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Leonard Kamungu Theological College, Zomba, Malawi

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TWO ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOPS AND PRIMATES RETIRE



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EDITORIAL

No sooner had the chairman of the governing council of the Africa Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANITEPAM), the Very Revd Victor Atta-Baffoe announced the appointment of a Malawian Priest and Theologian to be the new corresponding Secretary from May 2007, thus its Africa Regional Office was embraced in Malawi at Leonard Kamungu Theological College

Though ANITEPAM has been in operation in other African countries for more than a decade, very little is known about it in Malawi. However the Chinese have a saying which goes “every journey starts with a single step”. We are on that journey.

Now Malawian Theologians will share with their counterparts, the creative vitality characterised by a well balanced treatment of Theological issues, each contributing towards a harmonious integration of “the theology cooked in an African pot”. Africa needs to contextualize its theology to be of real meaning to the indigenous African Christians.

AS the newly appointed corresponding secretary I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Chairman, all members of the governing council and the liason director of ANITEPAM, Dr Leon Spencer for having confidence in me. I also thank my predecessor, the Revd Mike McCoy for his great help rendered to me while in Malawi and when I went to Port Elizabeth in South Africa. With the above, the implication to work untiringly follows. I therefore will need both your and Gods help, guidance and wisdom. Let me also take this opportunity to call upon Organisations and the Anglicans themselves in Malawi, Africa, the entire Anglican Communion and all well wishers to support the work of ANITEPAM as you have always done.

ANITEPAM

The African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry seeks to strengthen the ministry of theological education throughout Africa.

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ANITEPAM is committed to fostering communication about theological education throughout the continent. Members are encouraged to enter into correspondence with members of our Governing Council. It is chaired by The Very Revd Victor Atta-Baffoe PhD, Dean of St Nicholas Seminary, PO Box A-162, Cape Coast, Ghana, representing West Africa (term expiring 2008). E-mail: <victorattabaffoe@yahoo.com>

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TWO GREAT SERVANTS OF GOD RETIRE

The Anglican church in Africa will soon be missing the fatherly services of two great servants of God in the Anglican provinces of central and southern Africa. They are: The most Revd Dr Bernard Amos Malango bishop of the Diocese of upper Shire in Malawi and Archbishop and Primate of the church of the province of central Africa, and the most Revd Dr Njongonkulu Winston Huhg Ndungane, Bishop of Cape Town and Archbishop and primate of the church of the province of Southern Africa. The two great servants of God have worked tirelessly and are our living examples as we carry on the work they are leaving for us to continue. What is their final word!



**His Grace Archbishop of the Province
of Central Africa Dr. Bernard A.**

His Grace the Archbishop Bernard Malango retires as an archbishop and bishop of the diocese of Upper Shire in September and October 2007 respectively. "How exciting is retirement as you approach it Your Grace?" I asked the cool smiling Archbishop in his office at Malosa. "Very exciting indeed, and I just feel as if December was tomorrow" he answered, laughing.

The Archbishop was ordained in 1971 as a priest in the then diocese of Southern Malawi. He later served in various capacities in the diocese, ie ,Diocesan Training and Bishop's Chaplain, as an Archdeacon of Mangochi East and Shire Highlands archdeaconries and as Executive Director of Chilima Ecumenical and Training Conference Centre. He then was elected Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Zambia in 1988 After serving as bishop for nine years, he was again elected Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Central Africa in 2000 and was enthroned in the same year in Zimbabwe. When the diocese of Southern Malawi was

split into two dioceses, one retained the old name and the other was named the diocese of Upper Shire which automatically fell vacant and needed a new bishop. The Archbishop, then in Zambia was willing to come back home and was elected the first bishop of the new diocese of Upper Shire in 2000. Until his retirement, Dr Malango is both the diocesan bishop of upper shire diocese and an Archbishop of the Province of the Church of Central Africa.

