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Learning, teaching, writing in the “Life-Dance with God”: figures from Malawi

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Learning, Teaching, Writing in the “Life-Dance with God”: Figures from Malawi

By Michèle Miller Sigg

This issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography*, introduces readers to the concept of *uMuntu* theology—“a reflective life-dancing with God in the cosmos and through time . . . a celebrative reflection on our being with God.” This is how it is described by our featured theologian, Augustine Chingwala Musopole, author of *uMuntu Theology: An Introduction* (Mzuni Press, 2018).

Exceptionally, his biography is the only article in this issue that describes the life of a historical figure. Next, the stories of two living theologians out of Malawi illustrate the “life-dance” Musopole describes, both in their lives and their writing. Isabel Phiri, a larger-than-life educator-mentor-academic-advocate, is an influential figure among African women theologians and a past leader of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians who has “centered the voices of women in Africa.” Klaus Fiedler is a scholar missionary who has made his home in Malawi for many decades. His scholarship focuses on bringing into the light figures, movements, and issues that are “off the beaten track.” He does this by “inviting us to take a second look at those who have been discounted, (...) excluded, pushed to the margins, not taken seriously.”

The excitement of the “life dance with God” also comes through the lines of the report on the church history workshop that took place in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in March. Sixteen men and women from three Mennonite churches participated in an intensive course in global and African Christian history as well as oral history methodology. The purpose was to equip them to write biographies for a book to be published by Langham on African Christian biography—hopefully the first of a DACB series.

In the book review section, Goodwin Zainga analyzes Marc Thiesen’s historical work on the Churches of Christ in Malawi and Luke B. Donner offers a comparative review on two recent books that take stock of Kwame Bediako’s intellectual legacy. And as always, Beth Restrict has collected a series of works worthy of our attention—this time related to Malawian Christian history and theology.