

Africa Speaks Continuation Committee Meeting on Monday 4th February 2019 (Skype)

Present: All members of the Committee were present, being:
Edward Elliott, Modupe Ehirim, John Gathuku, Jules Ouaba, Liz Patten, Tim Welch.

Introduction

The meeting opened with thoughts about Esther 4:14 and the words of Mordecai: "... *And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*"

When we are following Christ, we are aware that He knows the future but we do not, therefore we don't always have the full sense of how important something may be. In **Africa Speaks**, we have a sense that what we are engaged in is something critically important. For this reason we go on trusting that God will use our efforts for His glory, so that those whom we have been chosen to represent will have some wonderful opportunities to publish great books for His Kingdom.

The meeting then opened in prayer, thanking the LORD for His long-term faithfulness in our lives and asking for wisdom in our decision making.

Growth in Membership

The following four people would like to join the **Africa Speaks** community, but we have not been able to access the information they have sent to us, despite trying to do so with the help of Paul Mouw.

- (1) Jason Turyahabwa from Kampala, Uganda - an author with Quiet Garden Publishing and a member of the Uganda Faith Writers' Association
- (2) Mercy Twikyirize, also with the Faith Writers' Association - application disappeared in system
- (3) (Rev.) Luka Vandi Uti - MD at Africa Christian Textbooks in Bukuru, Nigeria - application disappeared in system
- (4) Randy (Randall) Jahns from Crossway has applied for associate membership.

It was agreed that two members of the Continuation Committee, Ed and Liz, will review applicants and give a summary now and again to the rest of the group.

New Website

We have received a second quotation, this time from FitImage, Nairobi. In answer to a question, we were told that Aaron Kakunza (Ignite, first quotation) created the Timazi website some four years ago and that Ignite had been compassionate in their early costs.

A committee member summarized her comparison of the two quotations by saying that it seems that FitImage has looked ahead with a total quotation of USD \$9000, \$5000 for set up + future maintenance, with an eight weeks delivery period. By contrast, Ignite offers a 12 weeks delivery period. It was also underlined that we need to know which are the technical apps that would serve us best.

A committee member reminded us that the **Africa Speaks** community is awaiting our action, therefore we need wisdom from the LORD. He emphasized that the most important thing is to have an attractive website which is easily accessible, but obviously it must be at an affordable price so that it will be sustainable. The immediate thing is the need to get started and hopefully we can perfect as we go along.

A member had the general feeling that Ignite had worked harder to understand what we need and he also thought that there could be design advantages. We need to make the final decision as to who will actually take on the website and wonder how we can feel sufficiently informed to make that decision with confidence. We were asked if there would be agreement to ask for Jonathan Pulos' guidance on this, which there was. How much should we then agree to spend?

It was underlined that our main difficulty appears to be the area of the ongoing maintenance costs. We suggested that Gathuku should ask Jonathan for guidance about this as well and then

make a recommendation via email to the rest of the group. We prayed for Gathuku as he will go about this responsibility.

Communications with Signers of the Accord

Everyone was thankful for the Suggested Schedule for Communications pre-circulated to the members. It was felt reasonable to assume that each of us could be responsible for one e-mail every three months. The first communication is planned within the next couple of days.

The sending email address could be set up for the use of all the ConCom members, or we can send the emails to Ed and have them sent from the central hub. A member advised the latter, to keep the process as simple as possible. What we need to do is draw people's attention to the resources already published on the website, rather than create lots of new content. Some e-mails will go out in French, especially the ones prepared by Jules and Tim.

Africa Mini-LittWorld in Accra

We have not been able to re-connect with Rose Birenge of MAI but will do so this week. We still have plenty of time. The question was raised again, as to whether we want to meet as a committee at this gathering in Accra at the beginning of November. Most members think that they would be able to make it. One member had been thinking that a potential meeting in Johannesburg (suggested at the last ConCom meeting) may not be such a good idea. Another member expressed concern about the shortness of our meetings and also the gaps in between, which mean that it takes time to press on with things.