In course of his services as an Archbishop, Dr Malango was made Primate of his Province and is also one of the four "wise men" chosen to advise the Archbishop of Canterbury on issues in the Anglican Communion. Dr Malango retires a very happy person because as bishop of the diocese of Northern Zambia, he ordained three priests whom he later consecrated bishops. He has seen the Province of Central Africa grow from thirteen to fifteen dioceses. Back home, the Archbishop elevated St Peter and St Paul Church at Mpondasi in Mangochi into a Cathedral. Priests have been sent for further theological and academic training, and lay members of staff at the diocesan office also have gone for upgrading courses. Near to the close of his services, the Archbishop has witnessed yet another major event in his diocese, the appointment of one of his priests, The Revd. Fr Martin Mgeni as the

first Malawian Co-ordinating Secretary of ANITEPAM and the opening of ANITEPAM office at Leonard Kamungu Theological College. Asked what he felt about ANITEPAM, he replied, "I have been involved with the work of ANITEPAM while in Zambia, and I am extremely happy that now the office is here and in my diocese. I am now happy that I can sing the---dimitus--- Let your servant depart in peace, for thine eyes have seen the Lord" Indeed Dr Malango is so happy because his former Provincial secretary is now the chief administrator of ANITEPAM, an organization that co-ordinates all Anglican Theological colleges in Africa.

“IT’S ALL OVER”: ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP BIDS FAREWELL TO CAPE TOWN DIOCESE

By Fr Martin Mgeni



**His Grace Dr. Njongonkulu
W.H. Ndungane**

In an address to the Cape Town Anglican clergy and laity on Thursday 30th August, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane bid farewell to the Diocese of Cape Town. “It’s all over” read the caption attached to his photograph on the front of his printed speech. At the end of 2007 Ndungane retires, not only as head of the entire Anglican Church in Southern Africa, but also as bishop of the Diocese of Cape Town. When Ndungane was enthroned as Archbishop in 1996, the Cape Town Diocese – begun by Archbishop Robert Gray almost 160 years ago – was vast and consequently difficult-to-manage. Last year Ndungane finally succeeded in solving what he refers to as “an intractable problem” and the Diocese was divided into three. The Diocese of Cape Town itself was much reduced in size and the new dioceses of False Bay and Saldanha Bay came into being. The first synod of the newly constituted Cape Town diocese was held in 2006.

This year’s special synod which lasted from Thursday evening 30th August till Saturday 1st September 2007 dealt almost exclusively with setting up the rules and regulations of the new and smaller Cape Town diocese, on which task teams have been working for some time.

“As Anglicans,” says Ndungane, “we are episcopally led, but synodically governed, and thus we recognise the need to take counsel from clergy, bishops and laity for this process.”

There was an order paper of eighty seven pages of administrative rules and provisions to be addressed by delegates which, Ndungane said, “may not look very exciting”. But, he said he believed that “it was worth taking time and getting the new Acts right”.

“A good foundation, like that of a building, is largely invisible – we can almost take it for granted – and yet it securely underpins all that we build upon it,” he said.

Despite this emphasis on practical matters, the Archbishop however, also reminded delegates not to be “overburdened by administration” but to remember that their primary responsibility in the church: was “to bring the healing touch of the crucified Christ to bear on the needs of crime, and health care, and education, and the other problems of our city.”

The election of the new Archbishop, also Bishop of Cape Town, takes place at the end of September. There are three candidates for the post: Bishop of Pretoria, Johannes Seoka; Professor Barney Pitso, currently Principal and Vice-Chancellor of UNISA; and Bishop of Grahamstown, Thabo Makgoba.

St Paul's United Theological College , Limuru Kenya.

ANGLICAN STUDIES SYLLABUS

Rev Joseph Wandera

* As a network of theological institutions, ANITPAM encourages all colleges to share information on the programmes that are run in their colleges, outlining how their syllabi are developed. This will enable the world at large to be well informed of the activities in these colleges. An article in this bulletin from Limuru, Kenya is a very good example.

Principals and Deans of Anglican Provincial theological colleges in Kenya met at Trinity College in Nairobi on 3-4th July, 2007, to formulate a joint syllabus on Anglican Studies. This was following recommendations from the Provincial Board of Theological Education (PBTE). The consultation was funded by the Provincial office and the colleges involved namely ; St Paul's United Theological College, Limuru, St Andrews, Kabale, At Phillip,s Maseno, St Paul's Kapsabet, Carlile college, Nairobi and Berea Theological college.

