his name as W. M. Kitui.

of his first acts as the newly elected leader was of important symbolic significance for the young African church in Kenya. Before the 1970 agreement between the mission and the church, the AIC was already the largest Protestant denomination in Kenya, but it did not possess a cathedral or a central office. While AIM missionaries worked out of an office complex in the city, senior African church officials worked out of their homes or local churches.¹⁶ In a move that took some missionaries by surprise, Mulwa immediately set up offices in the largest AIC church in Nairobi (Ziwani), then successfully raised funds to construct a permanent headquarters for the denomination, which were dedicated by Vice-President Moi in 1972.¹⁷ When the church outgrew its new space, Mulwa secured funding for the AIC to take over the large office complex formerly occupied by the mission in order to manage all of its departments. In the absence of a cathedral, Mulwa had given the growing African church a visible and permanent seat of power in Nairobi.¹⁸

Mulwa also worked to assure Western missionaries that they were welcome and needed in Kenya. When he took office in 1970, there were approximately 250 AIM missionaries working in Kenya. Leading up to the historic hand-over, the new AIC leader made every effort to dispel rumors that Africans wanted missionaries to go home. As he put it: "It was never the intention of the church to 'kill' or drive out the white brethren as it has been wrongly advocated in many quarters here and in some lands overseas."¹⁹ In contrast with his counterpart John Gatui (1925-2017), the esteemed general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Mulwa was not in favor of a moratorium on Western missions. Mulwa even travelled to the United States and Great Britain to recruit more missionaries to serve in fields like education, medicine, and development, and succeeded in increasing the number of AIM missionaries from 250 in 1970 to more than 300 by the time of his death.²⁰ He believed that since

¹⁶ J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014, (Florida).

¹⁷ Wellington Mulwa, "80th Anniversary: African Inland Church, Address by Wellington Mulwa," BGC Archives (Wheaton), Collection 81, 12-13.

¹⁸ Mulwa, "80th Anniversary," 12-13; Africa Inland Mission – Kenya Field Council, 24-25 March, 1975, AIM International Archives (Nottingham).

¹⁹ Wellington Mulwa, "Statement of the President of the Africa Inland Church," November 1970, Nairobi, Kenya, BGC Archives (Wheaton), Collection 81.

²⁰ 'Distribution & Status of All A.I.M. Personnel, 1927-1981', AIM, International Office, (Bristol). It should be noted that the bishop made public

Kenya was “a developing country,” the church needed the support, expertise, and financial assistance of the “older overseas churches” to aid the “fast developing young” African church.²¹ Gatu and Mulwa shared the common goal of strengthening the African church, though they called for very different strategies.²² Gatu wanted a (temporary) moratorium to help the African church become self-sufficient, while Mulwa believed that the continued presence of Western missionaries could strengthen the church in Kenya.²³

Mulwa used his position as bishop to develop partnerships with global Evangelicals in order to extend the church’s witness in Africa. He travelled broadly to Germany, Holland, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Philippines in an effort to build relationships with Evangelical churches and institutions.²⁴ The “very active bishop,” noted a mission official in 1974, “is making all kinds of links in other parts of the world quite apart from the AIM.”²⁵ He curried favor with Evangelical schools like Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Illinois), Columbia Bible College (South Carolina), and London Bible College so that young graduates of Scott Theological College could study abroad and return to provide capable leadership

statements that there were about 500 missionaries serving with the AIC. This appears to be either an estimate (based on unofficial reports) or more like a reference to AIM personnel in all fields in East and Central Africa. During the bishop’s tenure, he was also working to create an African-wide AIC denomination. Official reports indicate that there were more than 510 AIM personnel in all fields in 1981.

²¹ Dave Hornberger, “Kenya’s New A.I.C. President,” *Inland Africa* (North America), Vol. LV, No. 2 [March-April 1971], 7-8.

²² Gatu was unfairly maligned by some Evangelicals for his position. For a fairer treatment, See Jesse N. K. Mugambi, “Either Patronage or Partnership in Christian Mission: Moderator John G. Gatu’s Proposal for a Moratorium on Western Missionary Funds and Personnel,” *Journal of African Christian Biography*, Vol. 2, No. 2 [April 2017], 22-33.

²³ This difficulty of how to best to strengthen the non-Western church through shared resources remains unresolved. For the best introduction, see Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

²⁴ Africa Inland Mission – Kenya Field Council, December 2-4, 1974, AIM International Archives (Nottingham).

²⁵ “Church Mission Relations with Particular Reference to African Members of the International Council of the A.I.M.,” May 12, 1974, AIM International Archives (Nottingham).

for the church.²⁶ He developed a partnership with the Christian Nationals Evangelism Commission (CNEC), later re-named Partners International, to provide financial support for African evangelists to work among unreached people groups in Kenya.²⁷ He secured significant funding from the German-based organization, Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World), to assist with relief efforts in Kenya.²⁸ He became a personal friend to the Dutch philanthropist, Anna Marie Rookmaker (1915-2003), the wife of the well-known activist “Hans” Rookmaker (1922-1977), and an outspoken critic of paternalism in the Western mission community. Mrs. Rookmaker had a reputation for circumventing traditional mission agencies to work directly with national leaders. Bishop Mulwa utilized her generous support to fund children’s homes and support church planters in Kenya.²⁹ The bishop represented the African church at the 1974 Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, affixing his signature to the covenant.³⁰ He also worked in tandem with Byang Kato (1936-1975) and the Association of Evangelicals in Africa to spread the spirit of Lausanne throughout Africa. During his tenure as bishop, the AIC became the largest and the most influential denomination in the nation.³¹

Opposition by Missionaries

²⁶ Mulwa, “80th Anniversary,” 9-12; Richard Gehman, “The Spreading Vineyard,” 578.

