



DACB News Link

Issue no. 12, April 2016

DACB Collected Memories



With this newsletter, we announce the new “Collected Memories” feature of the *DACB* website. The purpose of “Collected Memories” is to gather obituaries, newspaper articles, and other fragmentary information on recently-deceased persons who are worthy subjects for future research. We hope through this feature to stimulate the writing of their full biographies.

It is appropriate that our “Collected Memories” honor the recent death of Fr. Vincent Machozi Karunzu (1965-2016), a Catholic priest of the Assumptionist order. A gifted teacher and theologian, he formed many candidates for the priesthood. Fr. Machozi was a former doctoral student at the Boston University School of Theology,

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From the Director



The December 2015 executive meeting of the *DACB* advisory council and editorial committee issued in several

exceptional ideas for new initiatives—including the *Journal of African Christian Biography* (see announcement, left)—and the addition of five new advisors who bring a variety of gifts and ecumenical networks to the table. They add geographical range and denominational diversity to an already strong council. **Dr. Jesse Mugambi** is professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi, a well-known figure in the Anglican Communion and the World Council of Churches where he has served as a representative. **Dr.**

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Announcing: The Pilot Issue of the Journal of African Christian Biography for June 2016



The goal of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* (*JACB*) is to “complement and make stories from the online *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms” (*JACB* masthead). Each monthly installment (see black and white cover, top left) will include a biography from the *DACB* database and a commentary written by a member of the Advisory Council or the Editorial Committee. The commentary may focus on historical, theological, contextual, pedagogical, or interpretive issues, depending on the interests of the writer. Again, according to the masthead: “the *JACB* is intended to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publically accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent.” The annual cumulative volume (see color cover, bottom left) will include all previous content from the year’s monthly issues and additional book reviews. **



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Collected Memories (cont. from p.1)

from which he received his S.T.M. degree in 2015. While in Boston, he served a multicultural parish, and he worked in the African Studies Center to educate young students about Africa. His devotion to peacebuilding and human rights led him to return to Kivu Province.

While a student at BU, Fr. Machozi launched the Beni Lubero website to document human rights abuses against the Nande people of East Congo. The traditional territory of the Nande is located above coltan deposits, a mineral used to produce cell phones. Armed militias from Rwanda and Congo torture, rape, and kill the people in order to steal the coltan. Fr. Machozi was the most visible witness against these atrocities, as well as organizer of ecumenical efforts for peacebuilding.

On March 21, Fr. Machozi was visiting his mother in his home village. He had said Mass on Palm Sunday and was meeting with Nande chiefs and elders. Ten soldiers dressed in the uniforms of the Democratic Republic of Congo entered the



community center where Fr. Machozi was working on his laptop. They had unsuccessfully attempted to kill him six or seven times before. This time they succeeded. Fr. Machozi's last words were "Why are you killing me?"

The tragic martyrdom of our student and friend underscores the role of Catholic priests as witnesses to human rights abuses throughout Africa. Thousands of people lined the streets for his funeral. Fr. Machozi gave his life against genocidal violence. With our "Collected Memories," we promise never to forget him. **

- Dana L. Robert



Lessons and Legacies

When I came to Boston in September 2014, little did I know that my student job would turn out to be as meaningful and educational as the lectures I attended or the book I read. Every biography I have worked on has broadened the horizons of my mind: the entries have taught me and enlightened me, not only as stories of individuals but as pictures of histories, nations, cultures and, above all, the infinite variety and power of Christian faith. I have been intellectually and spiritually inspired by the project and I am grateful that I have been allowed to play a part in it.

The *DACB* has been my home away from home and I am truly sorry to be leaving. However, I comfort myself with the thought that the connection will not be lost; I have been trying to put together a biography of my great-grandmother, Lois Nees Murphree – a Boston University alumna, missionary and hymnist in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia as it was then) whose most famous hymn, *Mu Zunde Renyu Baba Mune Basa rekuita* (In Your Field, Oh Father, there is work to be done)



My great-grandmother in 1957



Lois Nees Murphree with mamba

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Returning to Old Watering Holes



In September of 2014, Sam Roebuck stepped into her position as editorial assistant for the *DACB* with zest, passion, and inspiration. She had been the first to apply and her enthusiasm for the project was evident. Her excitement grew as she gained new insights into the increasing prominence of African Christianity on the world scene. She also struggled to contain her indignation when she heard it described as “an undeveloped form of Western Christianity.” But Sam knew better. She grew up in Zimbabwe where 81% of the population self identifies as Christian and 56% of that number belong to an African Independent Church, a quintessentially African expression of Christianity.

