

Beyond Mount Kenya Region: 40 Years of Theological and Practical Education at St Andrew's College, Kabare (1977-2017), Julius Gathogo

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In this original research book on the history of Christianity across the populous area of Mount Kenya region and East Africa in general, *Beyond Mount Kenya Region*, the author draws his climax with the establishment of St Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, in 1977. As a historical text book, the author takes us on a journey from 1844 when the English religious outfit, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) introduced their evangelical Christianity in the coastal city of Mombasa. Their mission leader and pioneer was the Rev. Dr Ludwig Krapf. Even though Krapf was a Lutheran priest, he could not work with his Lutheran colleagues as he did not consider them "evangelical" enough for the mission of Christ abroad. Nevertheless, Krapf arrived in Mombasa together with his wife, Rosina, in January 1844. Before coming to the port city of Mombasa, Kenya, on the east coast of Africa, Krapf had spent six years in Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia). After obtaining the necessary permission from Sultan Seyyid Said of Zanzibar (who ruled the whole of the East African coast), Krapf established a home for his wife and himself on Mombasa Island in May of the same year. Within two months, both Krapf and his wife, Rosina, fell ill with malaria. While still sick, Rosina gave birth on 6 July 1844 but sadly died four days later and their baby girl soon followed her. Despite being sick, Krapf buried his two loved ones in Mombasa as a sign that he was claiming Africa for Christ. Interestingly, the governor and a few Muslim friends graciously accompanied him at the burial.

Shortly after his arrival in May 1844, Krapf, who had already lost his wife on 10 July 1844 and her little baby girl a few days later, wrote to the CMS in London:

Tell our friends at home that there is now on the East African coast a lonely missionary grave. This is a sign that you have commenced the struggle in this part of the world; and as the victories of the church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be



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the more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its Eastern shore.¹

Without his beloved wife, Krapf laboured on alone in the hot humid East African coast for the next two years, when Rebmann joined him. It is during his lonely moments that Krapf got three ideas that began to shape themselves in his mind. First, he envisaged a chain of mission centres stretching from East to West Africa; second, he dreamt of a colony for freed slaves near Mombasa; and thirdly, he looked forward to the ordination of African clergy with an African bishop, as the chief steward of the diocese thereof. Shortly after the arrival of Rev. John Rebmann in 1846, both of whom had trained at the Basel Seminary in Germany, the two established the first mission centre on the mainland at Rabai, about 10 kilometres from the island of Mombasa. Soon thereafter, they were joined by a third German missionary, who died shortly after arrival. This prompted Krapf to write:

The first resident of the new mission ground is a dead person of the missionary circle. Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build a church, showing us by this lesson that the resurrection of East Africa must be effected by our own destruction.²

As Krapf envisaged, a chain of mission centres stretching north from the east coast began with the establishment of the first Anglican Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa in 1884. It had James Hannington (1847-1885) as its first bishop, Henry Parker (1852-1888) as its second bishop, and Alfred Tucker (1849-1914) as its third bishop. In 1897, the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa was subdivided under the stewardship of the very able Bishop Tucker into the Diocese of Uganda and the Diocese of Mombasa. While Tucker took over as the Bishop of Uganda, which covered parts of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, William G. Peel took over Mombasa Diocese. In turn, Mombasa Diocese covered the present-day Kenya and the entire northern Tanzania region (formerly Tanganyika). From this development, the church grew under the European missionary tutelage till the late 1950s and early 1960s, when African leadership began to emerge with the first African-Anglican Archbishop (Festo Olang) appearing in 1970. In 1955, however, Festo Olang and Obadiah Kariuki had been appointed as assistant bishops within Kenya's territorial space. The climax of these developments, in Gathogo's (2017) view, is the emergency of David Gitari as the Bishop of Mount Kenya East in 1975. Considering that the Diocese of Mount Kenya East covered almost half of Kenya's territorial space, Gitari's ecclesiastical activities were critically watched. Coupled with this, he was the fourth Anglican Kenyan to have completed a theological degree, others being John Mbiti (first), Thomas Kuto Kalume (second), and Henry Okullu (third). Gitari's interest in theological and practical-holistic education is seen as the key to the establishment of St Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare in 1977. In turn, the establishment of St Andrew's College changed not only the Mount Kenya region but the entire East African region. As a result, what was primarily set to benefit one region of Mount Kenya area (the eastern side) eventually went beyond expectations and the bigger region benefited as well. *Beyond Mount Kenya Region* is indeed a

1 Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya: A Short History of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Mount Kenya (1900-1970)*, (Melbourne: Ridley College, 1970), 3.