²⁷ Africa Inland Mission – Kenya Field Council, December 2-4, 1974, AIM International Archives (Nottingham).

²⁸ J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014 (Florida); Mulwa, “80th Anniversary,” 15.

²⁹ Mulwa, “80th Anniversary,” 15; Laurel Gasque, *Art and the Christian Mind: The Life and Work of H. R. Rookmaker* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 59-90; J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014 (Florida).

³⁰ Wellington Mulwa to All AIM Home Councils, All AIM Missionaries Kenya and AIC Supporters, November 1974, BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81.

³¹ Wellington Mulwa, “The AIC 80th Anniversary Covenant,” Africa Inland Church, 11 October 1975, BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81; “Report by Byang Kato on the World Council of Churches given at AIM field conference,” December 1975, BGC Archives (Wheaton), Collection 81, T306, Side 1. Kato appeared together with Mulwa at Kijabe for the report.

Influential members of the mission community were fiercely critical of the bishop. Mulwa was the first leader of the AIC to serve after the mission handed over its authority and property to the church, and he expected mission leaders to work under his leadership. While he welcomed Western missionaries, he was not afraid to send them home if they were unable to come under the authority of the African church. In 1970 Mulwa ousted the veteran missionary Erik Barnett from his position as leader of the Kenya Field Council, and less than two years later he sacked an influential AIM missionary who served as a lecturer at Scott Theological College.³² He was also bothered by what he considered the outmoded “mission station mentality,” and urged missionaries to spread throughout the country and work side-by-side with African church leaders to build up the church.³³ The stalwart bishop was not afraid to speak his mind, and sometimes expressed his views with unrefined bluntness. At one of the annual AIM gatherings held in Kijabe, infamous for being the largest mission station in Africa, he once quipped: “We want you as missionaries to be out and be one with the people. Missionaries are like manure, they do nothing but stink [when they are gathered in one place], but if you spread them out you have great growth and wonderful crops.”³⁴ Some missionaries, understandably, did not find this humorous.

AIM workers of the more conservative stripe were also displeased with Mulwa’s association with the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) because of its relationship with the World Council of Churches.³⁵ Mulwa served as the chairperson of the NCCCK for a brief period (1972-1973) and, like many of his African colleagues, was less concerned about ecclesiastical separation. In 1975, when the WCC was held in Nairobi, he affirmed his Evangelical

³² Erik Barnett, interviews of Erik Stanley Barnett, Collection 510, BGC Archives (Wheaton), T3; Raymond Wolf to Sidney Langford, July 9, 1972, Machakos, Kenya, 1972 Work Diary of Raymond, author’s possession (Valparaiso, Indiana).

³³ Africa Inland Mission – Kenya, Field Council, December 2-4, 1974, AIM International Archives (Nottingham).

³⁴ Wellington Mulwa, according to J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014 (Florida).

³⁵ Gehman, “The Spreading Vineyard,” 260.

convictions to churches and supporters, but his alliance with the NCKK made him suspect among the more conservative ranks of the mission community.³⁶

He drew the ire of a contingent of Baptist members of the mission when he was granted the title of bishop in 1973 and was asked not to refer to himself as such when travelling to North America.³⁷ The AIC countered the criticism by saying that the title “bishop” was more biblical than “president”!³⁸ He was also criticized for requiring AIC pastors to wear clerical vestments. His stated motive for doing so was that he wanted pastors to be visibly recognized in the community, like their counterparts in the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.³⁹ Influential members of the AIM community also launched a whisper campaign against the bishop, accusing him of mismanaging funds because he was diverting some of the money he raised to fund AIC administrative costs.⁴⁰ His AIM supporters countered that he was only doing what he had learned from the Western mission community who also took a percentage of donations to the mission to offset expenses.⁴¹ Most members of the AIM community worked well under the bishop’s direction, though a vocal and influential minority remained highly critical.

Death and Legacy

Toward the end of Mulwa’s tenure, he grew increasingly frustrated with the AIM leadership and his relationship with the mission slowly deteriorated.

³⁶ For a list of past officials, see National Council of Churches of Kenya, “List of Council Officials,” <http://ncck.org/newsite2/index.php/about-ncck/council-officials> (accessed January 13, 2017); Mulwa offered a defense of his conservative Evangelical convictions in a lengthy letter: Wellington Mulwa to All AIM Home Councils, All AIM Missionaries Kenya and AIC Supporters, November 1974, BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81.

³⁷ Sindy Langford to Wellington Mulwa, November 1, 1974, BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81.

³⁸ J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014 (Florida).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ For an example of this kind of private correspondence, see Peter Stam to Frank Frew, Confidential, November 16, 1977, BGC Archives (Wheaton), AIM International, Collection 81.

⁴¹ J. Hildebrandt, interview by author, April 3, 2014 (Florida).