This sense of scholarly integrity and the earnest desire to give a voice to the stories of little known agents of African Christianity have colored all of Sam’s work. Dr. Daryl Ireland, associate director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission (STH, room 311) where the *DACB* has its office had this to say: “Sam has contributed to making the *DACB* a visible presence at Boston University. The hours she spends in the office, applying her skills to the website, newsletter, or a submission, reminds everyone that the largest digital collection of African Christian Biographies is now housed at BU. Her professionalism and devotion to the project have made her an ideal representative of the project.”

I have enjoyed working with Sam from the moment she walked into the office. As a true African, she enjoys working in community and has a joyful sense of humor. Certain new words in my vocabulary pay tribute to her influence—expressions such as “crack on” and “dodgy” (pronounced with a British accent, please, or it sounds corny). I know I won’t be the only one to miss her congenial presence let alone her invaluable work for the *DACB*. After a successful Masters program here in the BU School of Theology, Sam is returning home to England where she plans to seek work and eventually continue her studies. But I know her relationship with the project is not over. It recently took a personal turn when she undertook to write the biography of her missionary great-grandmother for the *DACB*.

Thank you, Sam, for all that you have already done for the project. As you return to home to old watering holes may you find more than water, but also friends and dreams waiting there to meet you (African proverb). And may God accompany you, always. **

- Michele Sigg



Lessons and Legacies (cont.)



Murphree family photo from 1931. Lois Nees Murphree is on the right.

is still sung throughout churches in Zimbabwe and has been recorded by one of Zimbabwe’s most famous and popular musicians, Oliver Mtukudzi. In spite of my access to archive materials of the Methodist church, I have found almost no record of her or her work. My grandfather, Marshall W. Murphree (the baby in the photo on the left), has been almost my sole source of information and I have realized that I need to record as many of his memories as I can. I am travelling to Zimbabwe in June and hope to find out more about my great-grandmother and to complete her biography for the *DACB*. I hope that this will be the first of many contributions I make and that as a writer, I will be able to carry the mission of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* wherever God leads me next. **

- Sam Roebuck

Madipoane Masenya (ngwan'a Mphahlele) is professor of Old Testament Studies at the University of South Africa and a leading authority in African women's theology. **Very Rev. Protopresbyter Fr. Evangelos E. M. Thiani** serves as vice rector and senior lecturer at the Orthodox College of Africa in Nairobi. He is the director of Theological Advancement, Interfaith, and Ecumenical relations for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa. In addition to being the Global Translator Advisor for the United Bible Societies, **Dr. Jean-Claude Loba Mkole, OP**, is professor extraordinary at the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and visiting professor at Hekima University College (Nairobi). **The Reverend Engr. Gabriel Leonard Allen**, from the Gambia, is a theologian, an ecumenist, and an interfaith activist working in the Methodist Church.

These join the seven individuals who have served on the Advisory Council since 2014: **Dr. Deji Isaac Ayegboyin**, professor and head of the Religious Studies Department at the University of Ibadan (Nigeria); **Dr. James N. Amanze**, General Secretary of ATISCA and professor at the University of Botswana; **Dr. Philomena Njeri Mwaura**, associate professor at Kenyatta University (Nairobi) and director of the Center for Gender Equity and Empowerment; **Dr. Paul Nchoji Nkwi**, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the Catholic University of Cameroon; **Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Oduro**, a member of WAATI and president of Good News Theological College and Seminary (Ghana); **Rev. Prof. Priscille Djomhoué**, who pastors a parish of the Eglise Protestante Unie de Belgique and is professor at the Faculté Universitaire de Theologie Protestante de Bruxelles; and **Dr. Edison Muhindo Kalengyo**, a member of ATIEA, who is professor at Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology at Uganda Christian University.

Given the personal and joint commitments, capacities, reputations, and wide ranging connections that these extraordinary men and women bring to our already strong Advisory Council, *DACB* prospects of fulfilling its mandate have never been better! We are blessed! **

- Jonathan Bonk

Advisory Council

The Reverend Engr. Gabriel Leonard Allen, The Gambia

Prof. Dr. James N. Amanze, Botswana

Prof. Dr. Deji Isaac Ayegboyin, Nigeria

Rev. Prof. Priscille Djomhoué, Belgium / Cameroon

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Prof. Dr. Jean-Claude Loba Mkole (OP), Angola

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Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Oduro, Ghana

Very. Rev. Protopresbyter Fr. Evangelos E. M. Thiani, Kenya



Project Director: Dr. Jonathan Bonk
Project Manager: Mrs. Michèle Sigg

Center for Global Christianity and Mission
Boston University School of Theology
745 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
Email: DACB@BU.edu

*American donations in support of the *DACB* should be sent to:

Dictionary of African Christian Biography
c/o Mr. Kevin Keith
Boston Univ. Sch. of Theology
745 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215, USA
<http://www.dacb.org/supportthedacb.html>
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