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Africa: The Developing Continent

An AJET Editorial

During the last few months I have been sorting through papers that have accumulated over 36 years of ministry in Kenya. Many have been thrown away, some given to friends and others packed to be taken back to the United States for our retirement which is planned within a few months. This process has led to many reflections over the development that has taken place in Kenya (and Africa) during the span of 36 years.

What has impressed me is the extent to which education has developed, including theological education. While one may read depressing reports of abject poverty, disease, corruption, war and civil strife, theological education has developed dramatically.

In 1963, when Kenya became an independent nation, there was only a handful of secondary schools in the whole nation. No Kenyan university existed. When Scott was founded in 1962 one aspiration was to have a degree level course offered through London Bible College in England. But this failed to materialise due to lack of qualified students. In fact, the entrance level for Scott until 1974 was completion of Primary School plus two years of secondary, or the equivalent. In practice, we accepted numerous students who only completed Primary School and then went on to a Bible School before entering Scott.

This low level of education throughout the nation was reflected in the inability of Scott to recruit any qualified Kenyans to teach for the first sixteen years. Though the desire to recruit Kenyans was not lacking, the availability of qualified teachers was not there.

With independence came the formation of hundreds of secondary schools with thousands of students aspiring for university education. These numbers have grown dramatically over the years.

Today we not only have in Kenya *five* state universities but an additional *five* chartered private universities and nearly *ten* institutions striving to attain that status. Not only is Scott training 103 students for the Bachelor of Theology degree today, ten other institutions also offer a B.Th. Neither is theological education in Kenya restricted to the first degree but various institutions offer master's degrees, including the Nairobi International School of Theology and the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. *The Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa* (ACTEA), formed by the Association of Evangelicals of Africa in 1976, is accrediting more and more institutions throughout Africa with 170 institutions affiliated with ACTEA. The growing number of university qualified students emerging from our secondary schools is providing a growing pool of prospective students for higher theological institutions.

Hence, we approach retirement with a deep sense of gratitude and praise to God because He is raising up Africans to assume leadership in all areas of the church and society. The landscape of leadership in Africa has been transformed completely.

A careful reading of this issue of AJET will demonstrate once again the development of theological reflection taking place.

Check the first article on *African Theology: Its History, Dynamics, Scope and Future* by Paul Bowers which demonstrates the rapid growth of theological reflection in Africa. *Witchcraft* by Samuel Waje Kunhiyop is a penetrating analysis of this persistent problem from an evangelical perspective. *Contextualizing Jesus: "The Only Mediator" for the Sukuma People of Tanzania* is a reflection by Fabian Maganda on his own peoples' religious beliefs in the light of biblical teaching. *Elisha's Unbearable Curse* is a biblical study of the Hebrew text by Mark Mercer with application to the African beliefs in the power of the curse. In addition to book reviews we provide a Review Article by Andrew Wildsmith on *Cultural Exegesis*.

May God continue to build his Church in Africa and strengthen all efforts, including *AJET*, to teach and apply the Word of God to his people. May God send a great revival upon his Church.

Even so come Lord Jesus. Maranatha.