

New Qualifications developed through ACRP facilitation

Though ACRP recognises existing SAQA registered qualifications, as professional body, ACRP is responsible to ensure that gaps existing in ministry training and formation is filled. A serious need for accessible, formally accredited ministry training and formation was identified and ACRP facilitated the development of new SAQA registered qualifications to respond to this need. The following new qualifications in the category of "occupational qualifications" were developed in conjunction with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), and were registered on the SAQA occupational qualification sub-framework:

An NQF Level 5 Christian Ministry Qualification
(SAQA Qual. ID: 101571)
Occupational Certificate:
Christian Religious Professional

An NQF Level 2 Christian Ministry Qualification
(SAQA Qual. ID: 101997)
Occupational Certificate:
Religious Associate
Professional (Christian Religious Practitioner)

Please take note that training providers may apply to be accredited by QCTO as providers (Skills Development Providers) of these qualifications.

A list of Ministry Training Institutions presenting SAQA registered Ministry qualifications can be found on our ACRP website www.acrpafrica.co.za

ACRP

Association of Christian Religious Practitioners

ACRP is a professional body recognised in South Africa by SAQA in terms of the section 13 (1)(j)(ii) of the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 - SAQA Reg No.: PB 0000110



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The guiding light Newsletter



Issue 9 - August 2021



A message from Dr Nontando Hadebe of ACRP

"The gospel according to WhatsApp"

Who are we listening to during this time of disruption, violence and confusion?

Like most people, I am on WhatsApp daily receiving messages from my contacts. They share videos, clips, recordings, bible verses, inspirational messages etc. I find myself as I read through the messages moving from feeling inspired to anger, confusion and disorientation! Before I know it an hour has gone with me scrolling through messages and sorting out feelings that arise with each message. So each day I found myself tied to my phone spending more and more time responding, debating and reflecting on messages received. I gradually realised that I am no longer thinking for myself but responding to the flow of messages sent to my phone. The agenda for the day was dictated by WhatsApp! Yes, I was living according to the gospel of WhatsApp! I think it was after viewing videos on the looting and violence that I asked myself where is God in this? Am I listening more to human views and reflections on the situation we are facing or am I taking time to discern closely what God is saying and calling me to do.

Having said this, I am not judging or condemning WhatsApp! It is a wonderful medium that has made our lives easier and allowed access to information and fostering of relationships (family, friends, church, community, work etc) but like any good thing it can also be a medium for spreading views or ideas that compromise our commitment to God expressed in core values such as respect for life, the human dignity of all, integrity, truth, justice, love and compassion to name a few.

So how do we tune into God at this time to receive messages that will allow us to live out our faith and values and be part of the solution and not part of the problem. One way is to look at what is going on around us through the 'two eyes' that represent our ministry: pastoral (the care and healing of the broken, traumatized including those responsible for these actions) and prophetic (not simply condemning wrong, violence and injustice but generating creative and innovative ideas, visions, words/language, systems that address root causes and bring God's shalom). Shalom or peace is not simply the absence of conflict or violence but the presence of justice and flourishing of life for everyone with no one left behind or excluded.

Am I saying ditch or reject WhatsApp? **Not at all!** This is not about a choice between WhatsApp and Scripture but bringing the two **together** to bring God's Shalom to South Africa!



OASIS

INTERNATIONAL

Oasis Int. has been intensely involved with the development and distribution of books by authors speaking to the African contexts. The Africa Study Bible is one of the these. Please read part 7C of their sponsored article on the next page.

*Article sponsored by OASIS International –
Publishers of the Africa Study Bible*

**SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CULTURES OF THE BIBLE AND AFRICA
(PART 7C)**

As we continue to compare some ways that cultures of the Bible are similar to cultures of Africa, we begin with the importance of wisdom.

High Value of Wisdom

Three entire books of the Old Testament are devoted to wisdom: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. But proverbs, riddles, parables, and discussions of life's problems are not limited to these books. Throughout the Bible, God is understood to be the source of wisdom. Those who are wise are seen as righteous, and those who are foolish are seen as wicked.

The New Testament culture also highly valued wisdom, and believers are called to live wisely. Jesus told a parable about wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25) and Paul cautioned, "Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise" (Ephesians 5:15).

Because of the strong emphasis on community, wisdom is highly valued in most African cultures, often more than wealth or power. Wisdom has to do with living well and living in such a way that one is held in high esteem and well-spoken of by others.

Blessing, Curse, and Retributive Justice

The occurrence of blessings and curses is common throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament the concept of blessing is a significant theme, especially with the patriarchs. Curses are also seen in the Old Testament (Genesis 9:25).

