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DOING AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: A RESPONSE AND A REVELATION

Richard J. Gehman

A recent issue of AJET (14.1 1995) contained an article by Augustine Musopole in which he critiqued the book, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective* (herein referred to as "the book") by Richard J. Gehman (herein referred to as the author). Musopole observes that "most" of what is written in the book is not new. The one new contribution, according to Musopole, is a suggested method of doing theology. "The emphasis that Gehman places on the doing of theology as a task of the whole church is most welcome, and especially the suggestion of a method that can make this happen" (page 16). The second part of this article is a *revelation* of what is actually taking place in the doing of theology, using the method described in the book.

The greatest treasure of any Christian is a personal knowledge of and relationship with the living God by faith. What greater riches could anyone have than to be reconciled to our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, God's only Son, and to experience the indwelling Holy Spirit who is our Counselor and Guide?

But this personal knowledge of God is mediated to men and women by the Holy Spirit through the written Word of God. When king David experienced answers to his prayers, he worshipped God and said, "for you have exalted above all things your name and your word" (Psalm 138:2). God's promises and the display of his faithfulness made the name of God and the word of God more highly treasured than anything else in the life of David. The apostle Paul likewise saw in the Scriptures a wealth of wisdom for he wrote, "**All** Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

What a rich treasure we have in the Bible. Its simplicity is unequalled in the wealth of narratives describing God's mighty acts in redeeming his people. Its profound wisdom is imparted to us by forty inspired biblical authors on three

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continents, writing in three languages, over a period of 1,600 years, all writing on one common theme. The writings of these forty kings, poets, scholars, statesmen, fishermen and peasants have engaged the best intellects over the centuries in trying to comprehend the revelation God has imparted to us. Its comfort, guidance and blessing to God's people over the centuries cannot be measured.

From the very beginning of history, Satan has attacked God by attacking his Word. By placing a doubt in the mind of Eve about the veracity of God's Word, Satan drove a wedge between Eve and God. The deceiver continues to do the same today.

Musopole's article is a painful reminder of what has been happening among the churches throughout the world. The key issue is the final authority for doing theology. In this article we shall first provide a *response* to the critique of the book, showing the importance of being faithful to the Scriptures. Following the *response* will be the *revelation* of what is actually taking place on the ground.

RESPONSE

Musopole enumerates five "troubling aspects" of the book. Following is a summary of these "troubling aspects" together with a response.

Presuppositions

Musopole believes *the Evangel* (who is Jesus Christ) should be our greatest concern, not *evangelical theology*. He believes that the book assumes a theology and imposes this evangelical theology on the African church, a theology which is alien to the continent and imported from the West. Instead of focusing on evangelical theology, he believes, the African church must focus on Jesus Christ who is the Evangel. "The Evangel is primary and African evangelicalism is the tool of the Evangel and not the other way round." "It is the reality of Jesus in the lives and culture of Africans and as their way of salvation, and everything else following from this makes African Christian experience evangelical" (page 18).

Who is the Evangel? Jesus Christ is indeed the centre of our hope (Col. 1:27). We preach Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 2:2). We call people to repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 2:38). Our devotion is to Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:21) and not to some written theology. But the unmentioned question from Musopole's article is "Who is this Jesus Christ?"

Is Jesus the eternal Word of God as declared by John the Apostle? The prologue of the Gospel of John declares Jesus to be God who was with the Father from the beginning and the Creator of everything (Jn. 1:1-5). Jesus Christ, according to the account of John, publicly claimed to be God when he confessed to the Jews, "before Abraham was born, I am" (8:58). In response the Jews tried to stone him for his blasphemy. But many critics today cannot accept Jesus according to the Gospel of John, for Jesus is portrayed as divine. Therefore, they conclude that this Gospel was written in the second century and reflects the beliefs of the early Christian Church, not the testimony of an eye witness.

If Jesus is not the one portrayed by John, is he the one portrayed by the apostle Matthew who wrote of his virgin birth (Matt. 1:18-23)? If the virgin birth cannot be accepted, may we then accept the Jesus according to the Gospel of Mark, to which recent criticism has assigned primacy in importance and priority in time among the Gospels? According to Mark Jesus healed the sick, calmed the storm (4:35-41), raised a dead girl to life (5:21-43), fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two fish (6:30-44), walked on the sea of Galilee (6:45-56), made the deaf to hear (7:31-37) and the blind to see (8:22-25).

Musopole is correct when he affirms that Jesus Christ is "primary" but the troubling question is "Who is this Jesus Christ?" Is Jesus the historic figure described in the Gospels or the one whom modern men reduce to their own fancy and personal taste? For Evangelicals, this is a crucial issue which must be addressed.

More than that, according to the Scriptures, the Evangel (from the Greek word, εὐαγγέλιον) is the Good News (or gospel) about Jesus Christ with a specific content. Paul used gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) sixty times to refer to the message to be preached which indeed focused on Christ. Paul defined the Evangel which had been passed down to him as an early Christian tradition from Jesus Christ himself and of "first importance," "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4).

Evangelicals are deeply committed to Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and to the gospel as defined by the Scriptures.

What is evangelical theology? Musopole reveals his misunderstanding of evangelicalism by suggesting that this theology arose "in response to the Enlightenment" and was "introduced to Africa as a new battlefield in the theological wars that had been raging in Europe and America" (page 17).

The essence of evangelicalism can be traced in the Christian church to the very beginning, as we shall demonstrate later. As a modern movement, evangelicalism embraces a wide range of doctrinal beliefs and practices, "transcending denominational and confessional boundaries" (Pierard 1984:379).

When Christian missionaries brought the gospel to Kenya more than one hundred years ago, the four main missions were the Church Missionary Society (of the Church of England), Church of Scotland Mission, the Methodist missionary society and the Africa Inland Mission. These four missionary societies were very diverse in theology. They differed on church government, baptism and eschatology. They did not agree on the issue of Covenant Theology or Dispensationalism. Neither were they united over the issue of election and perseverance of the saints. They even came from different nationalities. Yet those missionaries were united in their evangelical faith. In fact they felt so united in spirit because of their evangelical faith that they discussed seriously the possibility of establishing one single, united evangelical Christian church in Kenya. The two issues which prevented this union were the high church views of the Anglican church and the emergence of theological liberalism.

