



AFRICA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

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Committed to His
Mission, Connected
to His World

PRAISES AND PRAYERS :

* Praise God for the remarkable progress with the Road Project and pray for its successful completion.

*Thank God for his faithfulness to the graduating class of 2018.

*Pray for God's guidance to the graduating class.

*Pray for God's blessings upon AIU students, staff and faculty.

*Christ centred leaders in Africa educated
to transform God's people and the World*

Road Construction Project Report

The ongoing 1.2km Road construction project within the university is thankfully at an advanced stage. The construction of the road and two Gates will mark the end of phase I of the entire project that will involve installation of Lighting System & Outfall Drainage (Phase II); and construction of Parking areas (Phase III).



AIU Alumni Association officials have been at the

forefront in championing for this project; and we continue to appeal to all AIU Alumni to consider supporting this noble cause. With the ongoing construction, there are noticeable and significant transformations in the general outlook of the university. At least in the next few weeks our students and visitors will be able to walk and ride on a dust free road and enjoy the serene environment at AIU. We therefore urge you to continue supporting this project through prayer and giving.



2018 International Conference

The recent 2018 International Conference held on 14th -16th March, at the Main Campus, was AIU's first International conference. It marked AIU's debut into hosting high-level international scholarship forums where both local and global concerns are addressed in light of the Christian faith commitments.



And so, being the first international conference, much of ground-breaking work and concerted effort was put into the preparation; and eventually it turned out to be a great success! Praise the Lord! The conference, organized by the Institute for the Study of Africa Realities (ISAR), a constituent school of AIU,

attracted a good number of delegates from different universities and nations. Providentially, it accorded a rare opportunity to AIU students, staff, faculty and alumni to present their papers and be part of the deliberations.

The 2018 International Conference theme was: Ensuring Quality Education through Ethical and Value-based principles: A Focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4). The three-day event was fully-packed with presentations of academic papers on the respective thematic areas of the conference, with three break-away sessions every day.

As Alumni Office, we will continually keep you in the loop so that you can be part of what is happening in AIU. Soon we will notify you when the reviewed papers from the conference are published in the AIU Impact Journal. Also, once the information on the next conference and abstract/paper submission dates is out we will inform you accordingly; so that those interested can seize the opportunity.

FEATURING PROF. AND MRS VICTOR COLE

The Alumnus feature is a section of this newsletter that seeks to trace and tell stories of what God is doing in the church, society and marketplace through the lives and ministry of our very own AIU Alumni and occasionally, staff and faculty. Our hope is that this will serve not only to highlight individual testimonies, but also take stock of how AIU is realizing its mission and vision in the society. Ultimately, this will bring much praise to God, encouragement and inspiration to the Alumni, and current generation of students, staff and faculty. Indeed, through the few stories we have so far covered, we can attest that we are part of a great network of change agents in Africa and the world! In this issue we are featuring the legacy of Prof. Victor Cole and his wife Mrs. Toyin Cole.

THE LEGACY OF A PIONEER

Celebrating Prof. & Mrs. Victor Cole

As the beautiful cake was cut and shared out at the Farewell service, it was a great symbolism of what their lives have represented: a life of dedication, lived out in generous service to the AIU community and to the larger body of Christ. We are talking about none other than the family of Prof. Victor Babajide Cole and his wife Toyin Cole; one of the long-serving faculty members of the Education Department of AIU until his retirement in September 2017. It is certain, through the farewell speeches and messages from AIU alumni and community, that in their outstanding commitment to God's service the Coles' lives, and ministry led to the transformation of many lives and minds. Prof. Cole's story is an inspiring story of a servant, leader, and significantly one of the first generation of pioneer faculty members of the then NEGST.

Process of Relocating to Kenya.

Early in 1980s while completing his PhD at Michigan State University, Professor Cole received a general invitation to serve at NEGST. But his relocation to Kenya did not materialize immediately because of his active involvement in the pioneering work as Academic Dean at the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS), in his country, Nigeria. While in JETS, he was part of a team of African faculty that were developing and experimenting on a uniquely new curriculum developed specifically for the Nigerian context. Also, moving to Kenya was further complicated by the social and educational realities of his then young family.

However, more formal invitations ensued in 1985 and 1987, specifically to serve as Academic Dean of NEGST. Finally, they relocated to NEGST in 1990 just for a one-year sabbatical leave; but it was not to be so. They vividly recount, “we came just for a year, or so we thought, and lived out of our suitcases, ready to leave at any time—until we realized 3 years had elapsed, and we eventually set down our suitcases, as it were. Now the rest is history!”