A draft copy was designed drawing from resources each college had previously been using and St Paul's would be requested to examine this three year course to give it academic credibility. The chief concern was how to balance a historical approach with attention for contextual issues. Should one take precedence or they be treated concurrently? This gives the context within which the article argues that the future to the Anglican Communion is based on teaching both our unique contexts or current realities.

The draft syllabus put a considerable focus on the praxis of being an Anglican minister, highlighting the practical aspects of Anglican liturgy such as Baptism and Eucharist. Previously, colleges tended to focus more on theoretical concerns than practical aspects hence incompetent graduates such that one found it hard to baptize a baby. Imagine! Current issues facing Anglicanism like debate on sexuality ,ecological issues, global inequality and the debt crisis have also been factored in, probably to cherish unity in diversity as it remains to be seen how each college will work out the content of the same. It also seeks focus on new and creative aspects of ministry, for example, Praise and worship in liturgy. In fact there is a considerable lack of awareness among some theological educators on some of the new trends in Anglican ministry today. Again, the meeting considered possibilities of coming up with alternative Christian

rites of passage for young people to replace the traditional ones, Such as circumcision, a result of the changing demands of modernity, amid growing chronic cries of merciless HIV/AIDS scourge ..Truly, what African people in the past found meaningful through traditional ideas may today be found meaningful only through a different set of Christian ideas.

The process of gathering information, which allows us to assess and measure the task and to establish goals, plans and priorities for completing the Great Commission was another area of interest. Unless theological Colleges in Africa push their research activities to higher level and move away from merely concentrating on transmission of knowledge, syllabuses remain dead and irrelevant. It is also important that the colleges are courageous to outwit the doctrinal purity syndrome and such passivity upheld as obedience to create a conducive theological climate .Church Leadership also has not developed sufficient openness to encourage intellectual debate on "controversial topics". However, it is one thing to draft a nice syllabus and quite another to implement Therefore, total commitment and appreciation on the part of Anglican Theological Education that is ours is a divine calling for which we should not put money first, it is a necessity . The Dioceses must also be ready and willing to invest in the teaching of Anglicanism in their colleges if they expect to harvest the produce of well-equipped ordinands ready to serve the Church faithfully. The issue here is that of mutual and creative engagement between the academy and the Church..

What a challenge ,History or Context? Understanding of the present and insight in the future is always refreshed by the study of the past .But teaching Anglicanism with a critical eye on present

context will also be helpful to students and subsequently the Church to think about aspects of Anglicanism like the ecclesiology, theology and pastoral issues in their own context. For example, how can the teaching of Anglicanism in Kenya today make the episcopacy more democratic, less gullible to ethnic manipulation or self aggrandizement.

If we only emphasize on teaching Anglicanism from a historical perspective, then we risk suffering from what (Chatfield 1998:9) refers to as "church of England-ism". So, the present realities of Anglicanism in Kenya makes it imperative that its teaching involves creating a balance between our tradition and innovative contextual means.

MOMBO AWARDED HONORARY DOCTRATE DEGREE AT VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Compiled by Fr. Martin Mgeni

“Go to the kitchen where you belong!” What a non-sensical remark of silencing women? Has not time proved us wrong?

Here is a star, Dr Esther Mombo, an active member of the Governing Council of ANITEPAM. Congratulations! No wonder that at the 184th Commencement at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) on May 17, 2007, a Doctor of Divinity honoris causa was conferred upon Dr Esther Mombo by The Rt Rev. Peter Lee, Bishop of Virginia and chairman of the Board of Trustees of VTS.

A graduate of Saint Paul’s United Theological College, in Limuru, Kenya, Mombo furthered her theological studies by earning a Masters in Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin and a doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. She then returned to her alma mater at Limuru as a lecturer in Historical studies and women’s studies.

As an academic Dean, a position she has served with distinction and vision for the last eight years, Mombo startled some students and colleagues by implementing a unique Master’s program in the Christian response to HIV/AIDS Pandemic in conjunction with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. She advocated a Christian response free from judgemental attitudes rather focused on healing, provision of basic human necessities and for those orphaned and widowed. This program at Saint Paul’s Limuru now serves as a model for other schools and is a sign of hope throughout the Church.