Waldron Scott, former General Secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship, affirms that evangelicals are noted for three distinctives: "the primacy of the Bible as the inspired word of God, the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through conversion and the new birth, and a strong commitment to evangelism and missionary endeavour" (Scott 1985:107). Each of these three are essential for evangelicals. More will be said later about "the personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

It is the doctrinal issue that bothers Musopole the most. Harold Lindsell, former editor of *Christianity Today*, summarises the evangelical theological beliefs more fully as follows:

"First and foremost evangelicalism was committed to theological orthodoxy, holding firmly to the essential fundamentals of the faith. These consisted of adherence to biblical inerrancy, supernaturalism, the Trinity, the deity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ, His substitutionary blood atonement, justification by faith alone, the bodily resurrection and the second coming of Christ in power and great glory to consummate history" (Lindsell 1985:113).

These theological beliefs of evangelicals mentioned by Lindsell are at the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To deny the trinity of God, the deity of Christ (and his virgin birth), to deny the truth that Jesus died on the cross in the place of sinners to reconcile men and women to God, to deny the need of justification before God by grace through faith alone, and to deny that this same Jesus is returning in glory in his resurrected body, is to deny the gospel of the historic Christian church from the beginning. If anyone changes this gospel, it becomes a different gospel and the Christian faith becomes a different religion. For this is the message of the Bible.

Musopole does not seem to object to the preaching of the gospel in Africa by missionaries. He assumes the value of Christianity. What he objects to is "evangelical theology." He assumes that there is an African form of Christianity which will be neither liberal nor evangelical.

The book being critiqued *assumes* an evangelical theology which is clearly delineated on pages 90-93. These are the assumptions, yes, affirmations of all evangelicals world wide and have been throughout church history, until the era of rationalism in modern times.

However, Lindsell laments the dilution of the term, "evangelical." He comments that in recent years the views of evangelicals have "been stretched to a point where it is difficult to define what and who an evangelical is." He further comments:

But more recently, the term *evangelical* has been diluted. A formidable number of evangelicals have become fully at home with views their founding fathers saw as anti-biblical. And many in today's theological world enjoy calling themselves "evangelical," even though they have embraced quite foreign views (Lindsell 1985:114).

Evangelical Christianity is none other than historic Christianity, or what we might call today, biblical Christianity. The question which the African church must answer is "What kind of church does God want us to be? A church based on the Bible or one that is diluted by culture?"

The Role of Scripture

Musopole believes Jesus Christ is our final authority, not the written Word of God. He asks the question, "Is African evangelicalism right to insist on Scripture as the 'final authority in matter of faith and conduct?' Is this not to put the vehicle in the place of the reality being conveyed by it? ... Jesus promised

his presence to be with them to the end of the age. Jesus, the Word that is God, is the final authority in matters of faith and conduct and is the one who authenticates the scriptures and draws out their intention" (page 19).

In fact, he accuses the author of "paternalism" for "imposing a ready-made view on the African church." "Without the African Christians establishing their own biblical foundation, an African evangelical theology will never emerge" (page 19). "African Christians need to find answers for themselves and this calls for a testing of all theological spirits to find out whether they are of Christ and relevant to the African context" (page 20).

Jesus Christ and the Scriptures: We have returned to the same issue, the issue of final authority. According to Musopole, Jesus Christ is our final authority. This we grant. "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..." (Heb. 1:1,2). According to the writer of Hebrews, Jesus has spoken the final word.

But we know nothing of Jesus Christ, either of his life or teaching, apart from the Scriptures. We cannot divorce our faith in Christ from the Scriptures.

Since Christ is "the final authority in matters of faith, it is important to know what he taught. What did Jesus say about the Scriptures, according to the biblical account? A careful reading of the Gospels reveals that Jesus consistently treated the Old Testament as a reliable record of historical events. For example, while modern critics doubt the historicity of Jonah, Jesus accepted the historical narrative of Jonah when he commented, "The men of Ninevah will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12:41). His confidence in the historical account of Noah and the flood is similar (Matt. 24:37). Nowhere does he cast any doubt on the reliability of the Old Testament Scriptures.

In fact he affirmed his highest confidence in the total reliability and trustworthiness of the Scriptures. Jesus prayed to the Father, "Your Word is truth" (Jh. 17:17). Though Jesus freely condemned the Pharisees, he never questioned their appeal to the Scripture. "Rather he rebukes them for their failure to study it sufficiently profoundly" (Wenham 1955:15). Jesus declared,

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the

least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:18-19).

Now the question for Musopole is this. If Jesus Christ is his final authority in matters of faith and conduct, does he accept the reliability and trustworthiness of Scripture as Jesus Christ did, according to the Gospel records? If he does, he is an evangelical who emphasizes "the primacy of the Bible as the inspired Word of God." If he does not, then we must ask, "Who is this Jesus Christ who exercises final authority in his faith?" If he is not the Jesus found in the Scriptures, then he is a Jesus fashioned and shaped by his own reason, personal preferences and biases. This is the reason why Evangelicals place such a strong emphasis on the supreme authority of Scriptures.

Importance of Inerrancy of Scriptures: Musopole is simply in error when he states, "The view of biblical authority that Gehman presents is a statement out of the theological battles of Europe and America concerned with infallibility and inerrancy which arose out of the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods" (page 19). Confidence in the supreme authority and trustworthiness of Scripture was found in the Church from the beginning and throughout its history until modern times. Belief in the infallibility of Scripture is as old as the Christian Church. An honest study of the history of Christian thought will show that the evangelical view of the Bible is the historic Christian faith.

Listen to the words of Augustine, the great African theologian of the fourth century.

I have learned to yield this respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it" (quoted in Erickson 1983:226).

Martin Luther said, "The Scriptures have never erred...The Scriptures *cannot* err...It is certain that Scripture would not contradict itself; it only appears so to the senseless and obdurate hypocrites"

Musopole makes the assertion, "The authority of the Bible is derived authority because it points to Jesus ..." (page 19). The Bible does point to Jesus

but its derived authority is from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the apostle Peter wrote, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of men, but men spoke from God as *they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*" (II Pet. 1:20,21). Furthermore, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16). The authority of the Bible is due to its divine inspiration.

