

## AFRICAN PUBLIC THEOLOGY

APT stands for African Public Theology. The need that we want to address is the endemic corruption and lack of principled Christian leadership in our continent. The problem goes back to what is known as the secular-sacred divide. If religion and faith are seen as sacred but compartmentalized "for Sundays" while the rest of life and moral and ethical choices are made with a secular hermeneutic and rule supreme for the rest of the week, society literally ends up in chaos.

Our purpose is to write a handbook that theological schools and Christians in general can use to empower them theologically and spiritually to address the problem. When we brainstormed the challenge before us at the NETACT 2018 Annual General Meeting we formulated two lists: "The Africa we do not want" and "The Africa God wants." In summary we can say that our vision is to empower Christian leaders to make the prayer "Let thy Kingdom come" a reality. Our vision is to start a movement in our continent, a movement towards the Africa God wants.

### Good news

Langham Partnership is willing to publish the book we intend to write in their Hippo series and have seconded Isobel Stevenson to our project. A meeting between Langham's Literature Director Pieter Kwant and NetACT has greatly strengthened the bond between Langham and NetACT. Langham allocated Isobel Stephenson as their publication editor to assist the three editors: Dr Sunday Agang from Nigeria; Dr Dion Forster from South Africa and Dr Jurgens Hendriks of NetACT. Tearfund is also committed to work with us. Especially in the marketing or implementation phases of the book. Isobel Stevenson is a Senior Editor with Langham Publishers. She grew up in South Africa, studied at Stellenbosch, and taught Applied Linguistics at UNISA. Even though she now lives in Canada, she has maintained a close connection to Africa as the coordinating editor for the *Africa Bible Commentary* and the main editor for Hippo Books.

### More good news

The NetACT office met with the Vice President and CEO of the Tyndale House Foundation. THF has supported NetACT financially in various projects, including the Internet Portal, and we have helped them with advice, research and networking in their *African Leadership Study* and other projects. They were excited to hear about the APT project and "insisted" that the book be translated into Portuguese and French, and that we do it in collaboration with a number of French-speaking theological schools in which they have invested heavily. Key countries are Ivory Coast, Ghana, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### Project planning

We foresee the APT project having two phases. In the first one, we will *produce* the book. In the second phase, we will hold workshops in as many countries / regions in Africa as possible to *introduce* the book.

The following paragraphs are from a letter sent to all NetACT Members on 16 January 2019 and describe how the project will develop:

**"NetACT Regional Workshops** The 2018 AGM decided to have regional workshops in 2019. We will continue with these. We are sharing the venues, dates and program with you.

### Program: Two workshops run concurrently.

- The first one will be the NetACT Internet Portal training for librarians, IT (information technology) people and select staff members. Mr Fraser Jackson and one

or two of the librarians that attended the 2017 planning of the NIP at Scott Christian University, will present this.

- The second program will be a certificate workshop that cover four topics: African Public Theology as Integral Mission; Community Development, Curriculum design to address decolonialization and African Christian Leadership (making use of the African Leadership Study's book, website and research and working on setting goals on how to apply it contextually). We will make use of different presenters at the different venues.
- *The dates below are the days we will be working. Arrival is one day ahead of time and departure one day after the last-mentioned date.*
- We trust Tearfund will collaborate with us at the second workshops.

The venues are:

- 1 Lusaka, Zambia at JMU, 6-9 May 2019. Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Malawi (Hefsiba in Mozambique prefer to here). Our chair and these schools are in negotiations on the date.
- 2 Lubango, Angola at ISTEEL, 24-27 June 2019.
- 3 Limuru, Kenya at SPU, 8-11 July 2019: Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda.
- 4 Igbaja, Nigeria. 23-26 September 2019.”

The next step, to be implemented in 2020 and 2021 is to have country-specific workshops where the NETACT members and the African Public Theology team plus partners will introduce the book to the general public, especially the leadership in all key societal structures. The vision is to move towards the Africa God wants.

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22 January 2019