

Minutes of Africa Speaks Continuation Committee (ASCC) via Skype on 19th November 2019

Present: Edward Elliott, Modupe Ehirim, John Gathuku, Jules Ouoba, Liz Patten, Tim Welch.

1. Devotional Message

Devotional thoughts were shared by a ConCom about “lions and us” - Daniel in the lions’ den; David killing a lion; the LORD releasing lions on those who disobey him (see II Kings 17v25). He recalled his experience of seeing a lion in a zoo as a youth and the lion growling at him! A highlight of his adult travels was a visit to the Masai Mara where he came into close contact with a lioness.

A few years ago, a Pastor recounted to him words spoken at a meeting in Africa: “let the lion loose”!! The apostle John recorded that he wept because no one was found worthy to open the scroll until the Lion of Judah was declared to be so (Rev. 5v5). We are involved in “letting the lion loose” in the area of Christian publishing. Cf. C.S. Lewis’ Aslan character who is described (by Mr Beaver in *The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe*) as being not safe, but good.

2. Prayer

There followed a brief time of prayer based on this reflection and asking the LORD for His leading.

3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

These were formally approved.

4. Update on Setting Up a Legal Organisation

We have received the initial invoice for the 50% down payment from Anne Babu, the Christian lawyer whom we have agreed to engage in Nairobi.

A question was raised based on the meeting with the Trustees of MAI at LittAfrica in Ghana. The trustees had wanted to know what will distinguish Africa Speaks from MAI. This led to a discussion about our relationship with MAI Africa. Is MAI Africa set up as a legal organisation? A member said he had learned from that MAI Africa has been trying to set up as a legal organisation in Nairobi for some months but so far has not accomplished this. Someone wondered if we should register as a branch of MAI Africa. We asked, in the case that Africa Speaks would arrange a conference, how would it look different from LittAfrica?

A ConCom member had the opportunity to speak with John Maust when they were in Accra and had sensed some anxiety on his part regarding confusion between the two organisations. Because of this, it was emphasized that it’s important for MAI and Africa Speaks to sit and talk about the huge needs (especially in francophone Africa) and ensure that we work not in competition but in partnership. We should meet at least once each year to see what each other is doing best, how we may help each other and to develop a partnership to meet the needs on this vast continent.

It was suggested that maybe we should try to clarify some things with MAI before we take any legal steps. We were reminded that THF may not respond well if we would backtrack on becoming a legal entity at this point. A committee member recalled that at the Bannockburn conference last year, some four or five MAI people had signed the Accord. Before Africa Speaks, we did not know about MAI Africa, if we had done so then perhaps our approach would

have been different. It was suggested that it could be helpful to put something in our mission and vision statements underlining that we want to work in partnership with like-minded organisations.

A motion was proposed that we should initiate the process of legal registration of Africa Speaks as a legal trust in Kenya. This was seconded and carried.

5. Website Development

(a) Update regarding website and OneSheep

Since we sent the signed contract back to OneSheep two weeks ago, we have received no acknowledgement, either immediately or later when they were sent a further email. We have also not yet received the Work Order from OneSheep.

(b) Tyndale House Foundation's Observations about OneSheep

The Tyndale House Foundation (THF) have raised several and significant concerns concerning OneSheep in an email last week to the ASCC. They asked for a copy of the Terms & Conditions. We were surprised that THF had indicated that they would require up to 60 days to effect payments, this would appear to be a change due to their recent merger with the Tyndale House Publishers operating as a Christian (not for profit) organisation with two different divisions, in order to be more confident of legal protection of their Christian ethos.

Various members of the ASCC expressed that they shared concerns about OneSheep, following receipt of the email from THF, and also following subsequent internet research trying to find more information about the company. The lack of prompt responses from Arun has also not been encouraging.

(c) The Way Forward

After an hour-long discussion by all, it was proposed that we should revert back to OneSheep and ask for some portfolios of work done by them. We should raise our questions and give them one week to respond, after which a decision should be taken. If for any reason we would not want to do this, then we should simply walk away now.

A member wondered if perhaps Tyndale could somehow help us in our discussion with OneSheep by making a list of concerns. In fact the list already exists in the email from THF. It was proposed that (for the sake of being consistent) Gathuku and Modupe will communicate with One Sheep. They agreed to do this and then to communicate with the other members of the ASCC about the way forward.

Someone underlined the need for clarity regarding any potential legal matters or costs that could arise at any point with regard to this contract. He advised that the ASCC needs to consult a specialist for juridical questions relating to websites in order to avoid any potential future pitfalls.

We were reminded that, in contrast to the various concerns of THF, Johnathan Pulos (who originally had pointed us to OneSheep) had also looked over the contract and had not cautioned any red flags.

6. Recruitment of Staff Member

Draft Job Description prepared

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to defer this Item for the next meeting.

7. Concept Development of the Proposed Discipleship Program

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to defer this Item for the next meeting.

8. Other Business

(a) Report on LittAfrica

This was already covered under Item (4) above. The discussions between ASCC members and LittAfrica trustees at the event were held in less than ideal conditions, in a room with a lot of noise where it was sometimes difficult to hear what others were saying. It would be good to sit down together in a more conducive setting.

(b) Financial Gft to MAI Africa for LittAfrica

Some months back, THF had transferred USD \$10,000 to MAI for them to steward for Africa Speaks' expenses for the ASCC meetings in Nairobi and for LittAfrica travel. Following payment of these expenses, there is a balance of USD \$ 550.71c remaining at MAI as "left over" and this amount will be donated to LittAfrica. We will write to John Maust to inform him about this.

(c) Appreciation to Laura Finch

Laura Finch is an author who has ghost written some books and lives in the Chicago area. She has become accepted as an Associate member. She has volunteered some time to Africa Speaks and has already been most helpful with sending out recent emails, especially to all those who indicated an interest at the MTI event in Abidjan. We will write to Laura on behalf of the ASCC to say thank you.

9. Any Other Business

We have approved a new applicant for membership of Africa Speaks, a lady from Nairobi. Her name is Paulie Mugure Mugo.

10. Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 10th December at the same times.

11. Prayer

After expressing appreciation for Modupe's leadership of the meeting, the meeting was closed in prayer.