After the 1971 hand-over of the mission to the church, AIM continued to hold land and properties in Kenya, and Mulwa maintained that these should be handed over to the church. Some missionaries accused the bishop of sinister motives, of “maneuvering all the time to get everything the mission had in the name of the AIC.” AIM finally agreed to a more complete hand-over of its properties to the church in 1979, with some exceptions (like the prestigious Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe), though Mulwa died only a few weeks before the agreement was signed.⁴²

His funeral was attended by several thousand worshippers with President Moi offering a eulogy and calling the bishop “a dedicated church worker who had tirelessly travelled all over the world to spread the Word of God.”⁴³ Mwangi Mathai, a former Member of Parliament and the husband of renowned activist and Nobel laureate, Wangari Mathai (1940-2011), called the bishop “a man of integrity and compassion as well as a true man of God.”⁴⁴ The Honorable Mr. Justice Mulli, a senior judge of the federal court of Kenya, also spoke at the funeral and gave a “20-25 minute tirade against” the mission in which he outlined “Mulwa’s 30-year war with the Africa Inland Mission,” although church leaders afterwards apologized to the mission for his outburst.⁴⁵

John Gatui will be fondly remembered for his call to strengthen the church in East Africa by calling for a moratorium on Western missions and urging the church become self-sufficient, using the Swahili word *Jitigemea* (self-sufficiency). Mulwa will be remembered as someone who courageously “moved the church forward” by working in partnership with the Western missionaries, in spite of his many critics.⁴⁶ The bishop succeeded in giving the AIC a permanent seat of power in the nation’s capital and in raising the profile of the church as one of the most powerful denominations in Kenya during a period of significant numerical growth. He helped the AIC retain its conservative Evangelical

⁴² Confidential Report on February 14, 1980 by Peter Stam, BGC Archives (Wheaton).

⁴³ Gideon Mulaki, “The Late Bishop Wellington Mulwa.” *The East African Standard*, November 26, 1979.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Confidential Report on February 14, 1980 by Peter Stam, BGC Archives (Wheaton).

⁴⁶ The contrasting approaches of Gatui and Mulwa deserve continued consideration by mission strategists in the new era of World Christianity (see fn. 23).

convictions (contrary to the concern of some missionaries) while rejecting extreme views on ecclesiastical separation. He effectively developed a global network for the church that extended beyond the AIM community for the purpose of evangelism and social work in Kenya. He welcomed AIM missionaries in order to strengthen the church, though he held them accountable to work under the authority of African leadership. Mulwa used Kenya's national motto, *Harambee* (pull together), believing that the church in Kenya could accomplish more in partnership with the Western church. In 1979, the British edition of *Inland Africa* called Mulwa a leader who "stressed the need for continued missionary activity" though he was "strong against any kind of expatriate control in church affairs."⁴⁷ While some members of the AIM community rejoiced over Mulwa's death in 1979 seeing in it the sovereign hand of God, other missionaries, along with civic and church leaders in Kenya, eulogized him as a tireless worker who died fighting for an African-led, Evangelical church in Kenya.

F. Lionel Young III

This article, received in 2018, was written by F. Lionel Young III (PhD, University of Stirling), senior pastor of Calvary Church in Valparaiso, Indiana and research associate at the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide.

⁴⁷ Maurice Wheatley, "Bishop Wellington Mulwa: The Africa Inland Mission mourns its loss," *Inland Africa* (British), [February-March 1980], 10-11.

African Retrospect and Prospect: A View from Kenya

Interview with Prof. Dr. Jesse Mugambi⁴⁸

What was unique about your community and your home/family where you were born and experienced your first awareness of being someone from somewhere?

I was born on February 6, 1947, in the British Crown Colony of Kenya, on the “Native Reserve” called Embu, south of Mount Kenya. We were “tenants at the will of the crown” on the land of our ancestors that we had occupied for generations.⁴⁹ I was the second child, after my sister who was six years older. My mother, father, sister and I were part of a close-knit community of likeminded families. They were Anglican, evangelized by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The mission station was located across the river. I was baptized as an infant and received the biblical name Jesse. My paternal grandparents lived nearby. They were not Christians, but they were very strict adherents of the norms and values of our cultural and religious heritage.

Can you comment on key factors in the formation of your character and

⁴⁸ **NOTE:** Jesse N.K. Mugambi: B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (Nairobi); Fellow of the Kenya National Academy of Sciences (FKNAS), Elder of the Order of the Burning Spear (EBS); is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi, in Kenya. His specializations include Philosophy of Religion; Phenomenology of Religion; Applied Ethics; Communication Policy and Planning; Religion and Ecology; Comparative Study of Religions; African Religion and Culture; Ecumenical Studies; History of Christianity; Contemporary Christian Theology; African Christian Theology. His publication profile stretches across this range of specializations. He has spent most of his life in his country, Kenya, where he was born, brought up and educated, with a few short stints in Canada, Denmark, South Africa, UK, and USA. He is a passionate ecumenist and ecologist; and a committed lay Anglican. In addition to academic duties, he is a senior consultant in higher education; ecumenical relations; interfaith relations; applied ethics; ecology; multi-media communication. With his wife Elizabeth they have two daughters, four sons, three daughters-in-law, one son-in-law. They are an integral part of this biographical sketch.

⁴⁹ Okoth-Ogendo, H.W.O., *Tenants of the Crown: The Evolution of Agrarian Law and Policy in Kenya* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 1991); also in *University of Nairobi Law Journal*, Vol 1, 2003, p. 110.

your intellect?

At a very early age, I got a taste of three worldviews. First, I acquired an African Christian worldview through my parents and neighbors, and also through weekly church attendance. Second, I became acquainted with the missionary worldview at the CMS mission station, Kigari, where the church was located. It seemed like a totally different world. The trees and flowers were exotic; the buildings were walled with stone, and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. The mission station consisted of the church, a teacher training college, a dispensary, and the missionary residence quarter. Third, I learned about the traditional African worldview from my grandparents and uncles and aunts. I was very close to my paternal grandmother and grandfather with whom I stayed while my parents were at work. My grandparents taught me about the traditions, norms, and values of our community. These three seemingly disparate orientations to life remain integral to my self-awareness and are inseparable. I internalized an integrated worldview from very early in my upbringing.

