

A History of the Religion Department at Africa Nazarene University

Twenty-two years ago at the Africa Regional Conference in Mbabane, Swaziland, Nazarene educators from across Africa (including this writer) came together to discuss and make plans to meet the Africa regional education needs. During those discussions, the development of a Nazarene liberal arts college to prepare both lay and ministerial leaders for the Church in Africa was recommended. Members left that December 1983 conference praying that God would bring to reality this dream.

However, in the early 1980's, African countries were not granting church related university charters. Then Zimbabwe and Kenya led the way. Following the provisions of the Kenyan Universities Act of 1985, Nazarene leaders spent countless hours preparing the necessary documents and curricula to enable ANU to receive its Interim Letter of Authority from the Kenyan Commission for Higher Education in 1993. Many Kenyan and missionary church leaders joined together with hundreds of volunteers and work and witness team members to contribute their time, money and expertise to make ANU possible. With the Charter, which was granted in 2002, ANU has full academic approval as a holiness university to develop leaders for the Church in Africa.

What follows is more than simply a history of the establishment of the Religion Department at Africa Nazarene University. It is also a brief description of how God brought about the ANU dream.

Interestingly, 1983 is the year that Africa Regional Director, Dr. Richard Zanner, had made his exploratory trip to Kenya. In January the following year, the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene approved the opening of its work in East Africa. A few months later, Harmon Schmelzenbach visited Kenya and filed the registration papers. In November the Kenyan authorities approved the registration of the Church of the Nazarene, and Harmon and Beverly Schmelzenbach moved to Nairobi. For a more detailed account of the Schmelzenbachs' work and the early beginnings of the Church of the Nazarene in Kenya, please read Harmon's book ***The Edge of Africa's Eden***.

Leonard Mpoke joined the Schmelzenbachs in April 1985 as the Africa East Field (AEF) Developmental Ministries Director. Among his responsibilities was attending to over 30 applicants who desired to become Nazarene pastors. In June 1985 Rev. Stephen Akello, currently a BTH student at ANU, and 14 others from Western Kenya expressed interest in Nazarene ministry.

In August 1985, Mrs. Rowena Gastineau began to lay the foundation for pastoral training as the AEF Curriculum Developer. Then the Africa Regional Education Coordinator, Dr. Ted Esselstyn, officially began the training with 27 prospective pastors in the first 3-week AEF Ministerial Training Intensive in February 1986. Rev. Dan and Melody Anderson arrived in 1986 and began informal pastoral training in western Kenya. By April there were over 60 applicants to be pastors.

Preparations for university-level ministerial education in East Africa soon began. When Africa Regional Director, Dr. Richard Zanner, visited Kenya in 1986, he discussed with the AEF leadership a proposed university-level seminary. Then, a second ministerial training intensive was held in September with 80 trainees. A third intensive followed in March 1987 with 70 trainees. And soon, approval came from the World Mission Director, Dr. Robert Scott, allowing a Nazarene university-level college to be located in Nairobi. And, a fourth ministerial training intensive followed in September.

The founding of Kenya Nazarene Bible College (KNBC) was the next step, and Dr. Mark Moore was appointed as the first rector in 1988. Before his arrival, land was already purchased for KNBC near Ongatta Rongai, and 12 students were prepared to enroll. However, two more ministerial training intensives were organized, with over 70 trainees in March and with 108

trainees in September 1988 before the first classes began at KNBC with 12 diploma students in October 1989.

KNBC was also the beginning of the Proposed Africa Nazarene University. However, the proposed university established its offices at Central Church of the Nazarene, and its Board of Trustees held its first meeting in January 1990. The next month Dr. Al and Kitty Jones came to develop the extension education program. And shortly thereafter, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gilbert came to set up a bi-vocational training program for pastors and their wives.

Dr. Al Jones became the second rector (principal) in mid-1991 when Dr. Moore retired. 36 students enrolled in January 1992. Also, the first computer classes were offered in January. However by mid-year, Rev. David Moyer assumed responsibilities as the third rector (director) as Dr. Al Jones began to give his attention fully to the Proposed Africa Nazarene University with the assistance of Dr. Bob Woodruff, Dr. Glen Kell and Mr. Terry Newton. A satellite campus of KNBC was also established in Mbeya, Tanzania under the direction of Rev. Daryll Stanton in May 1993.

