



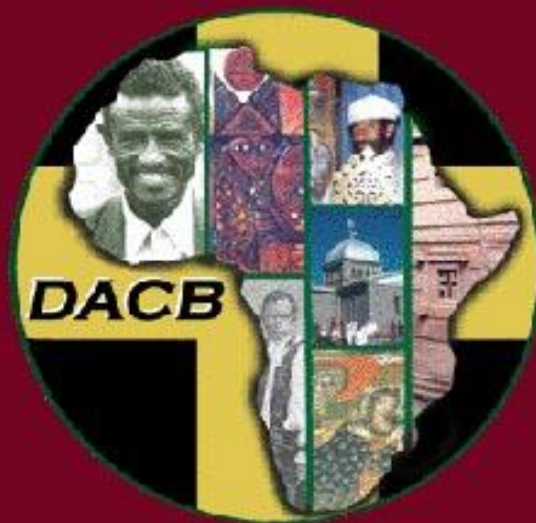
An Introduction to the



Dictionary of African Christian Biography



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Project Director



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Project Manager





FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE:

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you...”

Luke 1:1-4

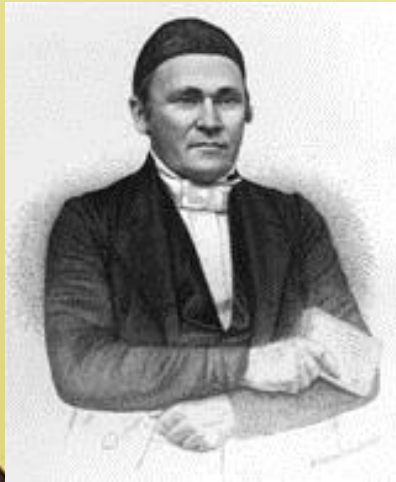
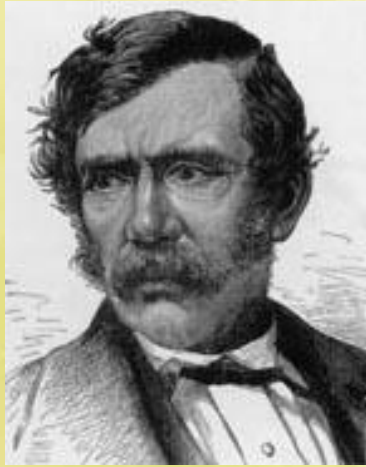


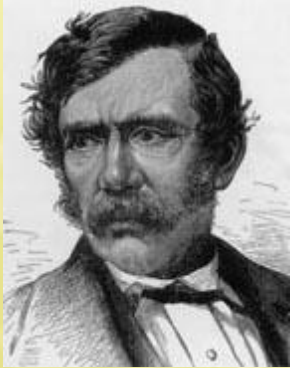
WHY THE *DACB*?



- The information gap
- A few statistics
- Response

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?





- **DAVID LIVINGSTONE:**
19th century Scottish missionary-explorer to southern Africa; fought the slave trade



- **MARY SLESSOR**
Missionary to Nigeria: planted churches, started schools, fought infanticide and other traditional practices



- **JOHANN LUDWIG KRAPPF:**
Pioneer missionary to East Africa; early Bible translator.

- **WILLIAM WADE HARRIS:**
West African prophet who baptized over 100,000 people in 18 months in Liberia, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire



- **SIMON KIMBANGU:**
Died in prison after a five month ministry of evangelism and miraculous healings; founded one of the largest independent churches in Central Africa



- **KIMPA VITA:**
Prophet and leader of one of the earliest independent church movements (16th century); burned at the stake.



WHAT WE HAVE HEARD...



While these pioneers planted the seeds of Christianity on African soil, they had little impact on the growth of the church. And yet they are well known because reference books document the work of the **Western missionaries** in Africa.