Who were two or three of the men and women who, as you look back now, exerted a profound impact on who you became and what you did?

My mother was a very wise and hardworking lady, and a strict disciplinarian. She was very resourceful and exceptionally intelligent, despite having very little school learning. She was a no-nonsense lady, and was furious if my sister and I misbehaved. She did not beat us but she would vehemently scold and warn us not to behave stupidly. My father was conscripted for the Second World War and sent to Burma, Ceylon, and India in 1941 leaving my mother with a baby daughter—my elder sister. Our mother was a steadfast woman of great faith. She prayed and waited for the return of her husband, trusting in God. She never talked about these difficult years—at least not in front of us. My godparents helped me to remain focused. They seemed more interested in the development of my personality than my parents. In my view, they were exemplary as godparents. My paternal grandparents were very instrumental in teaching me moral integrity at a very early age. They helped me to internalize the positive and constructive elements of the African cultural and religious heritage. They helped me to discern and reject the irresponsible behavior I witnessed among my relatives and their friends—such as alcohol abuse. My maternal grandparents also taught me many valuable principles. My maternal grandfather was a conscript of the British Carrier Corps during the First World War (1914-

18) in Tanganyika. He later earned a living smelting iron and doing metalwork. I loved visiting his workshop. My Sunday School teacher was a very charming and cheerful lady who, like her mentor missionary Edith H. M. Wiseman, remained a spinster.⁵⁰ She was like a second mother to me. Every time she came home we would bust into singing Sunday school songs—even in her old age!

How was it you became not only a Christian but a Christian intellectual and ecumenical leader?

At the end of 1952, the British Colonial Administration declared a state of emergency throughout Central Kenya. All British subjects in those areas were forced to live in “protected villages”—a euphemism for concentration camps. Each of the camps was surrounded with a deep trench, too wide for anyone to jump across, filled with sharp spikes and guarded by a drawbridge. It was dug through forced labor. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was vigorously enforced. From 1953 until 1962, we lived in these terrible camps.⁵¹ It was during this very unstable period that I started school in 1954 at the mission station that had been converted into a military base. It also served as a temporary settlement for a few families, including ours.

We were relocated seven times under these terrible conditions. Deforestation was one of the devastating ecological impacts of these concentration camps, owing to the great demand for building materials.⁵² In 1957, I was moved to another school for Class Four, where I sat for the Common Entrance Examination. This was a very difficult examination the purpose of which was to limit the number of African pupils entering the few available intermediate schools. I was fortunate enough to pass on my first attempt.

⁵⁰ Edith H. M. Wiseman, *Kikuyu Martyrs* (London, Highway Press, 1958).

⁵¹ The best depiction of these concentration camps is in murals painted in the Anglican All Martyrs Church, Muranga, Central Kenya, by Elimo Njau, the famous Tanzanian Artist. See Harold F. Miller, *The Murang'a Murals* (Nairobi, Kenya: N.pub., 2014). See Amazon link at <https://www.amazon.com/Muranga-Murals-Harold-F-Miller/dp/1502942216>.

⁵² David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005).

Were there particular incidents in your boyhood that stand out as particularly formative in shaping the man that you became?

My earliest theological reflection is still fresh in my consciousness. I remember seeing lorries packed with still bleeding corpses in front of the mansion of the resident missionary. Next to them was a long white truck from the Bible Society that was used for distributing Bibles and pamphlets in African languages. On both sides of the truck, painted in red, were the words *Mwoyo Mweru Thiini wa Jesu Kristo*, meaning “New Life in Jesus Christ.” It is difficult for me to elaborate on the deep theological meaning of this scene in a few words. The Bible Society was promising new life in Jesus Christ. Supposedly, the souls of these dead Africans had gone to hell. In front of the church, there was the cemetery. A few African martyrs were buried there. As children, we watched from a distance, in silence. But my mind could not rest with these memories.

On Christmas Day 1955, the resident missionary organized a Christmas party for children. He announced that Father Christmas would be visiting us. That was my first time hearing of Father Christmas. Being curious, I wondered how he would travel and where he would come from. However, it turned out that Father Christmas was the missionary himself. While this Christmas ritual was part of the foreign culture of children in Europe and North America, to us it felt deceptive. Father Christmas was the missionary in disguise. But, despite the disguise, we ate the sweets!⁵³

So how did you become a Christian intellectual—professor, author, and ecumenical leader?

I was introduced to contemporary Christian theology in 1968 while a student at Kenyatta College, Nairobi. Ronald Frederick Dain, an Anglican missionary and ecumenist who had spent ten years in Sierra Leone, introduced us to contemporary European theologians— especially those who had written on ecumenical themes. He also encouraged us to read works by African Christian theologians, notably those of John S. Mbiti. The research I conducted on the “Traditional Religion of the Embu People” was later published in *Dini na Mila*

⁵³ <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2005/15-july/features/michael-lapage-fleet-air-arm-pilot-rowing-silver-medallist-in-the-1948-british-olympics-and-missionary-teacher-in-kenya>

(Vol. 5 No.1), of which Mbiti was the editor. Its focus was to relate the African heritage with the Christian Faith. I was very fortunate to receive a typed critical comment from Professor S. Mbiti, long before we met.

