



Expanding Christ's Kingdom in Kenya ... and beyond

31 March 2023

Dear Friends,

One of the most familiar passages of Scripture for many of us is Romans 10.14–15:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

(NIV-1984)

Sometimes Ruth and I are the ones doing the preaching. (See the “[Back to the Bush!](#)” section below.) Typically, though, we are training and equipping those who will do the preaching, or training and equipping the teachers of such preachers. What we used to do at the grassroots we are now doing more frequently at the level of the branches, which gives our work a broader impact.

AFRICAN HOMILETICS SOCIETY

Speaking of preaching, I (Joshua) have been pleased to be active in the newly formed **African Homiletics Society** (AHS). “Homiletics” is the study, teaching, and practice of effective preaching. Many of you will remember our *Eating the Word of God* book (published in Maa, kiSwahili, and NgaTurkana); large portions of that text deal with practical homiletics. Last year, my friend Ezekiel Ajibade, a professor of preaching at an ACTEA-accredited seminary in Nigeria, organized an African Homiletics Group on WhatsApp. It has since grown into the new formal society, which is a group for trained homileticians and teachers of Preaching/Homiletics to collaborate on the task of strengthening biblical preaching in Africa.

AHS currently has 89 participants who meet monthly online from across the continent. The first annual AHS conference will be held in May in Nigeria, on the theme “[Biblical Preaching and African Realities](#),” and hosted by an ACTEA-accredited seminary. I will only be able to attend



Ezekiel Ajibade

virtually rather than in person, but I have been invited to give a presentation on “[Eating the Word of God: Ruminations on the Preparation and Practice of Preaching](#).” This will build on what Ruth and I have learned from the past sixteen years of implementation of our Eating the Word of God curriculum here in Kenya.



Joshua and Victor Bajah

Victor is beginning doctoral studies at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology; NEGST was one of the first two schools to be accredited by ACTEA.

One of my friends and colleagues is Victor Bajah of Nigeria. He is a graduate of another ACTEA-accredited seminary in Nigeria and one of the moderators of the [African Christian Theology](#) group that I co-founded in 2020 with my friend Wakakuholesanga Chisola of Zambia. We were chatting back in November when he mentioned that he had been talking with two of the Nigerian seminary professors who have been helping Ezekiel organize the AHS. One of them told Victor that “Joshua is one of the pillars of the project.” This feedback was very encouraging to hear!

RETHINKING PUBLIC WITNESS

Fuller Seminary and Langham Literature have been hosting some “ReThinking Church” study groups exploring various aspects of Christian life and practice. (Langham Literature was founded by evangelical biblical scholar John Stott; it provides quality study and teaching materials for the Majority World.) One of those groups is examining the public witness of the Church today — looking at what it is and considering what it should be. The ReThinking Public Witness group is producing an edited volume on this topic — chapters will cover topics including the Church’s response to corruption and to human trafficking, the Church’s public witness in universities, and the role of formal theological training (including Bible colleges). As ACTEA is a partnering organization, I was asked to serve as the writing coordinator for the project. In the different facets of public witness, I immediately noticed a glaring omission in the topics proposed to be covered. About five years ago, the issues of abuse in society at large entered public discourse around the motto #MeToo; this was soon followed by #ChurchToo discussions.

While abuse is certainly a societal problem, the Church has sadly not been immune. When brave women like Rachael Denhollander spoke out against systemic covering up of abuse by secular institutions, it was *Christian leaders* who came out of the woodwork to condemn and attack her, one of the victims. In recent years, scandals have brought to light what had long been hidden — at Sovereign Grace Churches, Hillsong, Willow Creek Community Church, Ravi Zacharias’s ministry, Kanakuk Kamps, among others. While most of the big stories covered in the international news have been on uncovered abuse in North America, Australia, and the UK, this is not a Western problem. Abuse is not limited to sexual abuse or other physical abuse but includes emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, and abuse of authority. Invariably, the Church’s response to abuse in her midst directly affects her public witness. When abuse and abusive sins are confronted and the abusers are held accountable and victims are given sanctuary and protection, the world sees that the Church is safe and that the Gospel really is good news. But when abuse is swept under the rug, ignored, or when abusers are protected while victims are condemned, then all the world sees that the Church is *not* safe and people easily conclude that the Gospel must be just hypocrisy and a sham. I believe that the way the Church responds to abuse or ignores it or enables it, or even participates in it!, is one of the biggest issues regarding the public witness of Christianity today. I made this case to the organizers of the project, and as a result Ruth and her friend Nyamatha Wanjirũ Gatere are co-writing a chapter on this topic.

BACK TO THE BUSH !



In January we were blessed to host the Penrod family from Northside Church of Christ in Richmond, Indiana. It was wonderful and we have seldom been so blessed. While they were here, we were able to visit three different Maasai congregations in the vicinity of Endoinyo Erinka, the village where we lived in 2007–08 when we first moved to Kenya. At the first one, Ruth and Christian Penrod co-preached, and our old friend and colleague James ole Sakat translated. At the third, a young under-the-tree congregation planted by Ruth’s Maasai mother Ng’oto Tiwai, Ruth brought the Word of God (in English, for the sake of the Penrods) and I translated for her.

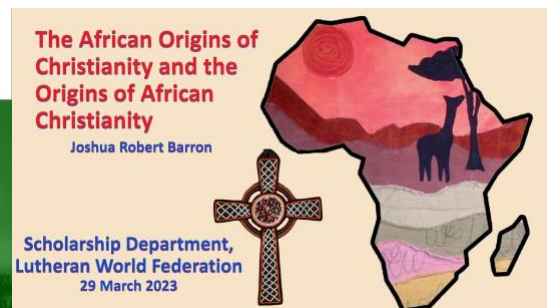
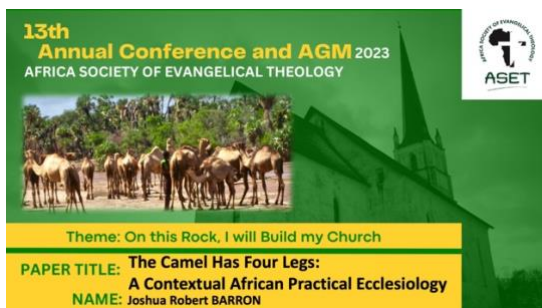


Ruth & James ole Sakat



Ruth & Ng’oto Tiwai

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA



We continue our work to strengthen ministerial training for African churches. Besides various mentoring roles and behind-the-scenes responsibilities, I still have opportunities to teach. So far this year I’ve been able to deliver a paper on ecclesiology (doctrine or theology of the nature of

the Church) and have lectured on “The African Origins of Christianity and the Origins of African Christianity,” refuting the myth that Christianity is the “white man’s religion” or something otherwise incompatible with being an African.

PRAY

- Give thanks that our travel expenses to visit America for Dad’s funeral last year were provided for;
- Give thanks for our continued Kingdom impact;
- For our family’s health;
- For God and God’s people to provide a sufficient level of support so we can continue in our work.

CONSIDER

- Whether you can partner with us financially (scroll down to see how) either as monthly support partners or with a one-time contribution to help offset our current deficit.

Thank you!

Mainosa ilomon! ... neaku taa lelo.

.....(Let’s chew the news! ... And that’s the way things are.)

grace and peace and thanks to you in our Lord Jesus,

Joshua & Ruth

joshua & ruth

with alitzah, hannahgail, eliana, zerachiah, ahaviah, & shalviah

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Mara South Cluster leadership workshop

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(a Maasai friend and former student)



Ntulele CCC

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