Does anyone know any of the current ECPA* leaders (*Evangelical Christian Publishers' Association). It was suggested that we should ask Matthew Elliott. The thought was that perhaps **Africa Speaks** would have something to learn from ECPA. It might serve as a kind of benchmark organisation for us. Jeremy Taylor could also advise on this. We decided to ask both of them who would be the critical contact people in ECPA, after which we could follow through on this.

Unanticipated Translation Costs

The Tyndale House Foundation felt that the Portuguese translation costs should be put against the ConCom budget and not against the Conference costs. Ed apologised for this misunderstanding. Modupe and Jules approved the expense and we will inform Mary Kleine. We will also circulate an update of the **Africa Speaks** financial spreadsheet to all the ConCom members.

MTI Opportunity

We discussed the opportunity being offered to us by MTI (Magazine Training International), to give a platform for **Africa Speaks** at their conference in Ivory Coast in September*. (*Exact dates still to be confirmed, but probably around the third week). Delegates are expected to attend from all over French-speaking West Africa. Someone underlined that we will definitely want to expose **Africa Speaks** to the MTI delegates, minimally through the one page advertisement space in their brochure, which is being offered at no cost. Everyone agreed that we would need a designer, which would incur professional costs.

We need to find out how much it would cost to sponsor a meal at the conference, since this is another possibility open to us. We will ask Sharon for more details, whilst gratefully accepting the kind offer of the one page.

We were informed that there will be a preparatory meeting in advance of the September conference. This will be hosted by CPE (Centre de Publications Évangéliques) on 20th February in Abidjan with some 20 guests.

Long Term Thinking & Staff

At a meeting with Jeremy Taylor, Mary Kleine Yehling and Karen Perlman, Jeremy suggested that perhaps **Africa Speaks** would benefit by having a staff member, but he did not develop this suggestion further. A committee member shared that she can well imagine that this could be helpful at a later stage, perhaps Jeremy is ahead of the ConCom in his thinking. It would be good to hear

his further thoughts on the matter. However it is likely that Jeremy would rather expect the ConCom to develop the suggestion.

We discussed the possibility of having someone available who could travel for **Africa Speaks**, as so much more can happen when people meet together face to face. Discussion followed.

It would be wonderful if someone who is well respected were available.

The partnership between those in Africa and those out of Africa is still very valid and necessary.

A level of face to face contact is very desirable, no virtual community can really replace this.

This kind of travel would require a significant budget.

Major issues facing publishers in Africa include, how do we move products and funds from country to country?

Such a person could address questions like these as well as try to solve some of the problems of the ConCom.

It was further pointed out that some publishers have been quick to address the need for electronic publishing, which eliminates the need to ship physical books. Then of course the downloaded book can be printed locally if the customer so desires. This surely has to be the future of global publishing.

We were reminded us that there are other Foundations (such as Cornerstone) which may offer funding. We need to remember that Christ is not limited to *our* limitations.

Should we consider bringing someone on board who can also work as an assistant to the ConCom, perhaps we can get a part time communications and administration person.

Unfortunately, Modupe lost her connection to Skype at this point, we later learned that this was due to a power failure.

Any Other Business

There was no other business as such, but a few observations and comments were made by way of conclusion.

This meeting conveyed more of a sense of urgency, perhaps because of Jeremy's questions which led to the need to produce more tangible results. Gratitude was expressed for opening up the bigger picture.

In light of the difficulties of distributing titles between countries, we wondered if perhaps we should have P4A somehow more on board because of this. A ConCom member stated that he would love to see a whole network for POD all around Africa, with payments in a general currency (USD, Euros, Bitcoin etc.) that everyone could use. Perhaps we should consider inviting Tim Kelly to participate in a part of the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

We resolved to have a longer-than-usual Skype call on Tuesday 5th March, with the need to draw some conclusions in advance of the Tyndale House Foundation Board meeting which will be on 11th April. It was suggested that Gathuku and Modupe* should work on the Agenda for 5th March, with everyone else notifying them of any particular topics for inclusion. (* Modupe had agreed to this prior to the lost Skype connection).

Prayer

We closed the meeting in prayer.