The Dangers of Epistemological Captivity

Musopole believes that a knowledge of the truth is best captured in a personal relationship with God, not in propositional revelation. He states, "it has already been pointed out that evangelicalism as arising from the West has been shaped by an epistemological approach which is not simply evangelical, but Aristotelian in orientation and the result is a scholastic theology filled with paradoxes and dualisms" (page 20). "Western evangelicalism," he contends, is "steeped in rationalistic categories." "Africans and the Bible have more ways of communicating truth than simply the propositional way which is more a legacy of Aristotelian syllogisms than biblical wisdom that uses narrative, prose, proverbs, ritual, symbols, parables and poetry" (page 20). Musopole's primary concern is with a "personal relationship and obedience to God."

Evangelical concern for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ:

Once again Musopole has misunderstood evangelicalism. He says, "The truth of the Bible is captured better as the whole of being is tuned to God in a personal relationship and obedience, *and not only and simply* by assenting to the truth of some statements, a method that has a tendency of freezing the truth and thus killing the life which it is supposed to convey" [italics mine] (page 21).

If Musopole means everything which he seems to say in the above statement, and if we understand fully what he is saying, then we both agree. This goes to the heart of what evangelicalism is.

"Although evangelicalism is customarily seen as a contemporary phenomenon, the evangelical spirit has manifested itself throughout church history" (Pierard 1984:380). Spiritual vitality, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and missionary zeal were common features among the apostolic church fathers. When the medieval church lost its spiritual life and instead emphasised formal assent to doctrine, renewal movements sprang up, including the early monastic movement and medieval reform movements.

Lutherans were known as "evangelical" because they redirected the church to the Evangel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ based on God's authoritative

Word. All evangelicals find their affinity within the Protestant Reformation. But the Protestant Reformation in the seventeenth century, like the Roman Catholic Church in the medieval age and earlier, began to turn formal, traditional and nominal. When Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy became rigid and lifeless and the Protestant world was engulfed in endless strife over details of theology, the Protestants required mere assent to doctrine. The result was loss of spiritual vitality.

It was in this context of “frozen truth” which killed the spiritual life (in the words of Musopole) that evangelical movements sprang up in the seventeenth century. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) became a spokesman for what became known as *Pietism*. This scholarly Lutheran pastor concluded that doctrinal purity was not enough for the Christian Church. The new birth and commitment to a *life of piety* should be the priority among the Christians. Spener and the German Lutheran Pietists emphasised small Bible study fellowships for laymen who studied the Scriptures and applied it to daily life. The Holy Spirit was recognized as the One who would illuminate the Scriptures. It was the development of the spiritual life of the person that Pietists were most concerned about.

It was a later Pietist, Gottfried Arnold (1660-1714), who argued that “the true church is not defined by its doctrinal stance as judged by the confessional decisions but by its fidelity to the new birth by the Holy Spirit” (Bundy 1988:279). This evangelical spirit continued on with Methodism in Great Britain in the eighteenth century and the Great Awakenings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Klaas Runia, of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, claims that the main characteristics of the evangelicals can best be understood as rooted in three layers or strata.

1. The bottom layer is formed by the *Reformation*. Almost all evangelicals feel associated with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The term “evangelical” originally meant also “reformative” as an antithesis to papistic.
2. The next layer has different names in different countries: *Puritanism* in the Anglophone world, *Pietismus* (Pietism) in Germany, and *Nadere Reformaile* (Continued Reformation) in the Netherlands. But a deep kinship is underlying these names.
3. The third layer is formed by the different *revival movements* of the 18th and 19th centuries, that are closely related. (Breman 1996:26).

Despite the many differences among evangelicals, they all have similar characteristics which are derived from these three historical layers or movements. These three distinctive characteristics of evangelicals according to Runia are:

1. The unconditional acceptance of the Holy Scripture as the authoritative Word of God to us. The *sola scriptura* of the Reformation cannot be compromised.
2. The personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Here one sees the connection with Puritanism, Pietism and Continued Reformation. As stated by Runia it is quite right that the evangelicals emphasise the atoning work of Christ and the necessity of rebirth and sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit.
3. The emphasis on the evangelistic and missionary task of all believers, which is part of the revival movement. (Breman 1996:26,27).

This background of the evangelicals should lay to rest the concerns of Musopole. Evangelicals are greatly concerned about a personal relationship and obedience to Jesus Christ. Knowing the truth of God is impossible without this personal relationship. Studying the Scriptures, understanding the doctrinal creeds and assenting to all of these can never bring one to a knowledge of the truth. For Jesus Christ is the Truth. To know Him is a matter of a personal relationship.

Evangelical Concern for Divine Revelation as Act and Word:

Musopole says he is "*not only and simply* concerned by assenting to the truth in some statements." We take from this that in addition to his concern about a personal relationship with God, he is also concerned about verbal truth.

Though the author is a son of a Pietist and gratefully traces his spiritual ancestry back through the Great Awakenings, the Pietists of Germany and to the Reformation, he does have one reservation about the statement made above by Gottfried Arnold. The true Christian Church is marked not only by spiritual vitality but also by doctrinal fidelity to Scripture. According to Scripture, divine revelation is not only in his mighty acts but also in his inspired Word. The author fears Musopole errs in his beliefs in his understanding of revelation.

In contemporary theology, revelation is said to be personal, as God discloses himself as a person to men and women. The contemporary theological thesis is that revelation is not "the communication of information (or propositions)." Ernest Wright taught that "history is 'the primary sphere in which

God reveals himself, 'as opposed to words" (Davis 1984:93). God has revealed himself in his "mighty acts" in history, not in words and propositions.

However, if these "mighty acts" never occurred in history, they are mere myths and meaningless. For example, if God never delivered the children of Israel from Egypt by the miraculous judgement of ten plagues, one is hard pressed to understand how this is revelation.

The evangelical believes that God who has revealed himself through mighty acts in history, has also revealed himself through his spoken Word. The God who can act is also the God who can speak. And He has spoken.