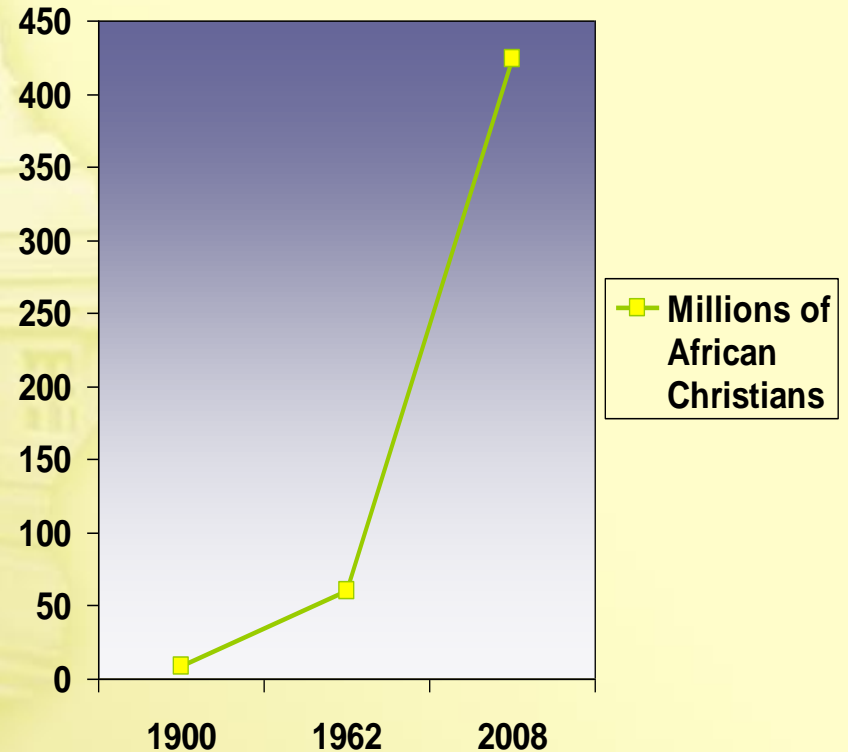
VS. WHAT WE HAVEN'T...

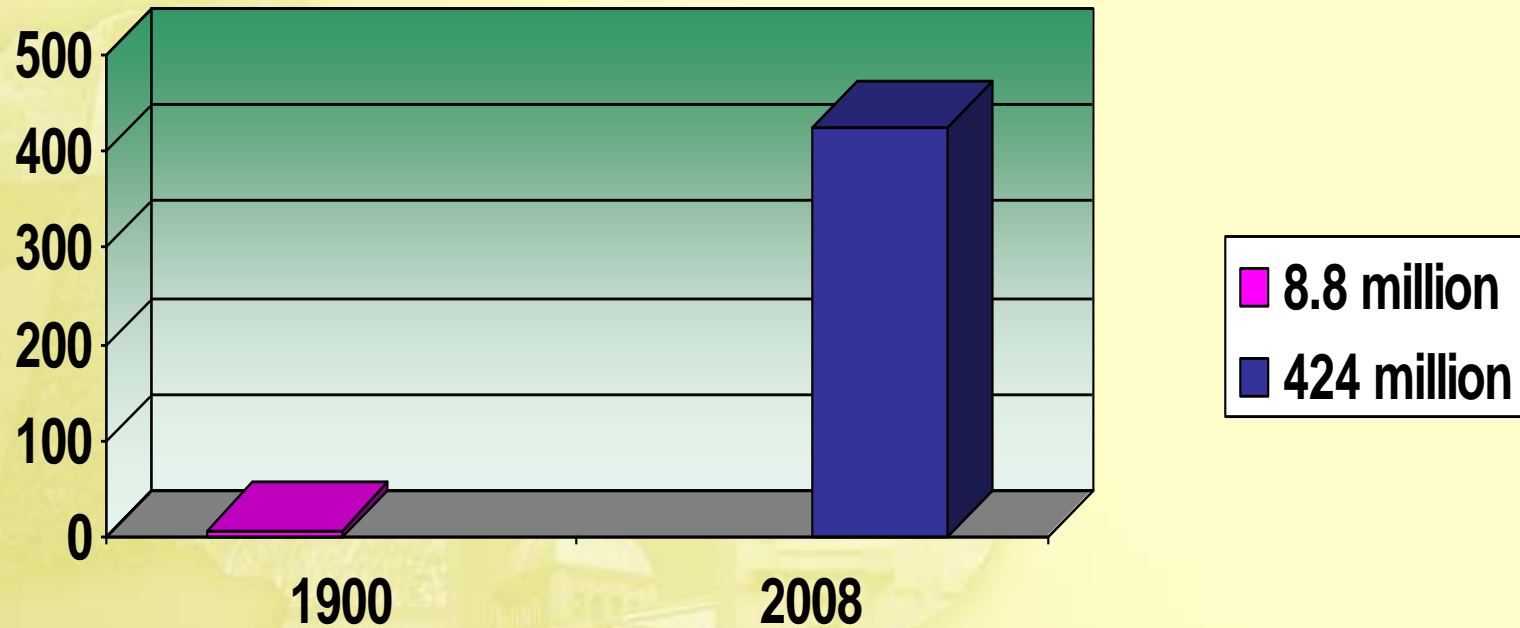
In contrast, many of these same reference works *do not mention* pioneer **African** church leaders and founders such as *these* whose ministries yielded astounding fruit in the birth and growth of the African church.