Under Mombo’s leadership, Saint Paul’s has actively recruited women students, sometimes using creative strategies to bypass discriminatory rules and policies. Driven by her conscience that “Biblical Patriarchy, Western Patriarchy and African Patriarchy have formed a very solid rock!” Mombo has created mentoring programs to oppose gender discrimination and violence against women.

As a member of the Circle of concerned Women Theologians, Mombo has continued teaching about poverty, war, and disability. With clarity, courage and humor she has not hidden behind the fears of those who mutilate reality. Her sense of creativity and objectivity of bringing out realities even in cases, call the attention of the Anglican Communion. A prolific leader of conferences, reader of papers and member of its commission, Mombo has served on the Windsor Report Commission, the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, and in the Consultation of International leaders on Global Poverty, and the Network for Inter-faith Concerns.

LEONARD KAMUNGU THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

By Canon A. Kalemba (DEAN)

Background

The Anglican Council in Malawi, (ACM), a body comprising of four Anglican dioceses, used to train its ordinands abroad in countries like Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, but from the late 1970s they joined the Presbyterians at Zomba theological College. Ever since our ordinands have been trained at Zomba Theological College, which is ecumenical in nature accommodating students from CCAP, Anglican, Methodist, churches of Christ and Baptist churches. In 2005 the Anglican Council in Malawi pulled out from Zomba Theological College.

The main reasons for pulling from ZTC included:

- ♦ Intake for ACM was limited to 6 students per year, which was inadequate comparing with our demand.
- ♦ Lack of deep Anglicanism, which is expected of the students as they go out.

These and other reasons made our bishops to agree on pulling out from ZTC and form our own college. A letter was written approved by all the bishops to ZTC Board and was presented at the last board meeting. They accepted the proposal.

Leonard Kamungu

He was born circa 1877/78 at Chia in Nkhotakota. He was educated at a mission school and received further theological training at Kiungani in Zanzibar. He was ordained deacon on 19th April 1901 and to priesthood on 18th April 1909. He served for nine years in Malawi before accepting a missionary call to go and serve in Zambia at Msoro among the Nsenga whose language was similar to Chichwa. He took up his new duties at Msoro early in 1910.

At Msoro Leonard had a lot of work in setting up the mission station which involved doing much of the construction work of the church with his own hands. He also set up education centres and a large number of catechumens of about 124 who were baptised towards the end of 1912.

There was very positive response at Msoro to the Christian message, largely due to the remarkable qualities of Leonard himself. People soon came to appreciate his friendliness, humility, courage, direction and devotion to duty, behind which lay a deep prayerfulness. He died in February 1913 probably from poisoning. Such qualities and Leonard being Malawian motivated the bishops and their chaplains to adopt his name for the college.

Why this College

The formation of this college will:

- ◆ Help ACM to increase its intake of ordinands to cope up with the demands for more priests.
- ◆ Help our ordinands to be well grounded in the Anglican traditions and effectively to the theological study from our perspective
- ◆ Enable us to have many indoor and on service training sessions to refresh our clergy and laity.

This college opened last year in January with 27 students in 1st, 2nd, 3rd years. It has been operational ever since though with a lot of challenges. There were 3 resident Lecturers Canon Alinafe Kalimba, (Dean of the College), Fr. Andrew Sumani, and Fr Evance Kachiwanda; and six part time Lecturers from Zomba Theological College, TEEM, and other institutions.

This year we have four resident Lecturers - Canon Kalemba, Frs Andrew Sumani, Martin Mgeni and Godwell Timverane, and four part-timers.

Our intake has been 2 candidates per Diocese because of Lack of enough accommodation, funding and equipment.

The college has already been accepted for registration under the University of Malawi umbrella body, Board of Theological Studies. We are currently offering certificates and Diplomas in theology. Both courses run for three years. Entry qualification for certificate course is O level, while Diploma is O level with six credits.

Having ANITEPAM offices at our campus is a great benefit to the college, the Anglican Church in Malawi and all theological institutions in Malawi. ANITEPAM will help our college to learn from other old colleges in Africa and also expose us to them, at the same time enriching the theological body with theological input from Anglican tradition and perspective. SO ANITEPAM IS VERY WELCOME TO OUR CAMPUS AND WILL HELP WHERE NECESSARY.