The persistent denials of the propositional component of revelation now appear in retrospect to be one-sided and just a bit silly, in the light of the biblical data (e.g. Lk. 1:26; Matt. 2:22; Col. 1:26; 3:4; 4:4; Eph. 3:5; 6:19; II Cor. 2:14; 11:6, etc.) and the considerable literary productions of the neo-orthodox scholars themselves. If there is so little cognitive content in biblical revelation, what is there to talk about? Why all the voluminous commentaries and systems of theology? If God can be experienced, but not really known in an articulate way, then why not become mystics and leave all the scholarly apparatus to less enlightened souls? (Davis 1984:96).

The notion of Musopole that evangelicalism is "Aristotelian in orientation and the result is a scholastic theology" is farfetched. It may be that some streams of evangelicalism have fossilised and become dead forms. The fact is that evangelicalism in its very origin and by its very nature is far removed from scholasticism.

The Protestant Reformers rejected the scholastic methods and emphasised the study of Scriptures, though they did "utilize Aristotle's deductive logic and gave reason an important place in theology." However, the sons of the Reformation began to use scholastic methods "to inquire beyond biblical texts into the intricacies and implications of Protestant theology, especially when election and the will of God were considered" (VanderMolen 1984:985).

The result was great controversies with intricate arguments and "tightly reasoned doctrinal statements" over predestination, free will and the like. It was in the midst of this Protestant scholasticism that the Pietists arose in the seventeenth century and placed greater emphasis on experiential Christianity as we have seen above. So evangelicals by definition are not imprisoned by subtle, sophisticated scholastic theology.

Nevertheless, the evangelical does believe in verbal revelation, a divine disclosure of Himself and his will in the written pages of Scripture. Unless one believes that the Christian faith is mystical and beyond rational formulation, he can and does formulate his beliefs in words. The God who performed mighty acts in redemptive history is also the one who spoke to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, the one who spoke to the apostles by his Son, Jesus Christ, and the one who led the apostles to write the Scriptures by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised would guide them into all truth.

Living the Whole Truth

Musopole believes that African Christian Theology should apply the whole gospel for the whole man, and not limit the gospel to the salvation of souls. Because the author gives priority to "the spiritual renewal among the churches and building up the Kingdom of God," Musopole accuses the author of being "narrowly focused" and suffering from "a Hellenistic dualism." "It is the whole gospel, to the whole person, in the totality of their culture, and for the whole world" (page 23).

This "troubling aspect" of the book is surprising, given the fact that nearly four pages were devoted to "some possible crucial needs" which should be researched (pages 103-106). Under needs in society reference is made to "many social ills" including "lack of justice, particularly when the poor and minorities are oppressed by the rich elite." What particularly troubles him is the question of priorities. Let us quote the whole statement from the book.

My own personal conviction is that the Christian Church's first responsibility is to set her own house in order. We ought to be concerned about social sins and have the courage to speak out against them. But if Jesus Christ is not exercising his lordship among his people in the churches, we are in a very weak position to exercise a prophetic role in society. If the Christian Church is a spiritual, dynamic body, which reflects the holiness of God, then her voice in society will commend attention. Let us give priority to the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit within the churches through powerful preaching and prayer. As God sanctifies His people wholly, we are then capable of being the light and salt in the world to which God has called us (page 105).

This may not be the conviction of others, but it remains the firm belief of the author. But to answer Musopole fully, more should be said.

World View of the Evangelicals: Contrary to the impression of Musopole, the history of evangelicals reflects a holistic concern for the needs of society at large. Springing out of the revivals under John Wesley in England during the eighteenth century, there were many examples of social concern. Latourette makes this comment.

The emphasis of the revivals was upon the transformation of the individual through faith in Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, through complete dedication to God, and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Those so committed were ardently missionary and sought to win others to a similar experience. They also strove to alleviate or abolish social conditions which warped or destroyed human lives. The movement begat radiant hope and inspired many to intense and unremitting activity (Latourette 1975:Vol.II, 1031).

Evangelicals like John Howard (1726-1790) laboured long and hard to improve prison conditions throughout Great Britain, Ireland and Europe. Evangelicals sought to curb gambling, duelling and cruel sports common in those days. They worked tirelessly to curb child labour and to protect children who were employed. Education for the masses was promoted. Wealthy evangelical members of the so-called "Clapham Sect" served in a wide range of philanthropic enterprises. Several were involved in the fighting of slavery, including William Wilberforce (1759-1833) who led the fight against slavery in the English Parliament which abolished slavery in the British dominion in 1833. Granville Sharp, another member of the "Clapham Sect" was responsible for the establishment of Sierra Leone in 1787 for freed blacks of African descent.

Not only is the social concern of evangelicals part of their heritage, evangelicals are continuing to be involved in the needs of society. Missionary agencies provided the backbone of education and schools in many developing countries. Mission hospitals and dispensaries remain to this day a prized source of medical care. Community projects, sponsored by evangelicals, abound. Disaster relief and community development are taking place throughout the world by evangelical agencies such as World Vision, Tear Fund and World Relief.

It must be admitted that the relationship between the spiritual ministry of evangelism/discipleship and social concerns has been a point of debate among evangelicals. The Reformed branch of evangelicalism tends to be more holistic in their approach to the application of the gospel to the whole man. Through the pressure of churches in the Third World, the International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974, the issue of social action

was brought to the foreground. In 1982 the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility was held to grapple with this issue.

Enough has been said, however, to demonstrate that Musopole is not alone in his concern that the whole Gospel be applied to the whole man. Evangelicals, through their history and present engagement, have demonstrated the same.

Primacy of a Person's Relationship with God: The point of disagreement with Musopole is not over the question whether Christians should engage in social action. The question is the relationship of the spiritual ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God by the Church with the aim of conversion and discipleship on the one hand, and the engagement of Christians by the Church in social services on the other hand. The evangelicals believe that a person's relationship with God is of first importance. Musopole's charge that the author's position "suffers from Hellenistic dualism" has no basis in fact.

There are two basic reasons why the author is convinced that his statement in the book, quoted above, is correct.

The first reason is a biblical one. A careful study of the content of the early preaching of the gospel (compare I Cor. 15:3-5; Phil. 2:6-11; Rom. 10:9; I Cor. 12:3 and Peter's sermons in the book of Acts) reveals the one primitive apostolic gospel.

In briefest outline, this message contained: 1) A historical proclamation of the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, set forth as the fulfillment of prophecy and involving man's responsibility; 2) A theological evaluation of the person of Jesus as both Lord and Christ; 3) A summons to repent and receive the forgiveness of sins (Mounce 1960:257).