NEW CENTER OF GRAVITY

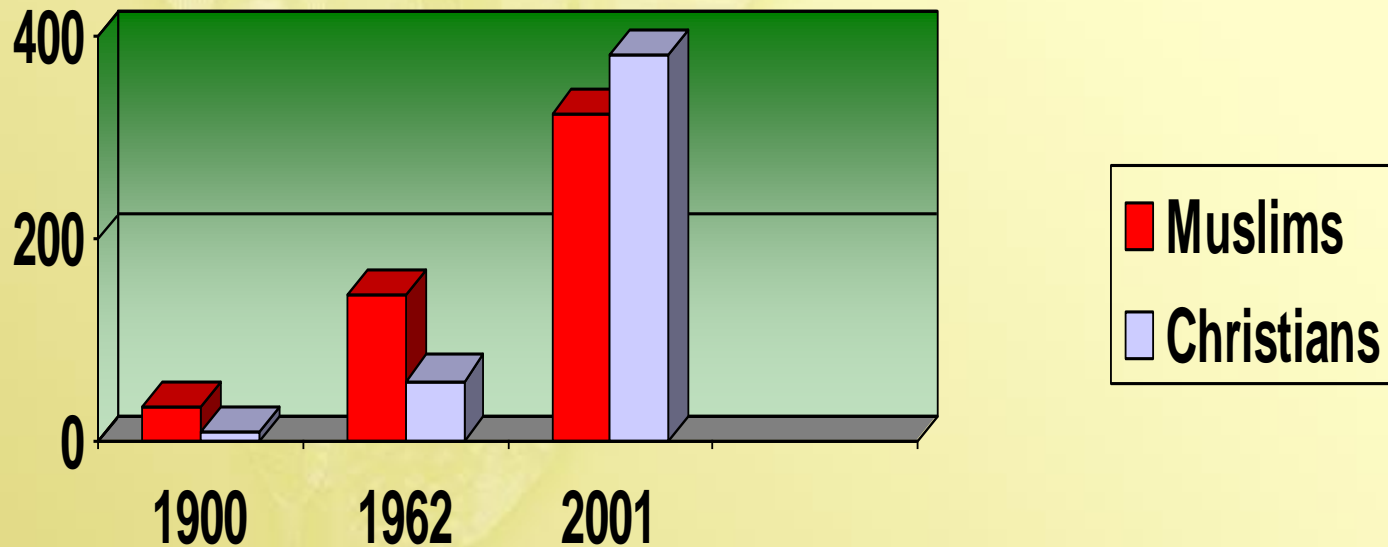
- Contrary to the Western church which **plateaued** or **declined** in Europe and the U.S.A. during the 20th century, the Christian church in Africa **grew** at an astounding rate.





- During the 20th century, the number of African Christians exploded
 - from **8.8 million** in 1900
 - to **424 million** in 2008.

- In 1900 there were **4 times more Muslims** in Africa than Christians.
- By 2001 this demographic was **reversed**. Africa's population was made up of:
 - 41.3% Muslims
 - **48.4% Christians**



THE INFORMATION GAP

Despite

- ✓ the **decline** of the Western church AND
 - ✓ the **growth** of the African church
- Few people are aware of the astonishing transformation taking place within world Christianity.

WHY THIS GAP?

- Most of the key African church fathers and mothers left no written record of their lives.
- The available stories are inaccessible to most because they are **oral**.



THE RESULT?