Admittedly, transition and relocation did not come without a cost; the Coles recall,



“We do acknowledge some of the disruption our move has had on our children. Our oldest had 3 years more in High school, and the two younger ones were just in 2nd and 3rd grades.”

(Cole Family in 1990)

27 Years of God's Service at NEGST/AIU

While in NEGST, Prof. Cole, helped to start a PhD program in Christian Education; a program which is now offered under the School of Education, Arts and Social Sciences (SEAS). He served as the head of the Christian Education Department in the year 1990; and between the years 1998 and 2003 he served as a Vice Principal Academics and then later as DVCAA, as they actively sought a university charter from the Government of Kenya. In 2004, he again took up the role of the head of the Department of Education, and in the year 2014 served as Director of the PhD Education until his retirement in September 2017.

Prof. Cole notes that, while in AIU, he learned a lot as he taught and provided leadership in various positions. During his ministry, as a student of organizational behavior and as a practitioner in organizational administration at NEGST, he learned that “interactions within human organizations require different types of skills.” As a leader, skills and wisdom are needed to deal with people and different situations effectively and to realize growth.

Noticeably, NEGST (now AIU) has experienced exponential numeric growth. Reportedly, in the year 1990, NEGST was “a small, closely knit community of students, teachers, and administrators.” Looking back, Prof. Cole recalls the students were “older and more mature, on average... Coupled with low class sizes then, we were often able to tap into prior experiences of students in our teaching.” Today, this has drastically changed, with the phenomenal growth and with the gradual increase of younger students transitioning directly from high school. But with the new realities of growth, Prof. Cole believes AIU faculty can still be strategic even in their teaching methods; “...Now such small size is unsustainable. We are now required to make more use of small discussion groups and to deliberately group together the more and the less experienced in today's classes.”



(Prof Cole working on student papers, 1998)

Challenges

Prof Cole's most challenging experiences while serving in AIU were in the area of administration "when personal, social and technical skills were expected to blur." He emphatically highlights, "I'm personally averse to political intrigue, so familiar

in human organizations, for I consider it an impediment to the realization of organizational goals. But as I tell my students, in reality, 'Scientific validity does not often augur well with political viability within human organizations.'"

But when faced with such challenging situations, what was his approach? Prof. Cole admits he would "take solace in the firm belief in divine sovereignty that works out God's purposes for my life in ways that humans can never thwart; and to keep reminding myself that 'we do not preach ourselves but Christ as Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake'" (2 Cor.4:5).

Motivation

What motivated this family to remain in AIU for such a long time? Prof. Coles relates this to his commitment and calling, "From the human perspective, I would appeal to my sense of loyalty and fulfillment of divine calling to contribute to Christian education on the continent, for which NEGST/AIU served as a channel. But the overarching reason remains Divine sovereignty, which guided His good purposes for our lives as a family."



(The Cole family 2001)

A Life of Impact

Evidently, the life and ministry of the Cole family has positively impacted many people who have gone through AIU. During his farewell, many alumni sent thoughtful farewell messages. Many of Prof. Cole's students will remember him for his critical mind, commitment to excellence and his calling, maturity, servant leadership, humility and fear of the Lord. He's been a mentor, role model, inspiration, and encourager to many. Likewise, many will remember Mrs. Cole for her mentorship to the praise and worship team, her love and care, friendship, service, maturity, and for the delicious meals she prepared for Grace Groups.

“Stay put!”

Prof. Cole is so passionate and optimistic about AIU’s strategic position in facing the challenges in Africa and the world. Especially, with the expansion of programs offered, Prof. Cole reveals, “The broadening of our scope into a Christian university was precisely an attempt to witness for Christ in all fields of knowledge on offer at AIU, to the extent that we keep our love for God, in education – ‘with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength....’” He cites the Mission statement of AIU as the factor that will make AIU remain relevant in the present time and future.

As a parting shot to the young ministers of the gospel, budding professionals, staff and faculty members of AIU, Prof. Cole’s advice is “Stay the course!”

How to Get involved as an Alumnus/Alumnae:

- Pray for AIU
- Recruit Students
- Mentor students and or provide internship opportunities
- Volunteer/participate in forming and leading Alumni Chapters
- Share your story at the Chapel
- Give to AIU

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