The concepts of blessing and curse are also very common in African cultures. Elders or those in a place of spiritual authority will utter blessings and curses against individuals. A belief in "generational curse or sin" has gained popularity among some believers in Africa. However, many theologians and Christian teachers in Africa have denounced this concept as not being similar to biblical blessing and cursing but rather being influenced by traditional thinking (Ezekiel 18:20).

A closely related concept to cursing is that of retributive justice. The imprecatory psalms (prayers against one's enemies) are uttered by the writer with retributive justice in mind. They include a request for God to deliver the justice of retribution in the form of punishment - in this life or the life after. Jesus disallowed the practice of revenge in both his teachings (Luke 6:28-29) and example (Luke 23:34). Even though this was contrary to their culture, Jesus' followers accepted his perspective in their teachings (Romans 12:19-21).

Many African cultures recognise that wrong actions bring dishonour to the person or family and bring some form of punishment, both in the physical and spiritual worlds.

The similarities between the cultural worlds of the Bible and various African cultures helps to give us insights into the meaning of the Bible. A particular concept found in the Bible may not mean the same thing as it does in the African culture. It is important to study the Bible's culture to find the true meaning.

To learn more the cultures of the Bible compared to the cultures of Africa, as well as to read the complete piece, see the article entitled "Similarities Between the Cultures of the Bible and Africa" in the *Africa Study Bible*.

Preparing Your Mind for Action

By Pastor Stephan De Villiers

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity... in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on it being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only." — Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities.

The opening lines from Charles Dickens's classic novel, could not be more descriptive of the times we are living in today. People swing on a pendulum between the best of times and the worst of times, between wisdom and foolishness, between belief and incredulity. This pendulum's momentum is fuelled by the "noisiest authorities", insisting on their message being received unrestrained and unscrutinised.

We all know these "noisy authorities" and their messages.

It is the official letter, leaked by an unnamed employee who "could not keep this from the public anymore" ...

Or the Facebook post, shared as absolute truth, about the medical dangers or benefits of a treatment...

Or the WhatsApp voice note or the YouTube video with the new revelation or prophecy about what is going on in the world...

In this world where people are being led astray by lies and half-truths, it is our duty as Christians not to get caught up in the emotion and hype these messages create. We must be sober-minded, like 1 Peter 1:13 says: *"Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

Peter felt so strongly about this point that he repeats it at the end of his letter in 1 Peter 5:8 when he wrote, *"Be sober-minded and be watchful..."*

What Peter says in these two scriptures is that, as Christ-followers, we must be "level-headed".

To help us put "being sober-minded" in practice, I want to suggest a thinking framework to help prepare your mind for action.

Tone down the emotion

The greatest enemy of clear thinking is an emotional reaction. Often false messaging and "conspiracy theory" facts, and even the "revelations" and "prophesies" going around, aim at getting an emotional response. Don't get pulled into the emotion of the message. Take a step back and look at the facts and real content.

Consider the source

Determine the source of the message, whether it is a video, website, Facebook page or print media. Remember the best deception is based on the truth. What other information is available from the source? Is it biased towards a certain viewpoint?

Don't engage in debate

Proverbs 24:6 says: *"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself."*

This is especially true when God's Word is used out of context, from a skewed doctrinal viewpoint to "prove" a point or justify a bias. As soon as you start quoting scriptures you get into a debate where the arguments and the use of the Bible are driven by personal conviction and viewpoint. It is a lose-lose situation where the division amongst Christians is highlighted, rather than the issue.

Get another opinion

Proverbs 25:6 **"for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counsellors there is victory."** No one person will have all the answers, therefore it is important to consult with other people. Be careful you don't consult people who all have the same viewpoint. That is not "an abundance of counsellors".

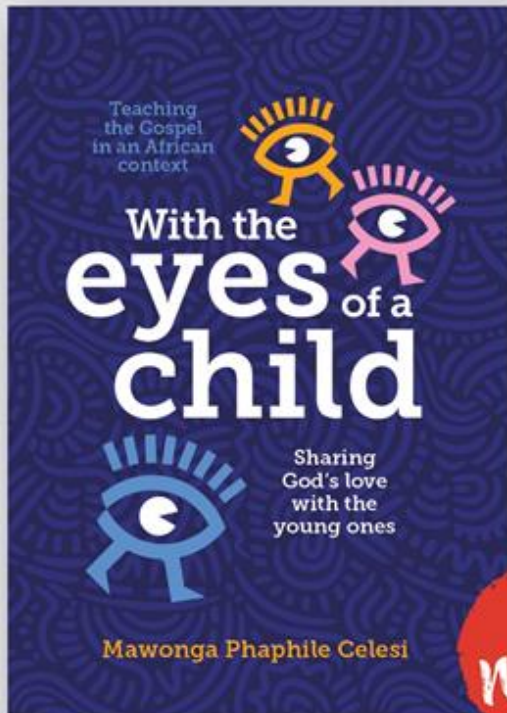
Check your own biases

Make sure your own strong opinion and possible bias is not clouding your judgement. Be open to listen to different opinions.