- Editors of reference works and professors of church history **don't have information** on the pioneers of African Christianity.
- African institutions do not have adequate tools to teach the history of Christianity on the African continent.

CYCLE OF MISINFORMATION

Lack of historical data on the African church



Few understand the importance of the African church in World Christianity

RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION GAP

- In 1995, a consultation at the Overseas Ministries Study Center discussed the need for “an international dictionary of non-Western biography.”



The major outcome was
an announcement of
plans to create a

Dictionary of African Christian Biography



www.DACB.org

THE DACB VISION



By Dr. Jonathan Bonk, Founding Director :

*“The Dictionary of African Christian Biography: A Proposal for Revising Ecclesiastical Maps.” **
(1999)

Title of article in Missiology: An International Review, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (January 1999), pp. 71-83

WHAT IS THE *DACB*?



- The Challenge
- Accessibility
- Scope
- Non-proprietary

THE CHALLENGE

- The *DACB* challenge is to create a memory base of African church history, written **for** Africans, **by** Africans, and **available** to Africans and African institutions at **no cost**.



ACCESSIBILITY

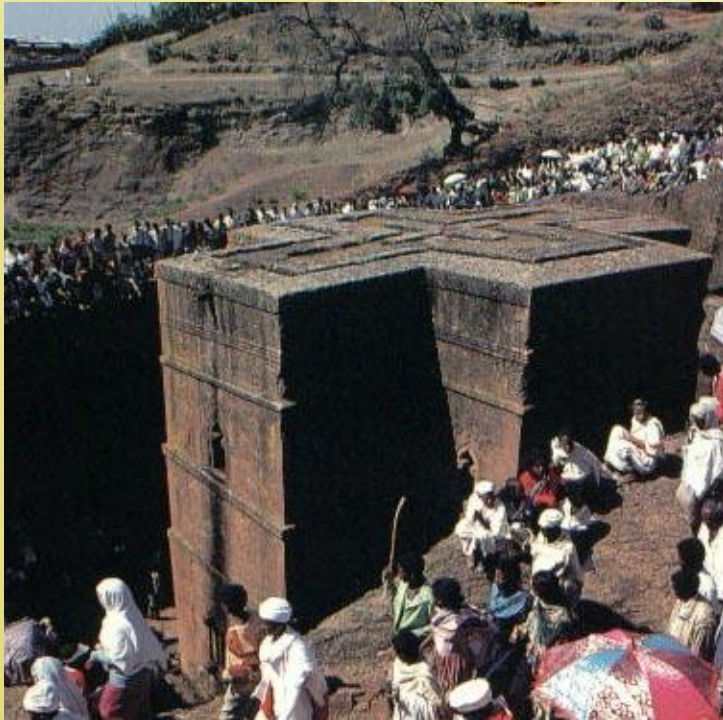
To reach as many people as possible, the *DACB* was designed as an **electronic database** :

- **free** access online (no subscription fees)
- distributed on CD-ROM to African institutions **free of charge**.