I spent the 1969-1970 academic year in Birmingham, UK, at the Westhill College of Education, Selly Oak. While there I read as much as I could find on the famous European and North American theologians— such as Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, Harvey Cox, John Hick, Paul Tillich, and the Niebuhr brothers. I also spent several weeks perusing the archives of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) on Waterloo Road, London. This was a very useful sojourn, during which my theological awareness crystallized. Upon returning to Kenya, I became fully involved in teaching and ecumenical networks that have remained integral to my vocation as a teacher, scholar, author, and ecumenist. Some of the ecumenists I have appreciated are, among others, Paul Abrecht, Jose Miguez Bonino, Gustavo Gutierrez, James Gustafson, Kosuke Koyama, Jürgen Moltmann, Leslie Newbigin, Phillip Potter, Choan-Sen Song, and Jean-Marie Tillard.

In 1971, I was in the first cohort of students to join the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi, which has remained my institutional point of reference. I have served there as an administrator in addition to my roles as a lecturer, researcher, published author, and mentor—both nationally and globally. I focused on contemporary religious thought with particular reference to ecumenical relations and applied ethics. For my masters' thesis, I researched the missionary factor in East African Christianity. For my doctoral thesis, I wrote on problems of meaning in discourse with particular reference to religion—taking my cue from Ludwig Wittgenstein. The philosophers I have most appreciated are Bertrand Russell, Frederick Copleston, and Georg Henrik von Wright. African philosophers with whom I resonate include Henry Odera Oruka, Cheik Anta Diop, Kwasi Wiredu, and V. Y. Mudimbe—among others.

My ecumenical exposure came from involvement in the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), the Christian Churches Education Association of Kenya (CCEA), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). I also interacted with Catholic leadership through the Kenya Catholic Secretariat and the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA). Prominent African scholars I have known include

Kwame Bediako, Benezet Bujo, Bolaji Idowu, Ogbu Kalu, Samuel G. Kibicho, John Mbiti, Laurenti Magesa, and Mercy Oduyoye, among others. The list is long! The Catholic missionaries from whom I learned a great deal include Fr. Joseph G. Donders (my Supervisor), WF; Joseph G. Healey, MM; and Sr. Janice McLaughlin, MM, among others. Senior Protestant missionaries include Professor Jonathan Bonk, Bishop (Professor) Stephen Neill, Fr. Cecil McGarry, SJ; and Prof. Andrew Walls.⁵⁴

Could you share your perspective on various world and African affairs over the years? As you look at the continent of Africa in the decades following the official departure of colonial governments, are you able to offer some general impressions on what you have observed? Are you generally positive or negative about the future of the continent? Please explain.

General Impressions: There are indications that Africa's prosperity is increasing, even though the media may paint a different picture. One of the most worrying trends, however, is the competition for the African soul, perpetrated by new missionary initiatives to a continent that is statistically more "Christian" than Europe and North America. These new initiatives are more distractive than progressive. Young Africans who happen to be emotively attracted by these initiatives soon abandon these "ministries" and return to the older denominations to which their parents and grandparents belonged. By then, the jet-set new-age missionaries have returned home to lavish retirement.⁵⁵

It has been a mistake to compare Africa with the United States or with Europe because these comparisons are ideological. Ideology tends to distort facts rather than offer a balanced picture. The Sahara Desert alone makes up 9.2 million km², comparable to China (9.597 million km²) or the United States (9.834 million km²). All of Africa is more than three times bigger (30.37 million km²) than that of the U.S. Demographically, Africa's population of 1.28 billion is four times that of the U.S. (325.7 million). The natural ecology of Africa, if well managed, is much more productive than that of the U.S.

⁵⁴ The entire list would take many pages. I am indebted to many scholars from across the world, who have broadened my imagination and challenged me to think beyond the prescribed confines of thought and action.

⁵⁵ On this point see, for example, Jonathan Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem—Revisited* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006).

Civilizations rise and fall. Economic theorists have taught that nations with huge populations and high percentages of low-income earners cannot effectively participate in the global economy. What of China and India, with their huge populations? Considering these inconsistencies, the argument that Africa will remain an underdog forever is not convincing. On the contrary, it seems more realistic that Africa's prosperity will continue to grow. Africa features positively in canonical biblical texts as well as in the early church. The negative profiling of Africa was a convenient ploy of the European Renaissance. In the thirteenth century, the largest university in the world was Timbuktu, in Central Africa. It was an African university, not an Arab one, even though it was Islamic.⁵⁶ But Renaissance scholarship completely overlooked this fact, in the same way that African initiatives are trivialized today.

China has been hard at work on building infrastructure across Africa, including Kenya. How would you compare China's approach and its outcomes to those of the United States, in the days when they were a major presence and influence on the continent?

Kenya-China Relations: The foreign relations policy of Kenya, as presupposed in the national anthem, is that Kenya aspires to be a friend of all nations and an enemy of none. Having been a crown colony of Britain, Kenya expected to remain within the ambit of the British Commonwealth. It was in the interest of Britain to compensate Kenya for the gross abuse of Kenyans before, during, and after the two World Wars. Britain and her allies could also have invested in the country's infrastructure so that Kenya might remain one of the core nations of the Commonwealth. Instead, the infrastructure declined until China came along and within a short time did what could have been accomplished in fifty years. The question of loans has been raised. Did Western countries invest in Africa for free?

There are now direct Kenya Airways flights to China, used by young Kenyans wishing to shop abroad. Starting in October 28, 2018, there will be direct Kenya Airways flights from Nairobi to New York. Why so late? Well, better late than never!

⁵⁶ On this point, see Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

In October 2017, I addressed a group of Chinese Christian entrepreneurs who were exploring possibilities for investment in Kenya. My task was to provide a logical basis for such engagement. I chose to focus on the fact that Chinese and Kenyans are relatives, not only at the business level, but also at the genetic level. We communicated through interpreters because they could not speak English and I could not speak Chinese. It was a very interesting experience. They gave me copy of the Bible in Chinese, and I gave them a set of books from the Acton Publishers catalogue.