In closing, let us be watchful for the truth. Let our actions and words not add to the pendulum, swinging people from "the best of times to the worst of times". Let us become the missing link in spreading fear and deceptive messages.

Let us rather bring balance through our reasonableness as Paul urges in Philippians 4:5 and may we shine God's light on the truth in this world.

EQUIP YOURSELF TO RAISE A CHRIST-LIKE GENERATION



Children have always been at the centre of Jesus' ministry, and this book is a must-read for everyone who has the responsibility to raise a Christ-like generation in these challenging times.

The main purpose of this book is to help everyone involved in children's ministry to make Jesus known to children, to make Jesus shine as a hero and role model to children.

To achieve this goal, we need to learn from Jesus how to do ministry. And this book is an excellent resource fulfilling this need.

Pastor Mawonga Phaphile Celesi challenges us to go back to the basics of the Gospel, back to the Bible, and back to God.



This book is a simple manual to equip you for this noble task. This book marks a very significant contribution to the fulfilment of the Great Commission in three respects:

- teaching the Gospel in the African context,
- preaching the Gospel with the eyes of a child, and
- sharing God's love with the young ones in our society.

All people involved in children's ministry can use this book:

- Ministers, pastors, faith leaders and community leaders
- Sunday School teachers
- Parents
- Students in theology focusing on children's ministry



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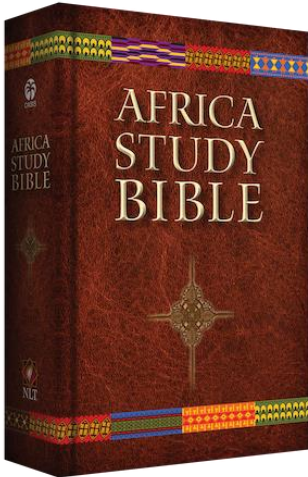


*The two **Must Have Resources** for the private library of pastors of the African continent. Together they form a complete library!*

Both available from ACRP office
(place orders by sending an e-mail to cgmp@acrpafrica.co.za)

1. Africa Study Bible (ASB) Hardcover

General Editor: Dr John Jusu



Key features:

The Africa Study Bible (ASB) was written by 338 contributors from 48 African countries, making it the most ethnically diverse, single-volume, biblical resource to date.

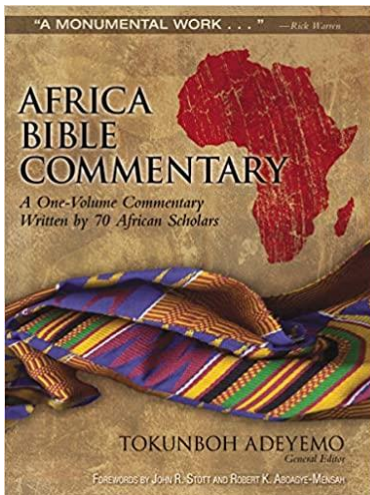
- It was built from the ground up by scholars and pastors in Africa who see the critical need to make Scripture relevant to our everyday lives.
- It contains more than 2,600 features that illuminate the truth of Scripture with a unique, African perspective.
- It is an all-in-one course in biblical content, theology, history, and culture.
- "Touchpoints", "Proverbs" and "Stories" gives an African perspective on the Bible and also show parallels with African wisdom.
- An absolute treasure of 2100 pages

Price: R450.00 (excluding delivery costs). A discount for orders of 10 or more can be arranged.

"The Africa Study Bible is a pacesetter in using the African experience for understanding the Bible. I recommend it highly to those who have sought to understand life and the world from an African perspective". **Dr Mvume Dandala**, former presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and former head of the All Africa Conference of Churches.

2. Africa Bible Commentary (ABC) (Hardcover)

General Editor: Dr Tokunboh Adeyemo



Key features:

- One-volume Bible commentary produced by African theologians, in Africa, for the needs of African pastors, students and lay leaders—and for the world.
- Section-by-section interpretive commentary, providing a useful guide to the entire Bible.
- More than 70 special articles dealing with topics of key importance in ministry in Africa today, but that have global implications.
- 70 African contributors from both English- and French-speaking countries in Africa
- Transcends the African context with insights into the biblical text and the Christian faith for readers worldwide.
- An absolute treasure of 1585 pages.

Price: R450.00 (excluding delivery costs). A discount for orders of 10 or more can be arranged.

"A rich and valuable contribution to biblical knowledge and understanding. I commend it to Christian leaders. not only in Africa but the world over". **Dr Justice James Ogenyi Ogebe**, High Court Nigeria

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