www.DACB.org



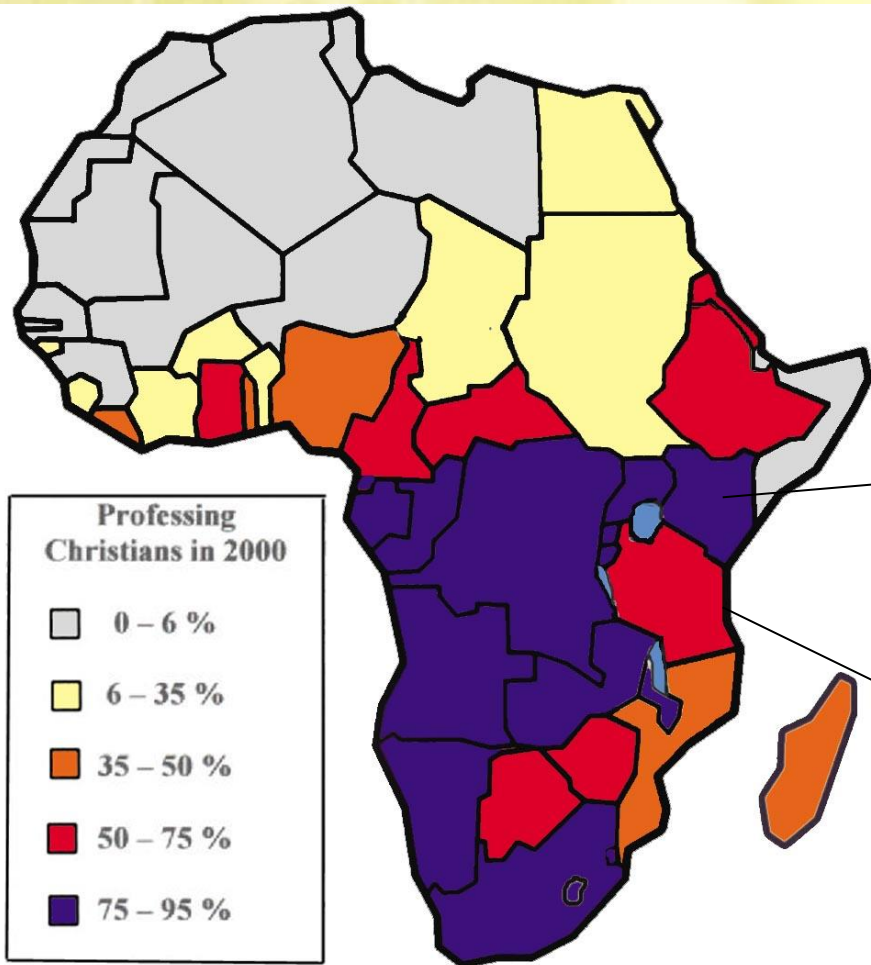
CHRONOLOGY



- The *DACB* documents the history of the church in Africa **from the time of Christ to the present....**

GEOGRAPHY

- ...over the entire continent.



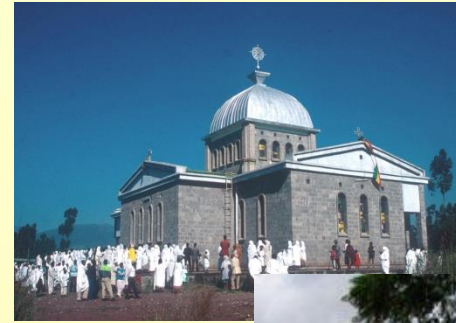
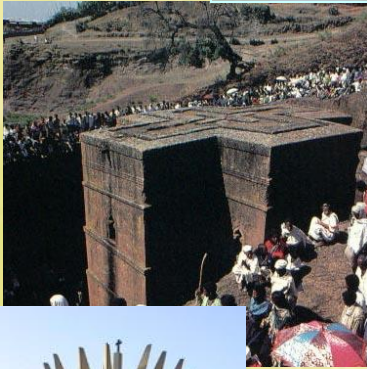
75-95% Christians in 2000

50-75% Christians

*Statistics are from *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), vol. I, by Barrett, Kurian and Johnson.

DENOMINATIONS

Any denomination that self identifies as "Christian" is included.



Wacitawala

Kimbanguists

Church
of the
Nazarene

Methodist

ROMAN
CATHOLIC

ABAKA

Anglican

Presbyterian

ORTHODOX

Baptist

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints

African Israel

Church Ninevah

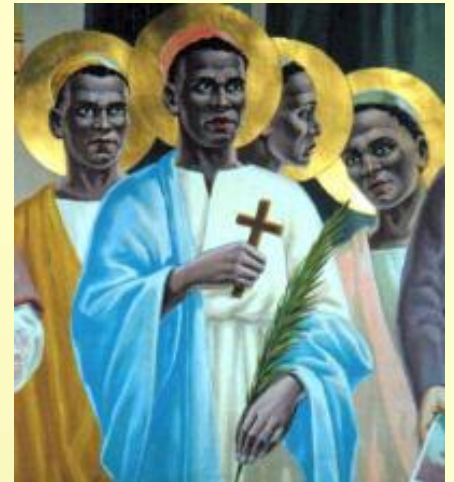
Aladura

Seventh Day Adventist

- As a research tool, the *DACB* aims at inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- As broad and as flexible as possible.
- Included: All persons deemed to have played an important role in the African church on the local, national, regional or denominational level.



