

PRESENT

Committee Members

1. Fr. Joseph Healey
2. Cephas Agbemenu
3. Margaret Wambere
4. Elias Bushiri
5. Sr. Ann Grace Njau
6. Francis Njuguna

Guests

1. Stan Nussbaum
2. Gerald Wanjohi
3. Wakuraya Wanjohi

Opening

Cephas welcomed the members to the meeting and introduced the members of the Executive Committee and **Fr. Healey** introduced the guests.

The Founders' Prayer

The opening prayer was said in a special way by **Fr. Healey**, who remembered the Founders

of the African Proverbs Project, the starting of the African Proverbs Working Group (APWG) and the history of the Website (<https://www.afriprov.org>).

Celebrating 20 Years of the African Endangered Proverbs Project

Stan Nusbaum: He recounted the efforts that were made on proverbs research and writing that led to the proposal to start the specific project on the African Endangered Proverbs Collection. He also appreciated the Founders of the project and the website.

Fr. Healey: He stated that the meeting coincided with the 20 years celebration of the foundation of African Proverbs Project Website (1998-2018). He used a saying *We create the path by walking* in how the group had started and lasted this long. The project currently needed to “grow new wings” in order to continue performing their activities in the future.

Gerald Wanjohi: He shared his experiences on African Philosophy and Proverbs. He cited the challenges he had experienced and was happy that he had pursued the subject in order to teach the world that Africa had a philosophy, despite being doubted by others.

Sr. Grace: She appreciated the presence of the Founders at the meeting and their input and their continued support of the APWG.

Future Stability of the Project

How can these African social/cultural programs survive?

Stan Nussbaum used some expressions to answer the above question.

1. “Among my brain children, the mortality rate is very high.” He said he had started many noble ideas and projects that had not thrived. He appreciated that the African Proverbs Working Group had continued to thrive in their work. He hoped that this would continue despite the financial challenges. He appreciated working with the team for so many years.

2. A Lesotho saying – *When a dog crosses the stream it becomes a puppy.* **Cephas** used an Ewe, Ghana proverb with similar teaching that *a master blacksmith becomes an apprentice in another country.*

This expresses the fact that once financial/other support ends, the dependents are required to seek alternative resources to support themselves so that their productivity continues. To counter this the expression would be

When the puppy crosses the ocean, it becomes a big dog.

This indicates that once the benefactor has more resources, then it is possible to support the activities of their dependents.

3. *2nd Corinthians*: “When I am weak, then I am strong.” Stan encouraged the team using this statement. He explained that at the time of need, and despair, a person is able to seek find solutions that they had never visualized in the past. New ideas can be realized that can lead to solutions and better performance. Times of weakness can be used as a stepping stone to better times.

Stan commented on how the APWG is looking for an American institutional partner – some school or center that can carry on the vision of the African Proverbs Project. He suggested Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, USA. Dr. Jay Moon is the dean and has a strong interest in the proverbs field. His recent book, *Intercultural Discipleship* (Chapter 8 is called “Proverbs Are Worth a Thousand Words”) makes a strong case for the use of proverbs and related tools. Stan said he would be happy to be present for dialogue in whatever direction the APWG wants to go.

The Future on the Website

Various ideas were shared:

1. **Videos**: To be included on the website especially showing African dances based on a

single proverb, to illustrate the message/s of the particular proverb. This would target specific viewers such as children and young of different age groups, as well as other viewers. This would draw more viewers compared to readers.

2. **Social Media:** This would focus on different users, especially the Young People, whose view of the African Proverbs is mainly negative or ancient. They tend to criticize their use in modern times. These proverbs may be on specific issues currently affecting the society such as disregard for environment, women, children and social justice. Some of the African proverbs need to change from former views and applications to the current times. A collection of about 500 proverbs could be prepared to provide this “twisted philosophy”, that is, turning the proverb around. For example, a Gikuyu, Kenya saying *Kanya gatune ni mwamukaniro* traditionally expressed the sharing of snuff (tobacco) by the elders. A contemporary version is that cigarettes are shared in today’s world: *Gati keru ni mwamukaniro*.

Some African proverbs about women expressed negative views about them. In modern times these opinions about women have changed. These proverbs need to be changed to express more positive opinions.

3. **Word Pictures and Art:** This can be applied on the Facebook and WhatsApp communication. These modern applications such as the use of MEME application on smartphones creates interest in readers. It can be used in the African Proverb of the Month productions.

4. **Print on Demand:** This was explained to the meeting. Print on Demand (POD) required an interested party to request for a book to be printed when they required it. They are printed only on request. The printing is done in the USA (and other places) and mailed to any destination at a cost.

A special collection of African Proverbs and Wise Sayings used on the African Khanga cloth is being edited and improved as a Ebook that would be published through Amazon publishers.

Marketing of this published work would be done through Book Reviews on Amazon, or through Writers’ Central or by writing review online. A blog could also be created to market the book.

Tokens

Tokens of appreciation were presented to the guests.

Closure

The meeting ended at 3 p.m. Lunch was provided by the Maryknoll House courtesy of **Father Joseph Healey**.