The Great Commission given to the Apostles by our Lord focuses entirely on the spiritual ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God in evangelism and discipling (Matt. 28:18,19; Lk. 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). Biblical teaching elsewhere indicates that social concerns are a concern to God and should be for his people. But the Great Commission and the content of the early preaching indicates that the supreme mission of the church is to make disciples of every nation.

A second reason for believing that "spiritual renewal among the churches and building up the Kingdom of God" has priority in doing African Christian Theology, is a pragmatic one. The churches in Kenya who engage in political action, calling the government to greater justice and honesty, are curtly told to set their own house in order. Churches are so weak spiritually, with corruption and dishonesty, power struggles and church conflict, immorality and carnality, that the churches have no moral authority to speak to society as a whole. This is not theory but observable fact.

God knows that society needs to hear a prophetic voice from the churches. If the church does not become a light in our societies, we are hopelessly lost. If Christians do not prove to be the salt in society to preserve it from total collapse, what hope do we have? Indeed, included in the book are many social issues that need resolution by the church. But without question, the most serious need is a renewal and revival within the churches so that they might become the light and salt in society. Only then will the church have the moral authority to speak. Only then will her own members practice the law of Christ and begin reforming the corrupt society in which they live.

Social activity is part of the Christian's responsibility but its relationship with the supreme mission of the church must be properly spelled out. Based on the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility held in Grand Rapids in 1982, we maintain a three-fold relationship between evangelism and Christian social activity:

- 1) First, Christian social activity is a consequence of evangelism. As a result of Christian conversion, true believers begin to express love and good works and show concern for justice in helping others. There is danger in substituting the fruit for the tree. Promoting social action which does not spring from the new birth will result in mere humanitarianism which can be done by non-Christians.
- 2) Second, Christian social activity is a bridge to evangelism. Deeds of kindness and concern for justice provide opportunities to preach the gospel and prepare people to hear and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ. This is best illustrated in the building of schools and hospitals by missions in order to win people to Christ.
- 3) Third, Christian social activity is a partner of evangelism, both activities being expressions of the gospel. As individual Christians are led by God to engage in humanitarian efforts, they can express their love for God and people and thereby serve and honour God, even as others are led by God to serve in evangelism and discipling.

The Need for the Whole Tool-Box for Biblical Exegesis

Musopole believes the biblical exegete should use "all tools of biblical criticism" and African Traditional Religion to interpret Scripture, without limitations of the grammatico-historical method. He states the following:

While the Bible is significant due to Israel's election to be God's servant in mission to the world, the question of where was God before the Gospel reached Africa is critical to an African evangelical theology and it impinges on soteriology as well as the theological status of the ancestors (page 23).

Importance of Principles of Interpreting Scripture: We have come full circle. The fundamental issue raised by Musopole is the final authority of the Christian faith. Gordon Fee writes, "It has long been my conviction that the battle for inerrancy must be settled in the arena of hermeneutics [principles of biblical interpretation]. The basic differences that have emerged among evangelicals...are not textual, but exegetical and hermeneutical" (Fee 1980:161). Indeed, the question of how we interpret the Bible is critical if the Scriptures are to exercise supreme authority in our faith and practice.

Interpreting the Scriptures involves two aspects which must not be confused: 1) What did the Scriptures mean to the human authors and first readers? 2) How do the Scriptures apply to us today? Application and meaning for us today is one thing which must not be neglected. But exegesis to discover the original intent and meaning of the Scriptures is basic to all hermeneutics.

Evangelical Presuppositions for Hermeneutics: Rudolf Bultmann developed a radical and critical method of biblical interpretation which has evolved over the years into the "New Hermeneutics." The two so-called "horizons" are 1) the original intended meaning of Scripture and 2) the present day understanding and application of those words. They speak of "the fusion of the horizons" so that the original intended meaning of Scripture has no independence from our understanding of those words. Interpreters therefore disregard the original intended meaning of Scripture. Instead of asking, "What does the text mean?" they ask, "What does the text mean to me?" Furthermore, they engage in the most radical form of higher criticism which rejects the supernatural in Scripture and assumes an evolving canon based on a naturalistic world view.

Evangelicals need to be clear in their pre-understanding before they engage in the interpretation of Scripture. Davis outlines evangelical presuppositions which will shape their hermeneutics (Davis 1984:253-255).

The most basic presupposition is that "there is only one, all-wise, and self-consistent God who is the ultimate author of scripture." Because the only true and living God is the ultimate author, there is unity and self-consistency in Scripture. This of course is a statement of faith, but it is based on the testimony of Scripture itself.

The second presupposition is that God "in his desire to communicate a saving revelation to mankind, has both the desire and the ability to do so successfully, in spite of the ...immaturity of sinful human instruments." The Bible clearly reflects the personality, life history and culture of the human authors. The second presupposition, based on the self-testimony of Scripture, assures us that "the Bible is in fact an authoritative divine revelation rather than merely a distorted human record of religious experiences."

Because the Scriptures are "God-breathed," the very Word of God and not merely the words of men, "the evangelical interpreter presupposes a basic harmony among the various parts of the canon and within the various works of a single writer." This also means that "all Scripture is profitable" (II Tim. 3:16).

In addition to these presuppositions, the evangelical exegete uses the exegetical tools of Grammatico-historical exegesis in order to determine the meaning of the text. In order to discover the original meaning of the text the exegete uses the biblical languages, studies the historical background, geographical conditions, the life setting and the types of literature represented.

This exegesis is to be distinguished from the exposition and application of the meaning of the text. "To be valid, exposition must be firmly based on exegesis: the meaning of the text for hearers today must be related to its meaning for the hearers to whom it was first addressed" (Bruce 1984:565).

This evangelical approach to biblical interpretation helps to avoid subjective interpretation. Granted, everyone approaches Scripture with his own preconceived and conditioned ideas. But if the interpreter is engaged in exegesis (reading out of Scriptures what the original biblical author intended to say) instead of eisegesis (reading into Scriptures our own preconceived ideas), there is an objective criteria to determine the truth or error of the exposition of Scripture.