LINGUISTICALLY

- The *DACB* database contains over 2,000 stories in **English**, with about 500 in **French** and a handful in **Portuguese** and **Swahili**.
- While we have a few funds for translation, more are needed.

INFORMATION SOURCES

- Both **oral** and **published sources** are used.
- Documentation standards are those used by people working in the field of oral history.

WRITTEN SOURCE

Sources:

Short biography of Dr. Pastor Bekele Lakew, read at his funeral ceremony, Alemaz Zewdie (Bekele's widow), interviewed by the author in June 2005.

ORAL INTERVIEW

LEGITIMACY

- Each story is identified with its **author**, the **participating institution**, the **supervisor**, and the **liaison coordinator** in order to ensure the legitimacy of the subject and the accuracy of the story.

AUTHOR



This article, received in 2004, was researched and written by **Njoku Chimaobi**, a student in the Department of Political Administration, University of Port Harcourt, under the supervision of **Dr. Kemdirim O. Protus**, DACB liaison coordinator at the **University of Port Harcourt** and DACB regional coordinator for Nigeria.



INSTITUTION



LIAISON COORDINATOR

NON-PROPRIETARY

- Publishing rights are freely granted to churches, institutions or publishers who wish to print any portion of the *DACB* for classroom materials or church history booklets.

- The CD-ROM can be copied without restrictions.
- We ask that proper attribution be given to the *DACB* for materials used.



HOW THE DACB WORKS



- Africa
- Staff
- Serving the academy
- Serving the church

IN AFRICA



Academics and students in church-related educational institutions in Africa write stories for the DACB, using both oral and written sources.

Dictionary of African Christian Biography

HOME AFRICA MAP ALL SUBJECTS ANCIENTS WOMEN CHURCHES PHOTOS

Find

Home
The Project
People
Story indexes
new stories
africa map
all subjects
ancient map
ancient church
women
non african
photo index
authors
project like stories
institution stories
churches
Resources
Institutions
For Writers
Contact

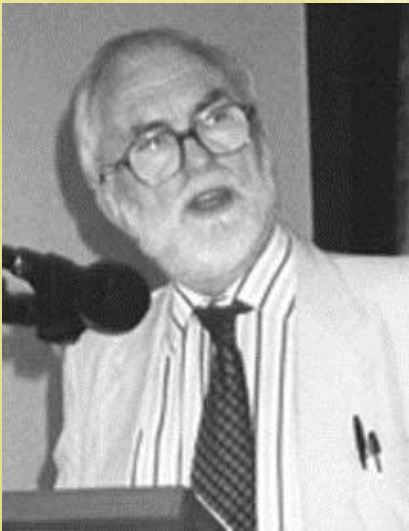
Biographies by Faculty, Students, and Researchers affiliated with
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
Ogbomoso, NIGERIA
Liaison Coordinator: Dr. Deji Ayegboyin

* Story has photo POR Story is in Portuguese
FR Story is in French SWA Story is in Swahili

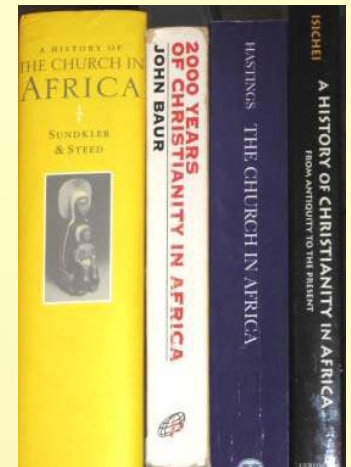
Biography	Affiliation	Author	FR	POR	SWA
Abiala, Titus	Anglican	Ayodele Adetayo Ajayi			
Adegbite, Joseph Adejumo	Nigerian Baptist Convention	Samuel Olatubosun Oyedele			
Adekunle, Joseph Adegbale, Tadele	Nigerian Baptist Convention	Abiola Ayodeji Olaniyi			

NBTS in Ogbomoso organizes 2-week Ph.D seminars that require students to write 2 biographies of Nigerian Christian figures. From 2007 to 2011, NBTS contributed over 70 stories.

