

January to March 2025
APF Prayer and Newsletter



African
Pastors
Fellowship

Impetus.

A Miracle in Sengenyra

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Get more APF news
and updates online

eVitabu Update

Paying Respects
in Malawi



From the CEO

Streamlined mailing and much more news and updates from APF online.

January 2025 marks my 10th anniversary as CEO of APF. During that time there have been many encouragements, a few setbacks, a pandemic, and the major innovation for APF being a digital tool - the eVitabu app.

As an organisation, APF has embraced ministry in the digital age in terms of delivery of training and resources in Africa, but also as a tool for communications with donors and supporters in the UK. Whether we like it or not, for the majority of our readers digital media has become an 'embedded, embodied, and everyday' fact of life.

With this in mind APF is changing the way we communicate with supporters. *Impetus* has become a streamlined eight-page journal, and much more regular email and social media updates will be posted online.

This will increase the frequency with which we share up-to-date stories, encouragements and prayer needs, but also reduce the amount of printed material and mailing costs to the charity. We are confident this is the trajectory of travel for charity communication and will result in strengthened relationships with supporters.

To receive more regular digital updates by email instead of a printed copy of *Impetus*, please sign up using this QR code, visit africanpastors.org/connect or tick the email box in the enclosed form.



I hope you continue to find *Impetus* informative and encouraging, and we remain grateful for all your support in prayer, giving or any other way.

In Christ,

Revd Dave Stedman

eVitabu Update

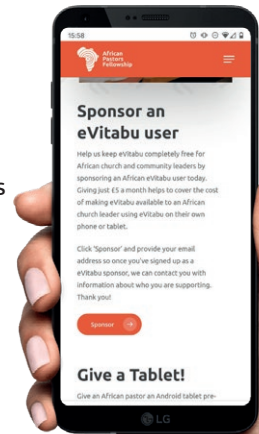
Important Changes to eVitabu Sponsorship

It is five years since we launched the eVitabu individual user sponsorship programme. The number of eVitabu users in Africa is now well over 2,000 and continues to grow almost daily but the number being sponsored is just 70. eVitabu will always be free to install for church leaders in Africa but there are significant costs to APF to keep the app available and make important improvements.

If you do not already, I am appealing to supporters to consider sponsoring an eVitabu user. You can do so by going to africanpastors.org/evitabu and signing up to sponsor a pastor using eVitabu.

If you are already a sponsor, from 1st February 2025, we will increase sponsorship from £5 to £7.50 per month. I hope this will not be off-putting. It remains less than the price of a paperback book to place an entire library in the hands of a dedicated but under-resourced pastor in Africa.

Thank you!
Andrew Richardson
Treasurer



In September, the APF team travelled to Uganda to connect with key partners from across Africa. The focus of the conference was to hear directly from African leaders already utilising eVitabu. By understanding their experiences and challenges, we aim to improve the app to better meet their evolving needs.

Dave's Advent Hike

During December, Dave walked 110 miles – the equivalent distance as from Nasareth in north Wales to Bethlehem in south Wales. This was to raise funds for a variety of children's projects in Uganda that have links to APF. Please sponsor Dave through **JustGiving** using the QR code.





A Miracle in Sengenya

Following the eVitabu conference in Uganda in September, APF Projects Coordinator Geoff Holder accepted invitations to Masasi and Morogoro Dioceses in Tanzania. In Masasi, Bishop James Almasi received a call from a rural pastor that offers a glimpse into the challenges faced by Anglican bishops in Africa.

Bishop James received the call on Sunday evening as he travelled back from meetings in Dodoma. The voice on the phone spoke quickly, trying to explain what had happened before his limited mobile 'airtime' ran out.

The Eucharist service had just finished and the congregation of St Michael and All Angels' Church in Sengenya in rural Masasi Diocese had returned home. Some of the church leadership remained inside to chat and share a meal together.

