

Press Release: New Partnership for Wesley House in Africa

Wesley House Cambridge is pleased to announce a new partnership with Africa University Zimbabwe. Sponsored by the Central Conferences Theological Education Fund of the United Methodist Church and the Innovation Fund of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church (GBHEM), Wesley House and Africa University will work together to deliver a doctoral programme in Methodist Theology for 12 African theological educators. The partnership is also designed to build the capacity of Africa University for the delivery of higher degrees and research in contextual theology through its new Institute of Theology and Religious Studies.



The Principal, The Revd Dr Jane Leach (left) is pictured here with the Vice Chancellor of Africa University, Dr Munashe Furusa and the General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The Revd Dr Kim Cape (right).

Dr Jane Leach says: *'This is an exciting cross continental partnership that is going to fund 12 Methodist theological research projects in Africa and that will develop a network of Methodist educators who are able to design contextual research and teach others how to think theologically about the problems that face the African continent. The partnership is an amazing opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and relationships amongst learners and teachers alike and amongst a wider team of supervisors from across the UK and Africa. We believe that the potential impact of this project is huge and we are delighted to be a part of its design and delivery.'*

The PhD Programme

Recruitment will begin after Easter to identify suitable Methodist theological educators working in African theological institutions. It is a five year programme, beginning with an Advanced Postgraduate Certificate in Theological Research, that will enable students to continue to teach in their own contexts whilst studying part time. Learners will travel twice a year to Africa University to meet with their peers, learn research skills, discuss theological concepts and insights from other disciplines and work together with staff from Cambridge and from Africa University. After the first year each student will work with at least two supervisors – one from Cambridge and one from an African context. Each student will spend a three month period on study leave in Cambridge during the course of the degree and return to Cambridge towards the end of the programme to finish their dissertation. Students will need the support of their bishop and of their theological institution to engage in the programme and a useful research proposal that can be developed as a doctoral project.

The Institute of Theology and Religious Studies

The PhD programme is part of a series of innovations at Africa University to promote research and the contextual study of theology in Africa in the service of church and society. Wesley House staff will be working with Africa University staff to expand the concept of the Institute, to recruit a Director for the Institute and to facilitate staff development.

About Wesley House, Cambridge (www.wesley.cam.ac.uk)



Wesley House was founded as a Wesleyan Theological College in 1921 as a house of residence within the precincts of the University of Cambridge. The college was established in Cambridge as a mission priority - in order to bring Methodist students and scholars to study in the world class university where they would learn to think at a deep level about the issues facing church and society alongside ecumenical colleagues. The purpose was also to bring Methodist students into contact with those studying at the cutting edge not only of theology, but also of philosophy and science so that they would be able to engage with key questions about how to communicate Christian faith in the contemporary world. The college was to be a house of prayer and formation for ministry and service as well as a place of study, combining the Wesleyan virtues of knowledge and vital piety, learning and growth in holiness.

Wesley House today continues these traditions through its community of prayer and scholarship in Cambridge; through its academic relationships with the University of Cambridge and with Anglia Ruskin University and the Cambridge Theological Federation; it now also works with cohorts of students in other parts of the world through partnerships with Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC, Africa University, Zimbabwe and Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary in South Africa and publishes the free international journal, *Holiness* (www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/holiness).

The oldest alumnus of Wesley House is The Revd John Stanfield, now in his nineties. His missionary family (to China and to various parts of Africa) is commemorated in the new academic building. He says, '*Wesley House is doing its job when people come from all over the world to study with some of the greatest minds in the world and then get to work in some of the poorest parts of the world.*'

To support the global work of Wesley House visit www.wesley.cam.ac.uk/support-us or ring Mr Alastair Oatey on 00 44 (0)1223 765850.

About Africa University

Africa University—a pan-African higher education ministry of The United Methodist Church—is celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year. The university opened in 1992 with 40 students from six African countries. It now has an annual full-time enrolment of 1,400 students representing as many as 29 of Africa's 55 nations. Degree programs as well as short courses are offered in three colleges: Health, Agriculture & Natural Sciences; Business, Peace, Leadership & Governance; and Social Sciences, Humanities, Theology and Education. More than 90 percent of Africa University's 8,000+ alumni have remained on the continent of Africa. Graduates are in leadership roles in more than 32 African countries as well as in countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America and North America. The university's main campus is located near Mutare, in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe. To learn more about Africa University, visit: www.africau.edu and www.support-africauniversit

About GBHEM

As the leadership development agency of The United Methodist Church, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's mission is to build capacity for United Methodist lay and clergy leaders to discover, claim and flourish in Christ's calling in their lives, by creating connections and providing resources to aid in recruitment, education, professional development and spiritual formation. Every elder, deacon and licensed local pastor benefits from our training and candidacy programs. Many young adults find help in clarifying their vocation and God's call in their lives through our leadership and discernment programs. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook: @GBHEM.

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