OTHER SOURCES OF STORIES:



- Academics, scholars, and lay people from around the world
- Biographies from published reference works, used with permission
- Project Luke scholars



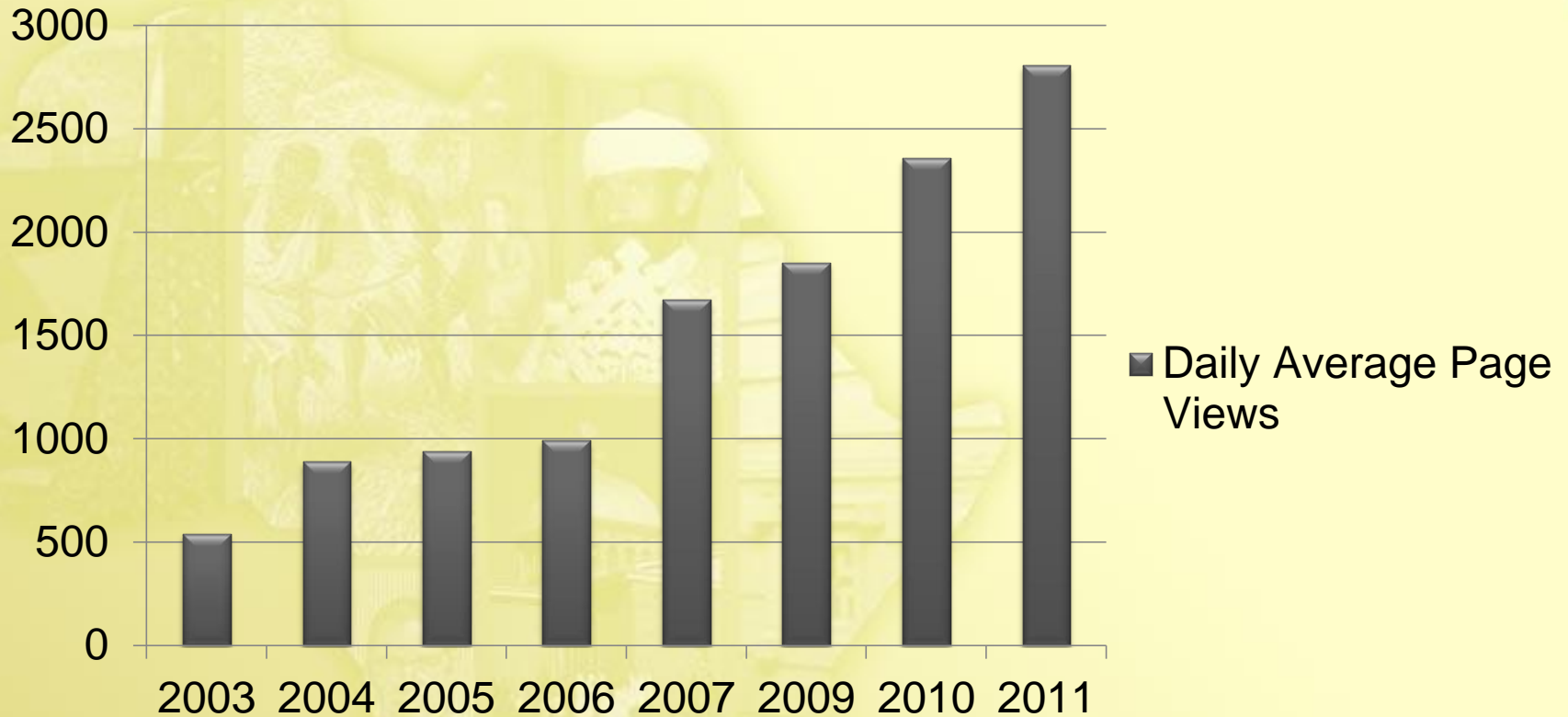
SERVING THE ACADEMY

- a. In Universities
- b. *DACB*-inspired projects
- c. Collaboration with
International Association of
Mission Studies (IAMS)

A. UNIVERSITIES

- The *DACB* is virtually the only centralized source of information on African Christian biography.
- Increasingly instructors require that students use the *DACB* for their assignments on African church history.