How would you assess the Church across Africa? According to commonly cited statistics from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, in 1910, only 9% of Africa’s population was Christian, and 80% of Christians lived in just four countries: Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, and Madagascar. According to this source, by 1970, Africa’s Christian percentage had risen to 38.7%, many of whom were converts from religions indigenous to sub-Saharan Africa. By 2020, the percentage of Africans who self-identify as “Christian” is expected to reach 49.3%. What do you make of such numbers, and what is their significance for the continent?

Statistics can be misleading— sometimes deliberately. Of what use are these statistics without probing not only the *quantitative* demographic indicators but also the *qualitative* self-definition of those who claim to be Christians? In Africa, self-identification with a particular denomination remains an outward indicator of status rather than an expression of self-definition. Changing denominational membership in Tropical Africa is like changing uniforms when a player joins a different team. That is why we see frequent church hopping, especially among the youth.

There is great difference in the *quality* of Christianity during post-colonial Africa, in contrast with the colonial period. Joining a church today is a matter of taste or preference— largely influenced by the power of advertisement and competition. During the colonial period, it was a great risk for an African to identify with Christianity. Church membership today has become a label indicating social class among other considerations. Some churches are already identified with particular political or economic interests. This trend is becoming increasingly normative. The statistics in the Pew Research and the *World Christian Encyclopedia* do not take into consideration the qualitative aspects of their random surveys. In Tropical Africa, church membership has become more

a matter of taste than a costly choice. Nominal church membership in Africa will decline as other more attractive options emerge. Fewer church leaders, clerical or lay, are willing to voice public criticisms on political and economic issues. Instead, many church leaders invite politicians and investors to church functions, in return for patronage—financial or otherwise. Congregations with the kind of faith commitment that I witnessed when I was a child are few and far between.

As an African leader who has been active in church, society and academy, what role does or should Christianity play in contributing to the common good of societies and social institutions across the continent? Is there a place for foreign missionaries—either those who come to African nations from elsewhere, or those who go from African nations to somewhere else? Explain.

There are at least two aspects to this question or two separate questions.

The role of the Church in politics. During the colonial era, both church and politics were identified with colonial rule, or more broadly, with empire. African Independent Churches (AICs) emerged as alternatives for Africans who appreciated Christianity but would not accept the missionary version associated with the oppressive imperial regime. The “established churches” viewed independent churches as enemies. The colonial state prosecuted some AIC leaders as criminals. Conversely, leaders of missionary churches were considered the symbolic representatives of the status quo.

Responsible leadership. Within churches, there are leaders who focus on the glamor of the position rather than the vocation of church responsibility. The process of choosing church leadership is becoming increasingly politicized and commercialized. In Kenya, there are many petitions in court challenging the election of bishops. This is a sign of churches in decline— on the entire ecclesiastical spectrum.

Lay leadership versus clerical leadership. People need to be educated on the meaning of *vocation* in the Church so that in ordination, for example, the focus is not on the *regalia* but on the *responsibilities* of the office.

The Church as torchbearer. The Church, understood as an exemplary community, ought to be the beacon that can offer viable alternatives to corruption, inefficiency and apathy- with humility. As St. Paul says in Romans 12, we are not called to conform to the world but to transform it. This is a long-term and challenging task.

The role of churches for the common good of social institutions. Churches

have a unique opportunity to become exemplary role models for social reconstruction. Two examples come to mind. When private assets were being nationalized in Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, one Lutheran diocese requested that the state release assets to them— assets they then managed as the corporate owner. That diocese became a role model that remains unique in Tanzania and in the whole continent of Africa. The diocese owns and manages the best college of accountancy, one of the best hospitals in Tanzania, and one of the best tourist hotels. The diocese runs schools, has its own vineyard from which make wine for ritual use, builds its church organs, and runs a bus service—all for the common good. With this approach, local Christians are highly motivated to work hard, and by so doing, to contribute more for supplementing what the diocese itself has earned from its operations in the service of society. Four doctoral theses have been written on this theme under my supervision.

The role of foreign personnel. “Mission” is not a religious term. It is used more frequently in diplomacy and military operations than in religion. There is no difference between the “missionaries” based in the embassy and those based in a church, school, hospital, farm or factory. All of them are part of foreign missions abroad. Can anyone honestly serve God as a religious missionary and act against the national interests of his country? If so, what happens when the missionary’s actions go against the best interests of the people he is serving? Such service cannot be consistent with the Gospel. But if the missionary chooses to act in the best interests of the community rather than those of the embassy, then those actions are treasonable.

In practice, no country lacks qualified personnel for work at the level of local communities. These individuals should be trained and encouraged to work on the task at hand, as cost-effectively as possible. Funds available to enhance church work abroad achieve much more if they are disbursed for reconstructive work at the points of need, rather than to enrich local or foreign personnel. There is much abuse in the disbursement of mission funds— especially those that are tax deductible. When Moderator John G. Gatu delivered his address on the missionary moratorium in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1971, he touched a sensitive nerve in mission theory and practice. Yet he was firm in his argument for African autonomy, and he proved his case by raising resources to accomplish projects with local means and expertise. Missionary complementation of local efforts is worthwhile but the ownership of all projects must be under the host community or institution.

The role of local churches and communities in social reconstruction. These entities should follow the crucial principle of *partnership* rather than *patronage*. Partnership is biblical, whereas patronage is imperialistic. St. Paul insisted on partnership and shunned patronage. So did Jesus throughout his public ministry. There are role models in the history of missions, both Protestant and Catholic.