COLLEGE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES(CCM)

*By Fr. Christopher Mwawa
(Dean and President)*

Historical Background

In 1998 at the 12th synod of the Diocese of Lake Malawi held on the 27th of June in Nkhotakota, Esther Miller, a missionary to the dioceses addressed the dele-

gates and informed the house that it was her wish to have a Malawi Missionary School of Evangelism built and opened in Lilongwe. The aim of this school was to assist Christians to have an upper understanding of the Christian faith. She appealed to the delegates to show interest and help to establish the center.

CCM

The college in the name of College for Christian Ministries was opened on 6th January 2003 with 20 students. The total capacity of the College is 40 students. On 18th January 2003 the celebration of Consecration and opening of the College took place and the then Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, His Honor Justin Malewezi officially opened the college.

Purpose

The purpose of College for Christian Ministries is to prepare men and women who have been called by God to train as Lay Ministers, Bible Study Leaders, Evangelists and Missionaries, Councillors, Catechists and priests. These will be men and women of integrity to be equipped with Knowledge of the Bible and skills of Evangelism. They will then work at home or abroad taking the good news of Jesus Christ and his redeeming love to those who have not yet heard the Good News.

Aims and Objects

1. To stand as a primary Church growth tool for Malawian Churches at ecumenical level;
2. Training people in the leadership skill and producing church leaders of integrity.
3. To train Evangelists and Catechists;
4. Training of Ordinands for Ordination;
5. Provision of refresher courses and seminars for clergy and all the church leadership (e.g. Catechists, M.U. leadership; youth; Lay leadership e.t.c).
6. To train church leaders from other churches in order to acquire a spirit of tolerance in differences of beliefs.
7. Creating self-supporting churches to help in unifying the Church Universal.

Entry Qualifications

Malawi School Certificate of Education with at least credits including English. From 1st January this year (2007) the college will be offering Diploma Certificates having been accredited to the university of Malawi through the Board for Theological Studies.

Currently there are 20 students; 8 in the third year; 6 in second year and 6 in first year. Anglican students pay MK19,500 per term and none Anglicans pay MK29,500 per term respectively. Out of the 20, 4 are none Anglicans.

Teaching Staff

Rev. Christopher Mwawa-Dip.Th; B.Th. M.T.S, (Dean and President)
 Rev. Symon Matumbo-B.D. (Dean of Studies)
 Rev. David Chingoka-B.D.
 Mrs. Chifungo-BA. MA.
 Rev. Kutiyola-BD.
 Rev. Chifungo-BA. MA.
 Rev. Nthala-BA.
 Rev. Paul M.Banda-BA (Hon)

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 Mrs. G. Chimbayo-Member

Future Plans

In order for the college to be self-sustaining , we are thinking of building a multipurpose hall which will generate funds for the college. We also intend to go into poultry farming both for food and income generation. Formation of Anglican University by merging CCM and Leonard Kamungu Theological College.

DARE I SAY IT? IS GOD PRESENT IN OUR SEXUALITY?

By Anne Bayley

Daniela Gennrich's question invites instant, instinctive-but opposed-responses: 'Of course God is present in our sexuality, if God created men and women to "become one flesh"' or 'our sexuality is basically sinful, so how can God "be present" in it?'

Gennrich is right to think that there are 'deadly connections', in the minds of many African religious leaders and many ordinary people, between sexuality and 'evil', but these are not only important in the limited context of needing to prevent HIV infections. They are critically important for the status of women in society and family, and for the conduct of marriage, whether formal or customary. At a meeting of clergy and lay couples in Malawi in 2002 a senior clergyman asked, innocently, 'Do we thank God for this good gift of sex in marriage?' His audience sat stunned and silent looking uneasily at the floor or at each others feet- no-one dared to say either 'yes' or 'No'. It seems that we ought not to use the words 'God' and 'Sex' in the same sentence.

