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**To the Heads of the Member Churches
of the Cevaa,
Southern Africa and Indian Ocean area
(FJKM, EPIM, EPIR, UCZ, LEC, IPM)
& EPCG**

Montpellier, 22nd March, 2016

Subject: Theological Empowerment Training Seminar for Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region

Ladies and gentlemen, dear presidents and/or moderators,

May the Lord accompany you in your various responsibilities with the strength he has given you!

By this letter, I bring you that, in accordance with the Executive Council Decision of Cevaa, the Secretariat have decided to organize a training seminar for Empowerment in Applied Bible Studies (EABS) for women in the Churches of the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, plus the EPCG, all members of Cevaa.

The seminar will be held at La Réunion Island, from 13th to 27nd November, 2016.

What is EABS training?: The Bible has been used often clumsily, both in new churches and in the so-called "historical" churches. Consequently, as part of their collaboration, Cevaa and Kerk-in-Actie, have established an "AEBA training development project", which means Empowerment in Applied Bible Studies or Contextual Bible Study – CBS.

The project aims to correct erroneous readings from the Bible, readings whose purpose has long been to maintain the woman into submission. In other words, it is about giving women the means that will allow them to read the Bible with other "glasses", that is to say to take charge and to face effectively the multifaceted problems that plague their everyday life (theirs and the one of the people around them), in order to enable them to participate actively in the construction and promotion of the Kingdom of God and the development of their society.

EABS training has already been proven in Cameroon and Congo Brazzaville. Indeed, in 1996, a training for Empowerment in Applied Bible Studies has been implemented in Cameroon, for women of the Department of the Union of Christian women (DUFC) of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (EEC). On and after 2000, this training was extended to women members of other Protestant Churches in Cameroon (such as UEBC, EPC, etc.).

Given the great success met by the EABS training in Cameroon, it was decided to offer this training to other countries: in Congo Brazzaville where it took place between 2009 and 2011, then in Rwanda between 2012 and 2014.

Given the importance of women training within the Cevaa, especially also because of the increasing demand of Member Churches, the Executive Council of the Cevaa decided to offer this training to several churches together. Between 2013 and 2015, North and West African Churches (EPMB, EMT, EMUCI, EEAM, EPS and ELS) benefited from this training held in Benin.

Your region was chosen today and we hope that you will respond favorably to this choice.

Training aims: Three main objectives are pursued by this training:

1. **Training of trainers:** EABS training is designed to train women who will in turn become trainers. Project sustainability is ensured, because the Church will continue this program independently through the action of the trainers at their disposal.
2. **The production of small working materials:** After the training, women should be able to produce materials they will need for their future work (Biblical facilitating sheets, for example).
3. **Creating a network of trained biblical facilitators:** The training also aims to stimulate collaboration and networking among women of a church, a networking that could spread to women of other churches and other countries.

Prerequisites: Effective participation in this training requires that participants have at least a First Leaving School Certificate. They must at least read and write fluently. It should however be clear that a high intellectual level is not a guarantee of success of the training. Experiences elsewhere have shown that some women, without university level, have managed training with better grades than some who had a university level, even in the field of theology. This brings us to tell you also that this training does not necessarily require a theological basis. To be graduated in theology is not compulsory to become a facilitator. Lay women can be very good facilitators of Empowerment in Applied Bible Studies. Therefore trained women will not "compete" with pastors in parishes.

Training duration: The training consists of three (3) sessions of two (2) weeks per year for three (3) years. After each training session, the participants will receive a certificate. After three sessions of the training, **the women who took part in three training sessions and who have passed the final exam will graduate with a diploma in EABS.**

Each Church will be represented by four (4) persons. We would like to insist on the fact that the training will be held in both French and English. Consequently the Churches should preferably choose women who are able to speak both languages. Thank you therefore to give us the names and addresses (email and phone) of women representing your Church. **Registration forms attached to this email must be returned to us imperatively before the 24th of June, 2016!**

Waiting for your answer, which I wish prompt, receive, dear Church Leaders, my cordial greetings.



Pastor Samuel Désiré JOHNSON
Executive Secretary - Activities Pole

