

Momentum

THE DICTIONARY OF
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN
BIOGRAPHY IS
GROWING ON
MULTIPLE FRONTS



NEW RESOURCE
LANGHAM PRESS
WORKS WITH DACB



EAST AND WEST
AFRICA
NEW INITIATIVES



STRENGTHENING THE
DACB
WAYS TO CONNECT

CCCM NEWS

Center for Global Christianity and Mission



Christian History and Biography

From March 20 to 24, DACB Executive Director Dr. Michèle Sigg and Dr. Anicka Fast (CGCM Visiting Researcher and BU alumna) taught a workshop entitled “Writing the History of the Church for Congolese Mennonites” at the Centre Universitaire de Missiologie (University Center for Missiology), an ecumenical, independent, and mission-

Sixteen students
were chosen to
write biographies
of the pioneers of
their churches

mind institution in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The workshop was designed to equip Congolese Mennonites to write biographies of the pioneers of their churches. The sixteen students—five women and eleven men, ranging in age from their early twenties to their



seventies—were carefully chosen from among forty applicants from the three Mennonite denominations in the DRC. Fast was the lead organizer because, as part of her work as an instructor in African Christian history with the Mennonite Mission Network, her goal is to train lay historians to produce historical resources for

Francophone Africa. She invited Sigg to team teach with her because they had already been collaborating in editing biographies from her classes for publication in the DACB. The workshop was sponsored by several ecumenical and Mennonite organizations including, among others, the CUM, the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, the Showalter Foundation, Mama Makeka House of Hope, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the DACB.

The intensive five-day program included lectures on global Christian history, Africa's ancient and medieval Christian history, and pre-colonial, colonial, and post colonial history in Africa, with focused units on Congolese history. There were practical sessions to develop skills in research methodology such as interviewing techniques, transcribing, as well as writing. The women students particularly appreciated the new insights they gained into the important roles of women in the growth, stability, and outreach initiatives of the church. Students and instructors alike left encouraged, having gained a greater sense of the global communion of the church.

New Resource



The students' biographies of Congolese Mennonites will appear in a volume published by Langham Press in their Global Perspectives series and co-edited by Anicka Fast and Michèle Sigg. This will be the first in what will hopefully be a *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* series of books showcasing biographies as primary sources for African Christian history curriculum that can be used throughout the continent of Africa. The volume will contain pedagogical resources on oral history research for educators who might use it in a classroom setting, and the book will be published in French and English to reach a broad audience.

Nigerian Christian Biography Conference



Nigeria National Consultation on African Christian Biographies, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta, March 2-3, 2023

The first Nigerian Consultation on African Christian Biographies was hosted by His Excellency, President Olusegun Obasanjo (DACB Council of Elders) at the Olusegun Obasanjo President Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria on March 2 and 3, 2023. The Consultation began with presentations by President Obasanjo; Dr. Michèle Sigg, Executive Director of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (DACB); and Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin, a member of the DACB Council of Elders. In his opening address, President Obasanjo underlined the importance of biographies noting that without biography, coming generations of African Church historians and their readers will be hard pressed to locate authentically the Africanness in the uniquely African story of Christianity across the continent. Thirty-two scholars in Christian Religious Studies, mainly full professors from universities in Nigeria attended, including several local chiefs, UNESCO Associate Experts, former Ambassadors, and three serving or former Vice-Chancellors.

— Adapted from the official communiqué of the consultation.

Kenyan Christian Biography Conference

In January 2023, Dr. Ferdinand Manjewa M’bwangi contacted DACB Executive Director Michèle Sigg to discuss the possibility of a collaboration between the DACB and his newly established research institute, the Diocese of Mombasa Research Institute (DoMRI). Founded by the Anglican Diocese of Mombasa, Kenya, DoMRI has an interdenominational team of researchers and a nine member Diocesan Research Institute Council (DRIC) that oversees its day-to-day operations under the auspices of the Diocesan Bishop. M’bwangi reported that “Members of the council were so excited to see this collaboration and forthcoming conference.”(email 5/30) After a Zoom meeting on May 4 to discuss details, the DoMRI council decided to move forward with the organization of a “Kenyan Christian Biography Conference” to be held in late 2023 at ACK Mombasa Memorial Cathedral. They have already retained Professor Esther Mombo, former Deputy Vice Chancellor at St. Paul's University in Limuru Kenya as their keynote speaker.

New Features on DACB

Thanks to the work of Jiaye Liu, a BU graduate in data science and software engineering who volunteered her time in Spring 2023, the DACB website now boasts new designs on several

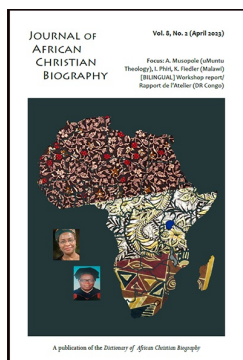


resource pages and novel features that extend its accessibility to multiple languages and even beyond Internet access.

Visitors can now use the TRANSLATE

button in the top menu to navigate through the website in any language offered by Google translate's embedded widget. Another new feature allows users, who do not have Internet access in their institutions, to download a zipfile containing a timestamped version of the complete DACB onto a USB drive and load it onto their local desktop computer or laptop. An updated USB version of the DACB—including all the issues of the *Journal of African Christian Biography*—will be available twice a year on the Introductory Resources page at this link: <https://dacb.org/resources/usb/indexes/>. Size on drive: 522 MB.

New JACB Issue



Download the latest version of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* at dacb.org/journal. The focus is on Malawi and features interviews with Isabel Phiri and Klaus Fiedler.

Friends of the DACB

The Friends of DACB is a community of individuals invested in the work of mission, global networks, scholarship, theological education, and shalom in the church in Africa. They support the work of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* and the *Journal of African Christian Biography* by:

- **Promoting** the mission of the DACB, and recruiting writers, educators, donors, and institutions.
- **Providing financial support** to sustain and help the project grow into the future.
- **Networking** to identify collaborators in academia, web development, publishing houses, church leadership, mission agencies, educational institutions.
- **Praying** for those involved in this work.

Want to get involved? Join us! We need a community of friends to build a sustainable future for this work.

To get involved, contact: Mrs. Judy Stebbins (Chair) at jcistebbins@gmail.com, or Michèle Sigg at dacb@bu.edu



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