

REPORT ON THE THEOLOGICAL COLLOQUIUM ORGANISED BY THE BENEDICT XVI INSTITUTE FOR AFRICA FROM 23RD TO 25TH NOVEMBER AT THE PAUL VI PASTORAL CENTRE BAMENDA

From 23rd to 25th November 2022, a Theological Colloquium in honour Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of his 95th Birthday, was organised at the Paul VI Pastoral Centre Bamenda, around the general theme: *Introduction to Christianity: Engagement of African Scholars*. This colloquium which registered 301 participants, examined some of the major themes of Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI's theological reflections. The participants were composed of priests, religious, seminarians, catechists, representatives of Lay Apostolic Groups, and other Christians.

I. DAY ONE: Wednesday 23rd November 2022

The Colloquium started at 4:30pm, with opening remarks made by Pr. Michael Niba, one of the Moderators of the Colloquium. After welcoming each and every one and expressing his sentiments of gratitude to all in their respective grades, he prefixed his words with questions worth reflecting on: What are we doing here listening to talks on the *Introduction to Christianity* whereas we have been Christians for many years? How relevant are we as Christians today? How can we be authentically Christian and authentically African?



The Moderator's introductory remarks were followed by an opening prayer said by His Grace Andrew Nkea, Archbishop of Bamenda and Chancellor of CATUC. In his prayer,

he invited the Holy Spirit to direct the proceedings of the Colloquium and to fill the speakers and participants with understanding and wisdom, and the grace to grow in their knowledge and love of God.

After prayers, he welcomed all those who were present asserting that the Catholic University of Cameroon (CATUC), Bamenda, was the host of the Colloquium. He went on to explain that although CATUC hasn't got a Department of Theology, she has a Department of Philosophy and in that capacity will host the eagerly awaited Benedict XVI Institute of Africa which would help advance our reflections on the theological contributions of Joseph Ratzinger. He informed the participants that Africa is the last continent to have a Benedict XVI Institute which has already been firmly established in Sri Lanka, Germany, and the United States. He expressed his desire, expectation and wish that once this institute goes operational here in Bamenda, we would have many people coming from different parts of the world to deepen their knowledge on the thoughts of Joseph Ratzinger. With these words he declared the Colloquium open.



Speaking after the Archbishop of Bamenda and Chancellor of CATUC, the Vice Chancellor of CATUC, Rev Fr Joseph Awoh welcomed everyone reiterating that CATUC is partnering with the Benedict XVI Institute as an institute that has a Philosophy Department. He announced Fr. Michael Niba as the new Director of the Benedict XVI Institute. He argued that Africa is the hope of the Universal Church

because of the increasing number of Christians, priests and religious. It is thus fitting to have a Benedict XVI Institute for catechetical formation, theological formation and continuous formation for priests and religious. He thanked the organizers while expressing his hope that the Colloquium would profit us spiritually and intellectually so that we are nourished to work for the Church, Cameroon and Africa.



The series of welcome speeches was concluded by that of the Representative of the Benedict XVI Institute for Africa, Rev. Pr. Maurice Ebai.



He explained how the idea of the Benedict Institute for Africa came about rendering immense thanks to His Grace Andrew Nkea. He equally expressed his appreciation to the Vice Chancellor of CATUC for opening the doors of CATUC to the Benedict XVI Institute for Africa. He thanked the coordinators of this Colloquium (Fr Michael Niba and Fr Giles Ngwa Forteh) and all the resource persons for their dedication and sacrifice. He was grateful to the Benedict Institute and read a note from the Prefect of the Papal household informing participants about the fact that Pope Benedict XVI had taken note of the Colloquium organised in his honour. He went on to state the Pope's satisfaction and sincere wishes for the colloquium to become an opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views, an in-depth study of theological issues, and growth in the faith and the practice of it. "*Quo Vadis African Theology?*" was the question Fr. Ebai suggested as the refrain for all theological reflections during the colloquium. To him, Africa stands to influence the global Church, thus, what we do here has implications that go beyond Cameroon and Africa.

The last activity of the day was the Key Note Lecture on the Theme: "*The Theological and Historical Hermeneutics of Ratzinger's Introduction to Christianity*" by Rev. Dr Andrew Ngah.



His reflections focused on the contextual interpretation of Ratzinger's thoughts, the historico-cultural and theological contexts that necessitated the *Introduction to Christianity* – a way of provoking reflection and research into Christianity. He demonstrated how theology grows out of specific contexts and seeks to address the issues of human conditions with the light of the Word of God. The first day ended with the taking of photographs and with a cocktail during which a lot of intersubjective dialogical discussions took place.



2. DAY TWO Thursday, 24 November 2022

As it is most fitting, the new day was inaugurated with the celebration of the Eucharist at 6.30 am. This was an opportunity for the organisers and the participants to pray for divine guidance throughout the colloquium.