Musopole has fallen into this tragic error. Not only does he desire to use "all tools of biblical criticism" without making any critical distinction, he desires to allow for "enlightened and informed subjectivity within the community of faith in theological discourse" (page 23). He accepts "the Bible as *a* norm," not as *the* norm. He prefers not a "fixed and static" Bible but one that is "rather creatively and incarnationally living and unfolding as applied by the Holy Spirit" (page 24).

Conclusion

The Church in Africa may desire to be unique but it is deeply affected by all the cross currents of theological dispute in the West. One can be certain that the theological perspective of Musopole was not derived from personal reflection on the Scriptures in Africa. It reflects the critical and unbelieving approach within western theological circles.

The Christian Church in Africa was fundamentally evangelical in its origins. But the Church is at the cross roads today. Will the Church in Africa be faithful to the Scriptures or will some churches dilute and distort the Word of God through a loss of confidence in the Scripture? The article written by Musopole indicates a serious loss of confidence in the Bible as the supreme authority for faith and practice. The challenge facing the African evangelical churches is to build her Christian faith and life on the written Word of God.

REVELATION

The book, *Doing African Christian Theology*, was first published in 1987. In the recommended Proposals for doing theology (chapter 4), reference was made to the formation of "A Theological Advisory Group." What was not disclosed at that time was the fact that such a group already existed. It seems appropriate at this time, some ten years after the publication of the book and some eleven years after the formation of TAG (Theological Advisory Group), to reveal the development, difficulties and progress of TAG. The reader is recommended to compare the following with the recommendations found in Chapter four of the book.

Organise for Theological Reflection

Gain approval of the church leadership: In October 1995 the author consulted with several key, albeit junior, church leaders in the Africa Inland Church (A.I.C.), Kenya, concerning the development of a Theological Advisory Group which would research various problems facing the church in order to find

a biblical solution. Upon their advice the proposal was taken to the AIC National Bible Schools Committee (NBSC) which is an association of approximately twenty Bible training institutes, colleges and centres for the Africa Inland Church in Kenya.

When the matter was presented to the NBSC meeting in February 1986 they welcomed the idea. Each member institution of the NBSC appointed a representative from their institution to form the membership of the Theological Advisory Group (TAG).

A major reason for recommending that TAG be placed under the NBSC was acceptance. New ideas are not readily received by elders who are church leaders. It was thought that the NBSC, composed of younger, better educated men, would more readily understand and accept the idea of TAG. This proved to be the case.

More than that, the Chairman of the NBSC was also a member of the Central Church Council and had a right to speak at the highest levels of the Council. Within the AIC structure, approval of anything from top leadership is crucial for acceptance. Through the Chairman of TAG, he was able to present the formation of TAG to the Central Church Council. Questions ensued. They finally asked the composition of the members of TAG. When they were informed of these names, they gave their blessing.

Gaining approval of church leadership has been frequently sought as will be demonstrated later. On 7th and 8th June, 1988, a few members of TAG met with the Bishop of the AIC in a special TAG retreat at the Baptist Conference Centre in Brackenhurst, near Nairobi, to discuss and pray about the vision of TAG. Everyone agreed that we should make plans for celebrating the centennial anniversary of the AIC in 1995 by emphasising spiritual renewal. To assist TAG in doing research the Bishop agreed to write a letter to the church leaders, granting official permission to do research. In addition to prayer, the leaders agreed that the following topics were important for research: worship, Christian marriage and family, salvation, the Holy Spirit and spiritual leadership.

Inquiry into the various challenges requiring research: On 4th February, 1986, a small ad hoc committee of eleven men convened in Nairobi to discuss the various needs within the church for which research was needed. After much discussion there was a compilation of nearly twenty needs which needed attention. Included in these felt needs were the following:

Ignorance of the Bible among the laity, baptism of polygamists, inadequate worship in the churches, The Lord's Table, a misconception of spiritual authority, breakdown of marriages, a gap between leaders and laity, witchcraft, dreams, funeral services, female and male circumcision, a dichotomy between profession and practice, church discipline, lack of adequate resources in churches, legalism, lack of trained Christian teachers in primary and secondary schools, proper use of money, ignorance of the real enemy in the church, family planning and birth control (Minutes of Special TAG Seminar, February 4, 1986).

Theological Advisory Group meets to plan: On 7th June, 1986, twelve members of TAG, including representatives from each institution represented by the NBSC, convened for the first meeting at Scott Theological College. Included was a prominent leader in the AIC who was chosen as the Chairman. His leadership of TAG in the early years was crucial for he was able to protect it from disapproving voices from different circles.

Being the first meeting of TAG, various foundational matters had to be agreed upon. Because TAG was composed of representatives chosen by each Bible training institution of the AIC, TAG was owned by all the training ministries, including the Christian Education Department and the Theological Education by Extension. But TAG was only the governing body of research, not the research body itself. TAG needed to appoint a Research Team and a Manuscript Drafter who would coordinate the research and edit the final document.

The Manuscript Drafter was a key person and much was discussed about his job description. The suggestion that he should have a minimum of a Master of Divinity was hotly debated, for some feared this would eliminate many. In the end the following compromise statement was made concerning his educational qualifications: "Competence in biblical and theological studies (preferably with a minimum of a B.D. (or the M.Div. equivalent). Time has provided irrefutable evidence, however, that this level of education is the minimum essential for effectiveness. However, education is not sufficient. He must have writing and research skills. He should also have ministerial experience in Africa, preferably with experience in the local church ministry. He needs to be sensitive to the ideas and feelings of the Research Team so that the end product is truly a reflection of their conclusion and not his own opinions foisted on them.

The suggestion in the book that the Research Team should be composed of three to five members was practiced in the first Research Team. But this proved to be inadequate. A functioning Research Team of four or five

men and women who are competent and knowledgeable has proved to be adequate. A Research Team with seven or eight functioning members is better. A large attendance beyond ten is counterproductive for it means that many are unable to participate in the discussion and provide their contributions. But the problem with a Research Team with only five members is that many do not come for one reason or another. Therefore, a membership of twelve or fifteen seems necessary in order to have the desirable number of seven or eight or even ten. However, we have had very profitable meetings with only four or five present, simply because the members present had much to contribute.