In this part of Africa, whirlwinds created by hot air spinning upwards in a vortex are not uncommon, especially towards the end of dry season as the temperature rises. This one, however, was extraordinarily powerful and seemed to come out of nowhere.

The wind whipped through the narrow church windows, mere slits in the mud-brick walls, and ripped the sheet metal roof away from its wooden rafters.

Everyone threw themselves on the ground as the entire church roof lifted and fell, twisting metal, splintering wood and ripping nails crashing down all around. Their quick action meant most emerged from the chaos with only minor injuries. One person would need hospital treatment.

Bishop James visited Sengenya as soon as possible. 'It is part of the pastoral ministry of a bishop to offer comfort and pray with those in need' he explained. Arriving at Sengenya, a small crowd had already gathered. Details of what had happened were shared and prayers were said. The bishop was shown around the ruined church building.

Despite everything, Revd Esau, a young deacon who was in the church eating lunch with the others when the whirlwind hit, is grateful. What if it had happened during the Eucharist rather than after most had gone home? What if the damaged electric wiring for the church lighting had electrified the collapsed metal roof? It was a miracle no one was killed. 'God is good all the time', he said.



Revd Esau, a deacon from Sengenya.



Rt Revd James Almasi.

Bishop James agrees that the old mud church building cannot be repaired. Next to it stands the roofless bare concrete block walls of its half-built replacement. 'They will need much prayer to find the capacity to finish the new church structure before the rain arrives in November or December', he said.

There is no doubt that the whirlwind that devastated St Michael and All Angels' Church in Sengenya is a huge blow to the community. Amidst the wreckage, however, a spirit of resilience and gratitude stands out. They believe that divine intervention prevented any fatalities and give thanks.

As the community now faces the daunting task of completing the replacement place of worship before the rains, they do so with a renewed sense of purpose and a belief that, with God's help, they will emerge from this with more faith, hope and love than before.



Paying respects in Malawi

In November, Geoff and Dave travelled to Malawi to pay respects to Bishop Lloyd Chizenga, the late leader of APF's key partner, New Life Christian Church. Besides spending time with Lloyd's family, they also met the church leadership team and discussed the church's ongoing sustainable agriculture project.



New Life Christian Church is an indigenous African church network with approximately 150 congregations spread across central and southern Malawi and northern Mozambique. Meeting with regional overseers in Blantyre was crucial to reaffirm APF's commitment to the partnership and explore the network's priorities with the new church leadership.



Most NLCC pastors have had no formal training, making in-service training a crucial priority. Pastor Souza from Mozambique highlighted the need for Chichewa language Bibles, bicycles, and income-generating projects to support his ministry.

Visiting Bishop Lloyd's grave required a long journey down a very rough washed-out road deep into rural Chikwawa District. Before visiting the grave, we had to obtain permission from the village headman. In this region of Africa, village cemeteries are traditionally situated within or near sacred groves of trees.



We met some of Lloyd's extended family in the village, which was bustling with activity as people returned from their fields in the Shire River flood plain. They had been working since before dawn, digging the land in anticipation of the rains which they expected to arrive very soon.

A crucial part of the trip was meeting the new team who will lead the Growing Greener agriculture project (pictured right, with Bishop Lloyd's widow). APF and Operation Agri have supported this wonderful initiative since Lloyd established it following the 2016 drought. With overwhelming demand for training in composting and many other essential sustainable agriculture techniques, plans were made to resume the programme in participating villages next year.



Hunta Fanta, Alex Muwawa, Jacqui Chizenga, Lonjezo Daniel, Bridget Chizenga and Johanna Chizenga.

The vision of APF is to enable African Christian leaders, of all denominations, to minister effectively in thriving local churches that serve flourishing communities.

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Giving to APF

If you would like to donate to APF, please visit www.africanpastors.org/donate where you can make a one-off gift or set up a regular donation. Alternatively, post a cheque to our address or use one of the services below:

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Please consider donating £2 to cover print and postage costs. Thank you.

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