This is the context in which it is urgent for African

theologians to explore, criticise and evaluate both instinctive responses to Gennrich's question, but from new perspectives. We could begin in several different ways. For example, we could question the validity of the concept of a hierarchy 'Between the soul/mind and spirit on the one hand -as being more divine-and the body on the other hand, being carnal and linked to the flesh and to sinfulness'. Is this 'hierarchy' the best or only way to interpret or express our status as physical beings, who experience ourselves as being 'more than our physical bodies?'

Alternatively, we could ask about both African and western origins of the concept of sex as 'evil' or 'shameful', and hoe (if it all) these different perspectives are related. We might question whether the sense of shame that may attach to sexual activity is intrinsically related to sexual acts, as such, as many people think. Maybe 'sex' is actually linked to 'shame' because greed or abuse of power in practice dehumanizes a relationship that we instinctively 'know' should be equal and personal?

I am tempted to suggest that we might re-examine the song of songs as more than Hebrew Love-poetry. Is it legitimate to interpret the 'song' (as a twelfth century Christian monk interpreted it) as speaking of the loving desire of God for the 'bride', human persons? Or should we examine a strange, repeated phenomenon in the lives of some saints, from the early church to the present day? This is a permanent and sometimes rapid transition from a life of sexual sin (or excess) to a life of sexual abstinence, accompanied by a deep affective bond to God, shown in persons as geographically and culturally diverse as Augustine of Hippo, Amma Mary, the desert harlot of Egypt, or Charles de Foucauld and Etty Hillesum in the twentieth century.

Or we could ask mature spirituality is linked to mature integration of sexuality into discipleship and prayer, as some spiritual writers have suggested? Any of these perspectives could be taken as a legitimate starting point for a wider enquiry into the meaning of sexuality in Africa and its bearing on the 'mind of Christ' fro relationships between men and women in the twenty -first century.

First, however, I suggest that we examine the way Jesus of Nazareth related to women, as recorded by the four evangelists. Their accounts do not suggest embarrassment in several intrinsically embarrassing circumstances; they describe Jesus at ease in the presence of women, when the evangelists did not share that ease, and consistently they convey Jesus' acceptance of women as fully human - against the strong religious and cultural conditioning of their time and place. (C D F Moule, 'The Phenomenon of the New Testament' 1967)

This re-examination of gospel evidence needs to take place at many different levels. It is needed in academic meetings and journals, as village congregations study the Bible, in urban youth groups, in preaching classes at seminary, during experiential workshops for women and men, and amongst lay leaders or Sunday school teachers preparing material for use in their churches. New illustrations showing gospel encounters in contemporary dress and settings might help to jolt people out of traditional ways of visualising Jesus' meetings with women, and would be worth commissioning for that purpose. Similarly it would be interesting to challenge seminarians or senior students to write alternative Bible study notes to pose contemporary questions alongside familiar stories. For example, using the account of a woman in the temple with Jesus (and others) in John chapter 8, verses 2 to 11, to ask 'What if this woman – or her partner - is HIV-infected?' Practical experience has shown that similar suggestions increase people's enjoyment of Bible study and elicit responses that surprise those making them!

May I suggest that ANITEPAM uses Daniela Gennrich's article to open a long-term, multi-level debate about 'God, sexuality and sin', not just as a contribution towards reducing HIV infection rates on our continent, but to allow our understanding of this essential part of our humanity to be redeemed?

BOARD FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (Malawi)

*By Klaus Fiedler
(Secretary for the Board)*

Almost every where in Africa the same dichotomy developed. The churches taught theology in their colleges and it was the universities which had the power to grant degrees. This led in many universities to the establishment of departments of Theology and Religious Studies, which in most cases did not train pastors. Several attempts were made to build a bridge between the two. One of the early attempts was to attach church related colleges from as far a field as the Congo to the university of East Africa (with its TRS Department at Makerere). But the university of East

Africa did not last nor did the affiliation scheme.

Probably for both the territory involved was too big. Though the institution died the idea of affiliating church related colleges to a university did not die and here in Malawi it has now been successful over 25 years.

The Diploma Board

What is now called the Board for Theological Studies started its life as The Diploma Board in 1975 the founding colleges were Zomba Theological College (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian and Anglican Council of Malawi), and Kachebere and St Peters major Seminaries for the Roman Catholic side. The three colleges related to the department of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Malawi in terms of admission and syllabi, examinations and grades. In all other things they remained independent.