Daily Average Page Views



- Traffic increase on the Web site from an average of 540 pages viewed per day in 2003 to **2,805** in 2011.
- Approx. **650** unique visitors per day (2011)

B. DACB-INSPIRED PROJECTS

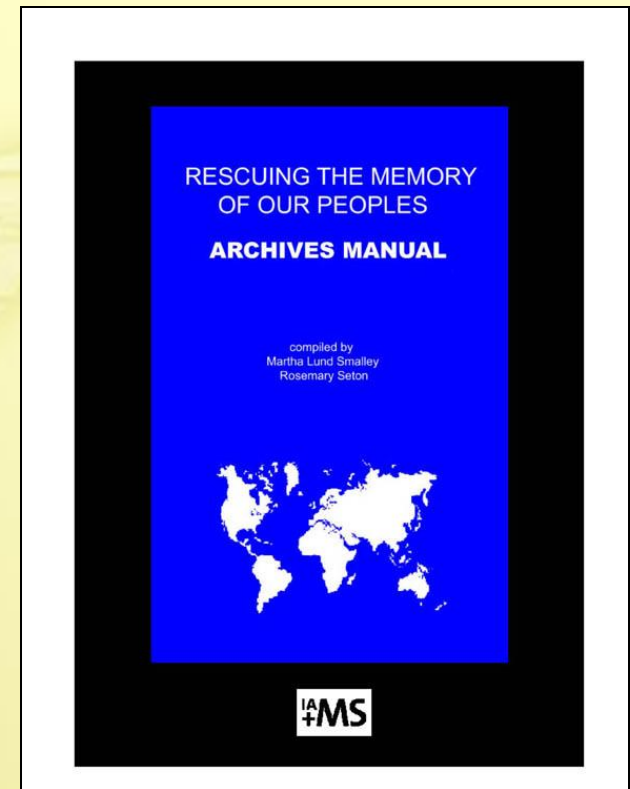


www.bdcconline.net

- The *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, launched in 2005, was incubated at OMSC using the *DACB* model.
- Centers in Singapore, India, and Malaysia are also producing databases modeled after the *DACB*.

C. COLLABORATION WITH IAMS

- The *DACB* collaborated with the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) to produce a multilingual archives manual for use in African institutions.



SERVING THE AFRICAN CHURCH

- The DACB is a tool designed to:
 - Record the **memory** of the African church
 - In order to equip the African church with tools for the **present**
 - And prepare the African church for the challenges of the **future**

SERVING THE AFRICAN CHURCH

- “A people is defined and unified not by blood but by shared memory.... Deciding to remember, and what to remember, is how we decide who we are.”
Robert Pinsky
- *Until lions start writing down their own stories, the hunters will always be the heroes.* (proverb, Kenya and Zimbabwe)

RECORDING THE MEMORY OF THE CHURCH

- The future of the church in Africa will be shaped by her understanding of the past.
- Coming to terms with her history:
 - The legacy of the Western missionary movement
 - The aftermath of colonialization
 - 20th century church growth

TO PROVIDE TOOLS FOR THE PRESENT

- Understanding the genesis of African Christianity in order to come to terms with the present:
 - Defining African Christianity in theological, ecclesiological, and liturgical terms

TO BETTER FACE THE FUTURE

- The African church facing the future:
 - As a leader in World Christianity
 - As an example of Biblical leadership to the West, where secularization is taking its toll on the church
 - Offering a model of renewal to the Western church.

SERVING THE GLOBAL CHURCH

- DACB as a facilitator for:
 - Ecumenical cooperation
 - New initiatives in oral history research on African Christianity
 - Development of new curricula for Christian education, in Africa and the West
 - Providing research tools on Christianity in the Global South

*“A huge cloud
of witnesses is
all around us.”*

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

Let us
remember
their stories...



...and be
encouraged.

*Powerpoint presentation created by Ms. Michèle Sigg,
DACB Project Manager*

VISIT THE *DACB* DATABASE:

- Online at www.Dacb.org
- On our CD-ROM (no Internet connection)

Sources:

- “Ecclesiastical Cartography and the Invisible Continent” by Jonathan J. Bonk. *IBMR* Oct. 2004, Vol. 28, No. 4. Pp. 153-158.
- Statistics are from David Barrett and Todd Johnson and *Operation World* (2001), quoted from J. Bonk’s article.
- Photo credits: Dan Nicholas, Jonathan Bonk, Fohle Lygunda, Annie Sigg, Michèle Sigg.
- Special graphics created by Michèle Sigg.