The establishment of Africa Nazarene University required both a mandate from the international Church of the Nazarene and the Kenyan authorities. So, in July 1993 Dr. Al Jones presented a Resolution to the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, which adopted it, providing for the establishment of ANU. Later the same year the Kenya Commission for Higher Education granted a four-year Letter of Interim Authority to ANU. For a more detailed account of this process, see Dr. Ted Esselstyn's book *Dreams, Doors and Degrees*.

To allow for the transition of the KNBC diploma students from the Ongatta Rongai campus to Central Church of the Nazarene, August 1994 was set for ANU degree classes to begin. Dr. Martha John was elected as Vice Chancellor (VC) and Dr. Floyd John, as Academic Dean (DVC) in early 1994. Due to limited dorm space, ANU opened in August with about 60 students. It became the first Nazarene university to be established outside of USA.

The new university began by offering the Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Theology, Master of Arts in Religion degrees and a post-graduate diploma in Religions Studies. 19 students enrolled in the Religion Department the first semester, including: Barihoreye Celestin, Banyicanzi Ferdinand, Akendo Henry, Nadiope Jim, Nyambura Judith Muthumbi, Woldu Million, Achieng Hallon Nixton Anyango, Onyango Silla Ochieng', Tekle G. Mariam, Wangure Simon Muniu, Nsanzimana Etienne, Mutowa Cosmos, Mbanze Carlos Vicente, Obotte Wellington Peter N., Ngobi Fredrick Kisaga, Kirichu Joseph, Masika Agnes Kanini, Kisiyenya Phanice Liagamula, Ruho Alfred and Mvunabandi Schadrack.

KNBC, its satellite campus in Mbeya and other extension work (also with about 40 students) were soon restructured to form the AEF – Africa Nazarene School of Extension (ANSE), and after a period of transition Dr. Terry Read became the AEF – ANSE Director.

In 1996 Professor Leah Marangu, who had already contributed much to the development of ANU, was elected as the second VC. She has continued to provide strong vision and leadership. The early fulltime Religion Department teaching staff at ANU included: Dr. Gary Goodell, Dr. Thomas Lowery, Dr. Carol Rotz, Rev. Jim Rotz and Rev. Debbie Flippo. Dr. Terry Read and other missionaries served as part-time lecturers. This writer began part-time in August 1997 while serving as the Kenya Mission Coordinator.

The first ANU graduation, with 25 graduates, took place in May 1998 na shangwe kubwa (with great rejoicing).

Today, as ANU celebrates 10 years as a university, both institutions which were birthed by KNBC are thriving. ANSE has over 1500 certificate and diploma students in numerous centers throughout Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. There are over 800 students from 18 African countries at ANU, with 32 students currently in the BTH program and 14 students in the MAR program.

Fulltime missionary teaching staff at ANU now includes: Dr. Rod Reed, Dr. Mike VanZant and Dr. Daryll Stanton. Also, three of our MAR graduates have joined the ANU teaching staff: Rev. Joseph Kisoï, fulltime; Pastor Simon Wangure, part-time and Pastor Stephen Muoki, part-time.

Other BTH and MAR graduates are currently serving the Church in several countries, including: Burundi, D R Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Some graduates are pursuing higher degrees worldwide at other institutions.

Currently new BTH curriculum is being developed which will include several options to better equip students for the demands of contemporary ministry. These include new tracks in the areas of Biblical Studies, Chaplaincy, Counseling, Doctrine, Education, Evangelism & Missions, Management plus Urban and Youth Ministries.

The door is open wide for holiness education to have a major impact on the Church in Africa in this century. Let us challenge our youth to effective Christian living and ministry. We can achieve this as we develop a community of African scholars to articulate our faith in Jesus Christ. ANU is leading the way as it prepares both ministers of the Gospel and lay Christian leaders at the degree level. Because of all we have already received from God, we expect an even better future for the Church in Africa.

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