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### Prayer and Thanksgiving:

- Thank God for the success of the fundraising Dinner
  - Thank God for students who have joined AIU
  - Pray for AIU alumni looking for job opportunities
  - Pray for AIU as it seeks to expand its partnership base
- Pray for God's provision for the remaining road project phases

### Convocation Ceremony for New Students

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018, the university held a convocation ceremony for students who were admitted to the university within the year. Their matriculation into AIU marks a new season in their lives and a beginning of a journey that requires diligence, determination and resilience. Pray that they will have worthwhile experience as they study at AIU.

The recent increase in student population and expanded programs on offer, provides AIU with a great opportunity to train Christ-centered leaders who can exert influence both in the church and society. We believe that their academic journey will enhance their spiritual formation, interpersonal relationships, character development and growth in the relevant professional skills. Virtually, from every intake, we have had referrals from the alumni; and we are greatly encouraged by the pivotal role AIU alumni body is playing in the student recruitment process.



Convocation Day

### Road Project Update and Appreciation for Support

Once again, we would like to thank you for your generosity and participation in the Fundraising Dinner that was held on 3rd August 2018. We also thank God for the many guests who managed to attend the event and their cheerful giving. We thank God for enabling us to raise total of Ksh. 3,953,595 (Cash + cheques + Pledges).

The number of guests and those who sent their contribution was both an assurance and a clear mark that we have many people who believe in what AIU stands for. It was such a blessing receiving contribution from AIU alumni across the world. Besides, the alumni attendance at the event was impressive! Your giving is, in a big way, enhancing training of Christ-centered leaders for the church and the world!



FUNDRAISING DINNER



New Gate A Entrance

We would also like to let you know that the 1.2Km road project construction (Phase I of III) is nearing completion. The contractor is currently finalizing on laying *cabro* on the entrance sections of our new Gate A and B. Once this is done, the contractor will attend to the road signage, and final road furnishing, as per Phase I agreement. Soon, the location of Gate A along Dagoreti road, will be replaced with a new gate that is still under construction; the new gate will be situated about 50metres from the present Gate, as you head towards Karinde.

The Alumni Association leadership would like to thank you for your prayer and financial support. The project committee's and consulting engineers are committed and have been regularly engaging the contractor to ensure that quality work is done and required standards are adhered to.



FUNDRAISING DINNER

## Alumni Connect

Alumni Connect is a section of the alumni online newsletter that seeks to trace, connect, and share stories of what God is doing in the church, and marketplace through the lives and ministry of our very own alumni; and occasionally, staff and faculty. Our hope is that this will not only serve to highlight individual testimonies on their engagement to the mission of God, but also take stock of how AIU is realizing its mission and vision in society.

Ultimately, this will create awareness of AIU alumni involvement with the church and engagement with the society. In addition, this will hopefully bring encouragement and inspiration to other Alumni, and current generation of students, staff and faculty. Indeed, through the few stories we have published so far, we can attest that AIU Alumni is part of a great network of change agents in Africa and the world! In this issue we are featuring the story of Prof. George Atido.



## Scaling the Heights of Christian Scholarship & Leadership

Featuring Prof. George Pirwoth Atido

Passion. Excellence. Resourcefulness. Focus. All these adjectives fit well with the person of the unassuming Associate Professor and Vice-Chancellor of Shalom University, Bunia, DRC. An AIU Alumnus in the pioneering PhD in World Christianity program, Prof. George Pirwoth Atido is a man who wears many hats and accolades, with many scholarly publications and vast experience in teaching and educational administration to his name.

As his story reveals, he is boldly and passionately living out God's Calling for his life, scaling the heights of Christian scholarship and leadership. So, who really is Prof. George Pirwoth Atido?

### Family & Vocational Background

George Pirwoth Atido hails from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Born and raised in a Christian family, Pirwoth reveals that his name means "because of the Lord" in his Alur language. Married to Jacqueline, they are blessed with five children namely: Divine, Deborah, David, Daniel and Dora, with an alliteration "D" motivated by his intention to dedicate all their children to God from birth as the name of God, "Dieu", in French. Pirwoth traces his journey of faith and ministry from his formative experience within his family context

He was born and raised in a Christian family at Kasengu, the first mission station of Africa Inland Mission (AIM); this is where he came to Christ at the tender age of six and baptized at twelve. In a family discipleship context that may echo biblical Timothy's own: evening family devotions, regular Sunday school and Bible studies, and the inspiring model of his passionate father Rev. Atido Kunde Dong' all influenced and inspired him from his tender age to serve Christ.

A desire which his father shared with his friends for prayer. This is what set him on the journey that would lead him to study an MTh Theology, and thereafter a PhD in World Christianity at NEGST/AIU. But this is a rather broad stroke of an otherwise colorful tory that belies the interesting twists and turns marking the transitions in his life's vocational journey.

### **From Linguistics to Theology**

Although his foundational academic interests were in Linguistics and Literature, eventually graduating with a Master of Education in French in the year 1988 and teaching the same at Université Shalom de Bunia (USB), Pirwoth admits that God used the very students he taught to remind him, that teaching the word of God appears to be his actual calling. Then, after deliberations and prayer, he enrolled for an M.A. program in Missions at the then Nairobi International School of Theology. He moved with his family to Kenya (Nairobi) in July 2002 and graduated in 2005.