The selection of members is crucial. If the research is to represent theological reflection for the national church, there needs to be representation from many communities. This can be done in Rift Valley or from the area around Nairobi. The contribution which someone can make is not necessarily tied to his educational level. What is needed is someone with experience, someone who knows the people in his church well, someone who has had theological training and can reflect on the Scripture and apply the principles of Scripture to the problem at hand.

Experience has demonstrated that there are many pastors and Bible College teachers who have rich understanding and profound wisdom. They are able to provide deep insight into the knowledge of a particular problem and the nature of the solution. This is the beauty of the proposal of the book. The research to be done is not *primarily* book centred, though every Research Project has utilised books. The goal, however, is to do primary research which has not been done before. This requires field research. To appoint members to the Research Team who have a wide range of experience, coming from different communities and all serving as "task theologians" in the ministry, means that they provide different perspectives on a given subject.

These members of the Research Team may not all be able to compose a scholarly piece of work. They may not be trained extensively in theological and biblical disciplines, nor in research or writing skills. But their wisdom and spiritual insights through years of church experience are rich and contribute immensely to the whole work. In fact, the author must confess that one of his most enriching experiences as a missionary has been to learn from these men and women. It has been like another university education in deepening and broadening his understanding of the Kenyan church.

The pattern of doing theology in TAG is this. The members of TAG appoint a Research Team with a Manuscript Drafter which does the actual research. The content and shape of the research is a group effort, determined

by the Research Team. They share from their wealth of wisdom and insight. They do further research in the field and bring reports. The Manuscript Drafter serves as the secretary and editor to help fashion the final document which is approved by the Research Team. This manuscript is then duplicated and given to the members of TAG who also read it and pass their approval on it. The National Bible Schools Committee exercises their ultimate authority by having each member appoint a representative to serve on the Theological Advisory Group.

Having laid down various guidelines for developing research, the members of TAG decided on "the pilot project." This was critical. Amazingly, the members came up with a recommendation that was never mentioned in the previous list of needs. They reached this conclusion within minutes. From hindsight we can say this was providential.

The first topic to be researched was "prayer." This decision was spontaneous and unanimous. Why such a topic? These following reasons were never discussed during the first TAG meeting, but from hindsight we have concluded the following. This decision was strategic for three reasons.

1) Who can be against prayer? As a new and untested group, no doubt many wondered what would be the goal of TAG. "Theological Advisory Group?" "Who asked them to advise us?" Pastors and elders may not be praying, but they certainly cannot challenge the need for prayer. 2) This was a "felt need." The Bishop of the AIC had expressed concern many times that "prayer is leaving the AIC." As a result, TAG had decided upon a topic of research that was near to the heart of church leadership. 3) Though research must be done and though new approaches should be taken for various things, the root cause of most problems within the churches is spiritual. If one's relationship with God would be made right, a major part of the problems would be resolved. So it appears that the first topic chosen by TAG was providentially chosen by God.

In fact a later description of TAG states that "the ultimate purpose of TAG is spiritual renewal in our Bible Schools/Colleges and in our A.I.C. churches through a study of God's Word and in prayer."

To this end the following goals for TAG were established:

1. To enable our Bible School/College teachers to be increasingly relevant as they prepare students and graduates to deal more biblically and effectively with various contemporary issues.

2. To research particular needs, issues and problems facing the A.I.C. Christians and A.I.C. churches in Kenya today through the study of the Bible and the Kenyan A.I.C. context.
3. To seek God's answer for these needs, issues and problems as we prayerfully apply the principles of Scripture to our context.
4. To select target groups with whom we need to communicate the Word of God.
5. To devise means and materials (e.g. seminars, conferences, written materials and cassettes) required to communicate effectively to the target groups.
6. To communicate the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit so that lives are being changed into the glory of Christ.

Research Teams are Formed

Research Team on Prayer: This was a pilot project. We learned many things the hard way. Research was made among the churches to learn the extent of the problem of prayerlessness in the AIC. We discovered that 35% of the churches do not have any prayer meetings. However, 16% of the churches have over 40% of their Sunday morning attendance in prayer meetings during the week. The Research Team concluded from their experience that churches do not pray because pastors are not praying.

Therefore, the target group to be reached in this research project was the pastors and church leaders. The means of arousing people to pray would be through the provision of biblical studies on prayer for small group Bible studies. A Bible study book on prayer was prepared with twenty nine lessons on the importance of prayer, meaning and nature of prayer, prayer and the nature of God, effectiveness of prayer and problems and questions concerning prayer.

The Lord provided the funds to publish this book, both the Leader's Guide and a student workbook in four languages. Provision was also made to conduct seminars for church leaders in four areas of the country. The purpose of this was not only to introduce the Bible study materials to them but also to gain their support and approval.

Once these books were published and seminars held, the Research Team was changed into the Steering Committee for Prayer Renewal. A Coordinator for Prayer Renewal was selected. His task, together with the members of the Steering Committee, is to conduct seminars with church leaders throughout the country to arouse them to renew prayer in their own lives and their churches. This project is continuing to this day.

The purpose of TAG is not simply research with literary productions setting on a book shelf to be read. But the purpose is "spiritual renewal," that is, spiritual change brought into the churches. This requires more than printed materials, for African society is primarily an oral society. Change is brought through oral communication. As Bible studies are held with small group discussion and as seminars are held with pastors and elders, changes are being brought about by God's grace.

Research Team on Worship: The second project selected was worship. Once again, hindsight would suggest this to be providential since prayer and worship go hand in hand. This was not planned through foresight.

This Research Team was larger in number, having learned from the Pilot Project. It was based in Eldoret in the Rift Valley where many different communities live together. So our research team was broadly representative of the AIC.

Extensive research was carried on in all regions of the country with 1,300 interviews made about worship. Extensive and enriching discussions were made by the Research Team on worship. The end result was the composition of two books. One was for small group Bible studies on worship with twenty lessons. We learned that shorter books and briefer lessons were advantageous. The second book was a practical, "how-to-do-it" book entitled, *Worship Guide: How to Improve Worship in the Africa Inland Church*. This book has proved to be a valuable resource tool in training elders and pastors. This book is largely a reflection of the discussions and research of the Research Team, edited by the Manuscript Drafter.