The board was organised as a low key institution with neither transport nor sitting allowances. The chair could be the head of any of the participating institutions, the secretary had to be a member of the TRS department. The board would meet two or three times a year on a Saturday morning. The Boards constitution and the syllabi were approved by the Senate of the University of Malawi.

The admission requirement was Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) with three credits including English, the diploma would last three years, and upon finishing 15 Courses the Diploma would be awarded by the board and recognised by the university. If a candidate reached 55% (High pass) or above entry into the third year of the BA (Theology) taught by the Department of Theology and Religious Studies (starting in 1991) was offered.

The syllabi were the same for all institutions, and so were the examinations. But the colleges would retain their own theology, so the same question could be answered from differing theological traditions in deferent ways. The colleges could also teach any subjects outside the required 15 course syllabus to curter for their own Theological inclinations.

Expansion

In 1995 the first expansion took place, when two evangelical colleges (Likhubula Bible Institute now Evangelical Bible College of Malawi in Blantyre and Baptist seminary in Malawi in Lilongwe) and any interdenominational correspondence College (Theological Education by Extension in Malawi,

TEEM). This diversified the theological spectrum and varied the methods of teaching. Later Zambezi College of Ministry in Blantyre Joined (Evangelical) St John the Baptists Major Seminary in Mangochi. The Seventh – day Adventist Lakeview College also applied to join, but in the end became a College of the Kenyan SDA University in Barton.

Over the last years the interest in joint theological training institutions declined, so that the constituent churches of Zomba Theological College decided to open their own Colleges, CCAP Nkhoma Synod Josephat Mwale College is expected to be admitted to the Board at its next meeting, and the Anglican Leonard Kamungu College here in Zomba was admitted last year, as was the College of Ministries in Lilongwe.

Bachelor of Divinity

Originally we intended only to teach the diploma, and qualified students would join Chancellor College to achieve a BA in two more years. The process of approval by the university was slow, but in the end the results right from year one were recognised. Taking note of the new reality, the Diploma board was renamed the Board for Theological Studies. In addition the three original colleges of the Board became affiliated to the university, and since then all diplomas and degrees were “awarded by the Board in conjunction with the University of Malawi”.

Diploma in Philosophy and Religious Studies

The latest expansion, approved by the University in principle, has been to meet the challenge of the catholic priestly training, which has two parts, commonly distinguished as philosophy and theology. For the second part students would get the Diploma in Theology (or later, at least at St Peters the BDiv), but they would not get any academic recognition for their first part. So a new syllabus was devised in cooperation with the Department of Philosophy which joined the board and cooperates in the moderation and examination. The Diploma in Philosophy and Religious Studies is taught at Kachebere Major Seminary which caters for the whole Malawi, at St Johns the Baptist, owned by Mangochi Diocese and at the Inter-Congregational Seminary in Balaka which trains different religious orders for the priest hood and which joined the board for this reason.

Numbers

In the early 1990s there were anything below a hundred Students studying with the board, now there are over 700 for the Diploma in Theology and the BDiv. Out of these over 500 are registered with TEEM as correspondence students, 85 and 63 with Zomba Theological College and St Peters Respectively, and the rest study at the smaller colleges.

A Community of Teaching Research and Publishing

Through their membership in the Board the colleges are joined to the department of Theology and Religious Studies and through it to research and publishing. Students who do well in their BDiv may enter the MA program at Chancellor College. BDiv and Diploma dissertations are being published as Kachere Documents, and Lecturers at Zomba Theological College have been Internal Assessors for Chancellor college PhDs, and St Peters have been Supervisors in the Chancellor College post graduate program. Lecturers of the Board Colleges are also welcome to Study with the university for their higher degrees, and a number of their books have been published by Kachere Series, the publications arm of the department. The Kachere Series has also recently published the Syllabi of the Board and the Handbook of the Baptist Seminary.

Prospects

Over the three decades the Board for Theological Studies as “a low key” institution has achieved a lot in terms of promotion of theological studies in Malawi. In this the process of the cooperation with the University of Malawi must be dully recognized as the crucial factor for any success.

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