Breakfast was served after Mass and at 9.00 am the participants were seated in the Hall, ready to listen to the presenters. A total of eight papers, reflecting on the various themes, were presented on this day, as follows:

1st *Belief in the World today.* Rev. Prof. Maurice Ebai

2nd *The Ecclesial Form of Faith* by Rev. Dr. Anthony Yilaka

3rd *Prolegomena to the Subject of God* by Dr. Nelson Shang

4th *The Biblical Belief in God* by Dr. Gordian Baba

5th *The God of Faith and the God of the Philosophers* by Rev. Dr. Peter Tarkov

6th *Faith in God Today* by Rev. Pr. Michael Niba

7th *Belief in the Triune God* by Rev. Dr. John Berinyuy

8th *I Believe in Jesus Christ, His Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord* by Rev. Dr. Marcel Gham.



Split into two panels, the presentations were punctuated by a question-and-answer session. Many members of the audience made beautiful contributions, notably the Archbishop Emeritus of Bamenda, His Grace Cornelius Fontem Esua. He insisted a lot on the need to bridge the gap between the audience and culture. Ratzinger wrote *Introduction to Christianity* for (the Germans) and our African scholars must demonstrate the relevance of his teaching to our ecclesiastical cultural context today.



DAY THREE: Friday, 25th November, 2022

The series of activities programmed for the 3rd and last day of the Colloquium began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, “the source and summit of the Christian life” (*Lumen Gentium, 11*). Beginning at 9.00am, the following papers were delivered:

1st : *Jesus Christ – True God and True Man* by Rev. Dr. Augustine Nkwain.

2nd: *Excursus: Christian Structures* Sr. Dr. Joan Mary Kiveyonge.

3rd: *The Development of Faith in Christ in the Christological Articles of the Creed* by Rev. Emmanuel Fale

4th: *The Question about God and about Christ and African Traditional Religions* by Rev. Dr. Remi Prospero Fonka

5th: *Introduction to Christianity and African Christian Philosophy* by Pr. Valentine Ngalim



The presentations were punctuated by a coffee break, lunch and a question-and-answer session. Participants were given sufficient time to express their views and impressions. There was general consensus on the importance of the colloquium and of the need to organise them quite frequently. The participants rejoiced at the fact that they learnt many new things and felt motivated to make a deeper commitment to the practice of their faith.

At the closing of the colloquium, the moderator of the colloquium (Pr. Michael Niba) and the representative of the Benedict XVI Institute for Africa (Pr. Maurice Ebai), each one in his turn, expressed gratitude to the resource persons, the participants and the workers at the centre for the hitch free conduct of the colloquium. Pr. Maurice Ebai, at the insistence of the participants, promised that another colloquium will be organised on another stimulating theme next year. After the concluding prayer said by Fr. Michael Kintang, Episcopal Vicar for the Laity in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, supper was served to all the participants. A total of 301 participants took part in the Colloquium.

A Cross-section of Participants at the Colloquium









DAILY PROGRAMME OF THE COLLOQUIUM

DAY ONE: Wednesday, 23rd November, 2022

PANEL 1: (3.00pm-5.30pm)

Moderator - Rev. Prof. Michael NIBA

3:00 pm: Arrival

4:00 pm: Start of Colloquium

- Opening Prayer and Blessing by the Most Rev. Dr. Andrew F. Nkea, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bamenda

- Word of Welcome by the Vice Chancellor of CATUC: Rev. Dr. Joseph Awoh

- Word of welcome by the Representative of Benedict XVI Institute for Africa

KEYNOTE LECTURE:

“The Theological and Historical Hermeneutics of Ratzinger’s Introduction to Christianity”

Rev. Dr Andrew NGAH

- Come Together Picture

- 6.00PM: Supper

- End of Day One

DAY TWO: Thursday, 24th November, 2022

7.00 AM: Mass

7:45 AM: Breakfast

PANEL 2 (9.00 am-12.50pm)

Moderator: Rev. Dr. Giles N. Forteh

9 AM: Rev. Prof. Maurice ABGAW – EBAI - *Belief in the World of Today*

9:35 AM: Rev. Dr. Anthony YILAKA – *The Ecclesial Form of Faith*

10: 10 AM: Dr. Nelson SHANG – *Prolegomena to the Subject of God*

10:45 AM: Rev. Dr. Gordian BABA – *The Biblical Belief in God*

11:20 AM – 11.45AM: General Questions and Answers

Coffee Break

12:15 PM: Rev Dr. Peter TAKOV - *The God of Faith and the God of the Philosophers*

1.00 PM **Lunch / Rest**

PANEL 3 (3.00 PM-5.15PM)

Moderator: Rev. Dr. Giles N. Forteh

3.00 PM: Rev. Prof. Michael NIBA - *Faith in God Today*

3:35 PM: Rev. Dr. John BERINYUY - *Belief in the Triune God*

4:10 PM: Rev. Dr. Marcel GHAM - *“I Believe in Jesus Christ, His Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord”.*