The Three-Self Principle. In Protestant circles, Henry Venn’s “Three-Self Principle” is helpful (1842), as is Roland Allen’s book *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?*⁵⁷ In Catholic circles, the missionary work of Matteo Ricci in China and that of Roberto de Nobili in India are noteworthy.⁵⁸ It is amazing what local communities can achieve with local resources, when they are motivated! Motivation is what the Gospel is about— not discouragement and condescendence. This insight was the core of John Gatu’s moratorium agenda. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (another of my mentors) also cherished this principle.

As an Anglican, what do you see as the strengths, weaknesses and prospects of the Anglican Church in your region and across the continent? What is your impression of the larger Anglican Communion, riven in the West, at least, by cultural debates and diminished as a social presence by sharply declining membership?

The Anglican Communion. The crisis in the Anglican Communion indicates that Europe is no longer the center of gravity of Anglicanism. According to the Pew Foundation (2010), more than eighty per cent of Anglicans are in countries other than Australia, Britain, New Zealand, and North America. Instead they live in countries formerly under British imperial rule, namely Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Tanzania. It is the task and responsibility of contextually trained African theologians to articulate the textual, contextual, and cultural implications of this massive demographic shift. My publications on theologies of

⁵⁷ Venn taught that missionaries should establish local churches that were self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

⁵⁸ See the books on these missionaries, authored by Vincent Cronin, 1924-2011: *The Wise Man from the West : Matteo Ricci and his Mission to China* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2016) and *A Pearl to India: The Life of Roberto de Nobili* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966).

liberation and reconstruction reflect this concern.

Crisis in the Anglican Communion. Since 1998, the Anglican Communion has been in an unprecedented crisis. The crisis began more than a century earlier sparked by decisions of two European missionaries in Tropical Africa in the 1860s. It was partly the outcome of controversial decisions by Bishop John William Colenso in Natal, South Africa, and Bishop William Vincent Lucas in Masasi, Tanganyika, East Africa. The two contexts were similar, and the responses from London were consistent but at variance with the situation in the two African dioceses. The issue at stake was the contextual reading, interpretation, and application of Scripture in culture-specific situations. Controversy arose between these bishops and fellow missionaries. In the Lambeth conference of 1888 an African Bishop proposed a motion on marriage, which was defeated. It was raised again in 1988, and the results reflected demographic change in the Anglican Communion. Church hierarchy is made of human individuals, from specific cultures— not angels.

The crisis in the Anglican Communion arises from the fact that the demographic shift in membership—from the North to the South—has not been in tandem with decision-making prerogatives. Patronage still reigns, instead of partnership. This crisis might trigger the disintegration of global Anglicanism.⁵⁹

What role does or can African Christianity play globally, through its missionary activities, yes, but especially through the African diaspora to every continent on the planet (with the exception of Antarctica)?

Christianity is “African” only to the extent that it is culturally, ontologically, conceptually, and pragmatically “contextual.” Outreach of African churches to other regions outside Africa is desirable, but it can take off only when African nations become global actors, influencing other nations in all six pillars of culture—politics and economics; ethics and aesthetics; religion and kinship. The decline of religiosity in Europe and North America may trigger initiatives for outward-bound missions from Africa. The African diaspora at the beginning of the twenty-first century has yet to become a norm-setting factor abroad. There are indications that this is possible, in view of the success of Sunday Adalaja in Kiev, Ukraine; Solomon Waigwa in Texas; and the mega-churches of London,

⁵⁹ On this point, see David M. Gitari, *Responsible Church Leadership* (Nairobi: Acton, 2005).

UK. The concept of “reverse mission” is conceptually risky because it smacks of “revenge” or “compensation.” Reactionary initiatives are counter-productive.

Do you think Christians and Muslims can continue to live and work together relatively peacefully and constructively in Tropical Africa? Explain.

African Christians and African Muslims actually live and work together relatively peacefully and constructively in Tropical Africa. The most interesting and most enjoyable class I taught at the Masters’ level at the University of Nairobi was in 2013. Among the eight students, half were Muslims and half were Christians. There were men and women, priests, imams, and lay people. It was great fun. We discovered that all scripture-based religions are structurally the same, and face similar challenges! There are many non-Muslim working in predominantly Muslim nations, without a problem, just as there are Muslim populations in predominantly Christian parts of Africa. The cardinal principle is to observe the rules of engagement, avoiding external ideological propaganda. Trouble erupts when politicians and business interests exploit religion to cause civil strife. It is possible to reverse the equation and use social differentiation constructively rather than destructively. Differentiated societies are more human and humane than homogeneous ones that are stale and boring!

Could you comment on the challenges of publishing on the continent? What do you see as the future of theological publishing?

African culture is primarily oral, symbolic, and relational. Western Culture is primarily literary. Too few Africans, even among the elite, are willing to spend much time reading and writing. Most of the African elite read and write only to earn academic and professional qualifications. Consequently, few African authors will ever see their books become bestsellers. Most Africans do not know about the core provisions of the 1948 Berne Convention on Intellectual Property. So they take the easier option of offering their manuscripts for publication abroad without realizing that it will be impossible to retrieve them.

All my works have been published in Kenya, except one. Publishing is a specialized undertaking, requiring a very wide range of expertise and huge investment. Returns on that investment are often hard to recoup. So it is very fortunate for an author when resources are allocated for the first edition of an important book. My humble joy is that my published books have made a significant impact on many people in Africa and abroad. There are several

dissertations and theses on my published work. For that response, I am grateful to God who sustains my motivation. Two Festschriften have been published, containing tens of responses to my published works. I am also grateful to many mentors, friends, colleagues, and family members who have continually encouraged me, even in the face of great difficulties and challenges.