Reflectively, Pirwoth looks back at his pastoral ministry experience with the Brethren Church in Kangundo as season in life in which he admits, "my faith in Christ grew significantly as God miraculously provided for my needs." In 2007, Pirwoth with his family had to relocate to Congo study an MTh Theology, and thereafter a PhD in World Christianity at NEGST/AIU.

But this is a rather broad stroke of an otherwise colorful tory that belies the interesting twists and turns marking the transitions in his life's vocational journey. to take up a position as the Executive Assistant to Dr. Katho, then the President of Université Shalom de Bunia, a University founded in 1961 by five church denominations as a theological school. Soon, however, the need arose for further studies and training. His MA qualification was inadequate for him to teach master-level courses the university was offering; and this got him packing again to return to Kenya in 2009 for an MTh in World Christianity.

This was Pirwoth's AIU connection, a path that led to a PhD under Prof. Mark Shaw's supervision. The rigorous educational program, travel opportunities to Edinburgh for research; and illuminating interactions with Prof Andrew Walls, Brian Stanley, and Afe Adogame greatly promoted his scholarship endeavors. And so, in 2015, Pirwoth successfully defended his dissertation titled, "Religious Mobility and Identity Among Alur Christians in North Eastern Congo." Always the indefatigable resourceful scholar,

Pirwoth, has since then been actively engaged in research and publication in scholarly journals, winning many prestigious research awards and grants, for example, Asbury Centre for World Christian Revitalization Movements, Tyndale House Grant, the Nagel Institute for the Studies of World Christianity at Calvin College (US), and the Shalom Research Centre in Bunia at Université Shalom de Bunia.

### **Look What the Lord Has Done: Reflecting on the Journey.**

When one listens to Prof. Pirwoth's testimony of career and professional progress, it is amazing to see how the dots connected to each other.

Within two years after his graduation, the board of USB appointed him to serve in the full capacity of Vice-Chancellor, following the sabbatical and subsequent stepping down of the President Dr Bungishabaku Katho, whom Pirwoth credits as "the author of the great university vision." As the twelfth director of USB and the second Vice Chancellor since it became a University, Prof. Pirwoth's considers his current role as "consolidating the great work done by my predecessors and mostly the work of Dr. Katho who transitioned the school from a seminary to a university and within a short period of time; establishing five new schools beside the school of theology." With continued commitment to both equip and address challenges facing the Congolese churches and society.

Pirwoth is keen to expand the University's capacity to train Christian professionals to respond holistically to the needs and crises facing the country. This vision is enshrined in a five-year Strategic Plan that will guide the growth of USB.

.... Looking at the side-mirror of his vocational journey, and the accomplishments he is making in the academia and administration, Prof. Pirwoth unequivocally testifies that, “my studies at AIU prepared me academically and spiritually to serve the Lord in Christian scholarship.” Like a skillful, professional juggler tossing three watermelons in the air, Pirwoth has balanced his administrative responsibilities with an active research and teaching responsibility in Masters and PhD programs.

Additionally, he is associated with several national and international Christian organizations in active membership and service, e.g. Strategic Plan Monitoring and Evaluation of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), and Africa Review of Interdisciplinary Studies (ARIS). Through these and other platforms, Pirwoth is making a great impact for God’s kingdom in Africa and beyond.



## Parting Shot

When all is said and done, Prof. Pirwoth argues, Christian scholarship should be highly valued in the African church and the Global South in general.

If the church hopes to rise to the challenge of contemporary Christian mission; he concludes by citing David S. Dockery that “a call to serious Christian scholarship simultaneously affirms our love for God and our love for study, the place of devotion and the place of research, the priority of affirming and passing on the great Christian traditions and the significance of honest exploration, reflection, struggle, curiosity, and intellectual inquiry. These matters are in tension, but not in contradiction and are framed by a faith-informed commitment.”

We thank Prof. Atido for sharing his story to Alumni Connect; and are grateful to God for the contribution AIU alumni are making in the world. Prof. Atido is one of our many alumni serving as Vice Chancellor’s in universities across Africa.

## Pomp and Color at the 2018 AIU Culture Week

The AIU annual Culture Week celebrations event that took place between 8<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> October 2018, was characterized by pomp and color. The cultural displays, performances, adornments, food, cuisines and panel discussions on preserving our key cultural values highlighted the richness of our diversity as a university. The annual event aims at celebrating cultural diversities represented in AIU community.

The colorful event, that was climaxed on 13<sup>th</sup> Saturday 2018, was graced by invited government officials, High commissioners, Members of Parliament, and other prominent guests. In a world where diversity is often seen as a threat, the Chief Guest Dr. Ezekiel Mutua, emphatically pointed out that our diversities should be celebrated because “Our cultural diversity is our strength and beauty.” In a big way, the 2018 theme “**Celebrating Cultural Diversity**,” reminded us of the beauty of our God-given diversities.

Also, in a profound way, the eventful week impressed on the members of our community the need to embrace, learn from the ‘other’; and more so view diversity not as a threat but as a divine factor worthy of celebration.

As a University, we are committed to making Africa International University a home of diversity, a melting pot of diversity. Currently, with over 30 nationalities and 5 continents represented, we are optimistic that AIU has a unique role in modeling what it means to coexist in a society full of diversities.



AIU gift of honor presented by the Vice-Chancellor (Prof. Dankit Nassiuma) to the CEO Kenya Film Classification Board

AIU  
Alumni

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Association  
Account Number:  
01134126672300.  
Swift code: KCOOKENA

**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