2 Keith Cole, *The Cross Over Mount Kenya*: 3.

textbook that seeks to celebrate the success of theological education and practical education in Africa under the African leadership. It shows that the success of African leadership within the ecclesiastical scene can be replicated in other domains of life such as the political wing, the economic and the family domains.

In Julius Gathogo's book, *Beyond Mount Kenya Region*, Alfred Tucker (1849-1914) and David Gitari (1937-2013) feature as the greatest bishops in East Africa. Their concern for education also comes out as their key strengths. While Gitari established St Andrew's College, Kabare, among other achievements, Bishop Tucker began Mukono College, now Uganda Christian University, Mukono. To this end, Gathogo has noted thus:

Under Tucker, Anglican growth in Uganda thrived by the turn of the 20th century and among the most notable contribution of the Anglican Church was in the area of education. The first elementary schools were established in the 1890s. In 1913, the Bishop Tucker Theological College was established in Mukono and this institution was eventually expanded into what is now today the Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mukono. This growth climaxed in 1961 when the Anglican Church of Uganda was recognised in the Anglican Communion with the establishment of the Province of Uganda and Rwanda-Urundi (later Province of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi). The incumbent Bishop of Uganda, Leslie Brown, was the first Metropolitan Archbishop of the Province. Brown was succeeded in 1966 by the first Ugandan Archbishop, Erica Sabiti. In 1980, Rwanda and Burundi were elevated to a separate province.³

Further, as Gathogo has noted, St Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, is historically a progression of the wider Anglican ministry in East Africa, the Church Missionary Society, which was pioneered by Rev. Dr Ludwig Krapf in 1844. Like Krapf before him, Bishop Tucker could see the African church beyond his time—a church with trained theologians, with its own African leadership, and with a critical mass of worshippers.

In a nutshell, the book: *Beyond Mount Kenya Region*, is composed of nine solid chapters which are thorough, comprehensive and informative. Chapter one deals the introductory information that connects the establishment of St Andrew's College with the rest of Christendom. It locates St Andrew's geographically and ecclesiastically. Chapter two deals with the name St Andrew's itself. How has the institution wrestled with the faithful discipleship displayed by Andrew? Has the name demonstrated the mission beyond Mount Kenya region and reached out to the broader human community within and outside Africa? Chapter three deals with the intrigues behind the establishment of St Andrew's College, Kabare. Were the theological divergences and/or contestations between bishops David Gitari and Sospeter Magua regarding their joint college then (McGregor Weithaga) the key reason for the establishment of St Andrew's? Were these theological differences theologically sound? Chapter four deals with the ownership, assets and buildings of St Andrew's College. Chapters five and six deal with all forms of education in St Andrew's that have been offered such as accounting, secretarial training, counselling psychology, a pilot training programme, double training, business studies, basic nursing skills, rural development studies, theology, teacher refresher courses, and so on. Chapter seven deals with the leadership question. In

3 Julius Gathogo, *Pangs of Birth in African Christianity* (Saabruken: Lambert Academic Publishers, 2011), 41.

other words, Gathogo boldly suggests that leadership which goes beyond Mount Kenya Region has to be transformative leadership rather than mere servant leadership. In his view, servant leadership assumes that people must necessarily be assisted while transformative leadership empowers the file-and-rank of society. Chapter eight deals with collaboration and partnership. For St Andrew's to reach her higher heights in practical and theological education, how has she partnered with local and overseas partners? The last chapter deals with the future of mission beyond Mount Kenya region and particularly through focusing on the youth, students, academic associations, professional networking, and staff empowerment, among other trends.

The book *Beyond Mount Kenya Region* is a must read for all Africanist scholars, historians, theologians, policy makers, and scholars of all walks of life. Post-graduate researchers will find it a necessary reading as it will shed light on how to document original data and convert the materials into a book. As its blurb shows, Dr Julius Gathogo is a senior lecturer at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of Kenyatta University, a distinguished professor at St Alcuin's House Seminary, Minnesota, USA, and a widely published scholar. In writing this book, he has converted oral histories into written histories and eventually produced an authoritative book that will speak to the present and future generations.