What are your deepest wishes for Africa of the future?

My deepest wish for Africa and Africans is that we should appreciate all the divine endowments bestowed upon this continent. Africa has all the climates in the world, all the vegetation species in the world, and the greatest biodiversity in the world. These positive facts are underplayed, while the negative ones are overplayed. I wish that the truth would shine over lies and that light would shine over darkness!

You have been a member of the Advisory Council of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* for several years now. Why, in your opinion, is this project important? Why and how should Africans be engaged with the DACB?

The *Dictionary of African Christian Biography (DACB)* is important because it is the first systematic attempt at documenting African biographies. We may not know what future generations will do with this knowledge, but at least it will be available. My hope is that the depository of the *DACB* will be located in Africa, much sooner rather than later. On this point, I would like further consultation, to explore more options than those that are currently available.

**Interview conducted by Jonathan Bonk
May 9, 2018**

Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Niringiye, David Zac. **The Church in the World: A Historical-Ecclesiological Study of the Church of Uganda with Particular Reference to Post-Independence Uganda, 1962-1992** Langham Monographs, 2016. \$23.24.

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

ISBN: 978-1783681198

Description:

Historically, studies of the church in Africa have tended to focus on church history or church-state relations, but in this publication David Zac Niringiye presents a study of the Church of Uganda focused on its ecclesiology. Niringiye examines several formative periods for the Church of Uganda during concurrent chronological political eras characterized by varying degrees of socio-political turbulence, highlighting how the social context impacted the church's self-expression. The author's methodology and insight sets this work apart as an excellent reflection on the Ugandan church and brings scholarly attention to previously ignored topics that hold great value to society, the church, and the academic community globally. ([Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

Wright, Marcia. **German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands** (Oxford studies in African affairs).

Clarendon Press, 1971. \$40.37. [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [AbeBooks.com](https://www.abebooks.com)

ISBN: 978-0198216650

Description:

Based on a PhD thesis, this 1971 publication delves into mission archives held in Tanzania, Germany. At the time of publication, this was one of few works in English that focused on German missions. The author addresses the politics of mission expansion before and after colonization as well as the interactions between African societies and the German missionaries.

Dissertations

Lubawa, Richard Mathew. **The missing link: indigenous agents in the development of the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Church of Tanzania (ELCT) 1899-1999.** University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Thesis (Ph.D.) 2002.

URI: <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/3438>

Abstract.

Traditionally, the history of Christianity has been written from a white, missionary perspective and in many ways it has portrayed them as the heroes of Africa. Such information has neglected the hard work of their African counterparts, many of who interpreted and organized evangelistic meetings among the indigenous people. Its history has primarily reflected the opinions and interests of Western missionaries. The white missionaries' information relied almost exclusively on written sources. The missing link: Indigenous agents in the development of the Iringa diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (1899-1999) tries to recover the silenced voices of the Christian people particularly the men and women who played a crucial role in the development of the church in the Iringa diocese. The study has attempted to give an historic account of the recovering of the African perspective and counterbalance a presentation dominated by a missionary perspective and bringing to a fore all the actors by drawing attention to the role and importance of the African agents in the development of the church. In this study, oral history methodology has been used in analyzing and interpreting the history of the Iringa diocese from an African perspective, while at the same time bringing into focus the indigenous actors: teachers, evangelists, women and youth. There would have been a serious gap in Christian knowledge if such information were not available. The study has established that from the inception of the planting of the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese in 1899 the missionaries, Tanzanian clergy, and agents worked with determination for the church to take root. From that time, the church gradually expanded by way of increase in the number of stations and converts. What cannot be ignored is the fact the indigenous agents were instrumental in the planting and consolidation of the gains of the Lutheran church in the Iringa diocese in Tanzania. The determination of the "fathers" to inject Christianity in Tanzania, has been continued by the generations after them. From the foregoing,

the point that Africans have always heard the gospel principally from other Africans in Africa should not be belabored.

Young, F Lionel. **The Transition from the Africa Inland Mission to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, 1939-1975.** University of Stirling, Thesis (Ph.D.) 2017.


URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1893/25975>

Abstract:

This thesis examines the relationship between the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) and the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Kenya between 1939 and 1975. AIM began laying plans for an African denomination in Kenya in 1939 and established the Africa Inland Church in 1943. The mission did not clearly define the nature of its relationship with the church it founded. The arrangement was informal, and evolved over time. In addition, the relationship between the AIM and the AIC between 1939 and 1975 was often troubled. African independent churches were formed in the 1940s because of dissatisfaction over AIM policies. The mission opposed devolution in the 1950s, even when other mission societies were following this policy in preparation for independence in Kenya. AIM continued to resist a mission church merger in the 1960s and did not hand over properties and powers to the church until 1971.

The study focuses on how the mission's relationship with the church it founded evolved during this period. It considers how mission principles and policies created tension in the relationship with the church it founded. First, it examines how mission policy contributed to significant schisms in the 1940s, giving rise to African independent churches. Second, it looks at how AIM interpreted and responded to post-war religious, political and social changes in Kenya. Third, it explores the reasons for AIM's rejection of a proposed mission-church merger in the late 1950s. Fourth, this study investigates mission motives for resisting increased African pressure for devolution after independence in Kenya even while it helped establish the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar. Fifth, it considers what happened to the mission and the church in the aftermath of a merger in 1971.

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