4.45 PM- 5.15 PM: General Questions and Answers

6:00 PM Supper

End of Day Two

DAY THREE: Friday, 25th November, 2022

7 AM: Mass

7:45 AM: Breakfast

PANEL 4 (9.00 AM-12.50PM)

Rev. Pr. Michael Niba

9 AM: Rev Dr. Augustine NKWAIN – *“Jesus Christ – True God and True Man.”*

9:35 AM: Rev. Dr. Humphrey TATAH – *The Different Paths taken by Christology*

10:10 AM: Sr. Dr. Joan Mary KIYVEYONGE – *Excursus: Christian Structures*

10:45 AM: Rev. Dr. Emmanuel FALE – *The Development of Faith in Christ in the Christological Articles of the Creed*

11:20 AM – 11.45AM: General Questions and Answers

Coffee Break

12.15 PM: Rev. Dr. Charles SENGKA – *The Spirit and the Church*

1.00 PM **Lunch/ Rest**

PANEL 5 (3.00PM-5.15 PM)

Rev. Pr. Michael Suh Niba

3.00 PM: Rev. Jude LANGEH - *Introduction to Christianity and Christian Preaching: Method and Praxis,*

3:35 PM: Rev. Dr. Remi Prospero FONKA – *The Question about God and about Christ and African Traditional Religions*

4:10 PM: Pr. Valentine NGALIM - *Introduction to Christianity and African Christian Philosophy*

4.45 PM- 5.25 PM: General Questions and Answers

5.15 PM: Concluding Remarks

END OF COLLOQUIUM

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME

N	Date	Source	Amount
1.	12/11/22	BIA	1 207 034

2.	--	BIA	1 220 241
3.	22/11/22	BIA	1 497 259
4.	--	BIA	1 645 394
5.	25/11/12	BIA	2 077 622
	total		7 647 550

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

N	ITEM	AMOUNT	REMARKS
1	Renting and Decoration of Hall	150 000	
2	Decoration	150 000	
3	Hiring of Public Address Systems	100 000	
4	Printing of Colloquium Booklet	491 000	
5	Colloquium Files and Writing Materials		
a	200 plastic folders	85 000	
b	Design and printing of writing materials	80 000	
c	Deign and printing of labours on files	30 000	
d	Design and printing of posters	40 000	
e	Realm of paper (1)	3 200	
		238 200	
6	Publicity		
a	CRTV	50 000	
b	Radio Evangelium	40 000	
		90 000	
7	Cocktail		
a	Peanuts	10 000	
b	Chinchin	10 000	
c	Icepot	7 500	
d	Juice for Archbishop's table	5 900	
e	Giscours wine	12 000	
		45 400	
8	Water and Drinks		

a	water	108 000	
b	Beers	97 800	
c	Juice	94 250	
d	Wine	145 000	
e	Martini, campari, amarula	48 400	
		493 450	
9	Others		
a	Badges for Conferenciers	20 500	
b	Disposable cups	4 000	
c	Openers	2 000	
d	Helpers to clean and set the halls	80 000	
		124 500	
10	Transport		
a	Vianney Centre	50 000	
b	St Anne Sisters	50 000	
c	Seminarians from Bambui (48)	200 000	
d	Transport for purchases	25 000	
		325 000	
11	Board and Lodging	2 510 000	
13	Stipend for Resource Persons and Organisers		
a.	Archbishop of Bamenda/ Chancellor of CATUC	300 000	
b.	Rev. Dr. Joseph Awoh, Vice Chancellor of CATUC	150 000	
c	Pr. Michael Niba - Moderator	500 000	
d	Rev. Dr. Giles Forteh	500 000	
e	Rev. Dr. Andrew Ngah - Keynote speaker	120 000	
f	Dr. Nelson Shang (Secretary)	100 000	
g	Fr. Leonard Zifack (Secretary)	100 000	
		1 770 000	
	Speakers		

h	Rev. Dr. Marcel Gham	100 000	
i	Rev Dr. Emmanuel Fale	100 000	
j	Rev. Dr. Anthony Yilaka	80 000	
k	Rev. Dr. Gordian Baba	80 000	
l	Rev. Dr. Peter Tarkov	80 000	
m	Rev. Dr. John Berinyuy	80 000	
n	Rev. Dr. Remi Prospero Fonka	80 000	
o	Dr. Charles Berinyuy	80 000	
p	Pr. Maurice Agbaw-Ebai	80 000	
q	Pr. Michael Niba	80 000	
r	Pr. Valentine Ngalim	80 000	
s	Rev. Dr. Augustine Nkwain	80 000	
t	Sr. Joan Mary Kiveyongne	120 000	
u	Dr. Nelson Shang	80 000	
		1 200 000	
	TOTAL	7 687 550	

Total Expenditure: 7 687 550

Balance - Total Money received (7, 647, 550) – Total expenditure (7 687 550) (-40,000CFA)

Flight Tickets for November Conference: 3, 787,500

Miscellaneous Expenses: 1,260,354

Total for November Introduction to Christianity Conference: CFA 12,735,404: US\$ 23,155