The surprising conclusion of the Research Team was that they did not know of any "model of worship" in the churches. Since worship is more caught than taught, it was agreed that we would focus our attention on the Bible Schools and Colleges and enlist their help to teach students and provide models of worship in chapels.

Having published the two books mentioned above in 1991 in two languages the Coordinator of TAG (who happens to be also the Manuscript Drafter) visited eighteen AIC Bible training institutions to present the challenge of renewing worship in their institutions. Thirteen agreed to come on board and become involved in worship renewal. This involved a commitment to do the following: 1) teach the students the biblical understanding of worship, using the TAG book, *Come, Let Us Bow Down...Worship in the Christian Church in Africa*;

2) teach the students how to improve worship in the churches, using the TAG book, *Worship Guide*; 3) Conduct models of worship in chapel, once weekly; 4) encourage students to use the TAG books in Field Education ministries.

Subsequently, two annual workshops were conducted for teachers from these institutions. Included in the second workshop was the visit of six different churches in Nairobi to observe their worship services. A follow up indicated that the institutions were satisfied and did not feel a need for further training in the immediate future.

Research Team on Christian Marriage and Family: This Research Team was based at Kijabe. It had the largest number of highly trained individuals of any of our research teams, both men and women. We engaged in library research on African traditional marriage customs together with field research. We enlisted the help of a Christian attorney to help us understand the laws of Christian marriage in Kenya. This Research Team was for some time suspended in order to complete and publish the research materials on worship, even while TAG was conducting workshops on prayer renewal.

The final production was first published in 1994 under the title, *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa*. The first printing of 3,000 books was sold out within fifteen months and a second printing of 6,000 books was made in 1996. It is a 220 page book intended as a textbook in Bible Schools and Colleges. In fact the book is used widely as a textbook.

The intention is to conduct seminars on marriage and family after developing popular instructional materials. Since change comes through interaction and discussion, rather than through the written page alone, this is a desirable goal. However, due to various impediments, this has not yet happened.

Research Team on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit: This is the fourth topic and is not yet complete. The Research Team met four times and engaged in much discussion and field research through personal interviews. Now, due to the nature of the project, the burden of responsibility is on the Manuscript Drafter who must research extensively in Scripture and printed material to develop a biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit and relate this to our Kenyan situation.

Modification in the Structure of TAG in 1994

For the first eight years the ministry of TAG was carried on by the Manuscript Drafter as a full time assistant under the National Bible Schools Committee. Such an arrangement worked fine initially. But there were potential difficulties in sustaining this research ministry of renewal in the future.

Through the initiative of the Principal of Scott Theological College an invitation was extended to incorporate the research ministry of TAG under Scott. This involved much discussion and negotiation with the NBSC which was reluctant to see the ministry absorbed into Scott, one member of the NBSC. The final agreement was to continue the structure of TAG as members constituted by the NBSC, but have the Manuscript Drafter and Coordinator of TAG be appointed by Scott.

There are many advantages to the new arrangement. Scott Theological College, which is in the process of being chartered by the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya, is deeply concerned with research. Discussion is under way to provide sabbatical leaves for teachers to do research. By having the national theological institution at university level being committed to the ministry of research through TAG, ensures that this ministry will continue. Moreover, by continuing to have TAG linked with the NBSC ensures that TAG is not lost in one institution but will contribute to all the other Bible training ministries throughout the Africa Inland Church.

Lessons Learned in the First Ten Years of TAG

1. Many people are hungry for biblical study and guidance in problem areas off their lives. There is a felt need for all these topics chosen by TAG to research. Everywhere we have gone, there is wide open reception and responsiveness. The lack of prayer in the churches is lamented by many. Believers recognize the poverty of worship in the churches. They yearn for something more meaningful. In a day when marriages are in trouble, there is an eagerness for biblical solutions and help. The topics chosen for research by TAG are what the churches desire.
2. The value of Research Teams is manifold. The wisdom and insight which evolves through mutual sharing and discussion is awesome. No one person could ever derive such a full and complete understanding of the problem and solution as what can be found from a group of experienced churchmen and women. It has been interesting to observe that sometimes those with significantly less education have deeper insight and greater understanding of the problem and the nature of the solution than the more highly educated

- individuals because the former are closer to the situation and know the people better.
3. This approach to research also enables credible research to be done with only one qualified person who is able to bring things together in the final document. Churches differ in their level of development. Some may not have a qualified person who is able to lead in group research. However, by incorporating experienced and knowledgeable church leaders on the Research Team, led by the right kind of Manuscript Drafter, every denomination is able to provide research in areas of need.
 4. Selecting and preparing individuals to be Manuscript Drafters is a challenging task. This person requires certain gifts, training and experience which are not in abundant supply. There is no substitute for adequate training. But training does not ensure the right qualifications. Being a Manuscript Drafter requires ability to lead a Research Team to a consensus, rather than imposing his or her ideas on them. It requires ability to think, plan ahead, analyse, research and write. It requires blood, sweat and tears to produce a document which is refined after many, many revisions.
 5. Renewal in churches, no matter how modest, involves change. And many resist change. The intention of every TAG Research Team has been not to revolutionise the AIC but to strengthen it and restore the heritage of the church in prayer, worship, Christian marriage and family and so forth. But this inevitably brings about opposition from those who cling to the present tradition. Ensuring that respected leaders support the ministry of renewal is essential for any modicum of success.
 6. In order to bring about change in society, there must first be change within the churches. A weakened and anemic church cannot hope to bring about change in society. One church leader likened his church to a pregnant woman about to deliver a child. But this woman is so weak that she is unable to bring forth the child. If the churches are anemic spiritually with a compromised Christian testimony, what hope is there to bring about change in society? The Christian Church brings change only as she faithfully preaches and teaches the Word of God. Only then we she be able to fulfill her role as light and salt in society. Therein, is the reason for the goal of TAG to bring about renewal within the Bible Schools and Colleges and among the churches.

CONCLUSION

The author concludes by saying that the primary purpose of this lengthy article is the same as the primary purpose of writing the book. Let me quote from the book.

"The basic purpose of this book is twofold: to alert the evangelicals concerning the faulty foundations for some of African Christian Theology; and to challenge the evangelicals to become engaged in this necessary task of reflecting on God's revelation of Himself and His will for his people in the context of Africa" (Introduction).

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