

Effective Evangelism for Contemporary Africa

What is Evangelism?

The spreading of the good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ by public preaching or personal witness.

Romans 10:15 (NLT)

¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"^[a]

- a. There is the public preaching**
- b. There is the personal witness**
 - i. Personal witnessing through verbal sharing of the gospel to others**
 - ii. Personal witness of lifestyle choices and love for others**
 - iii. The above two should go hand in hand for effective evangelism to happen.**

What then summarizes the content of the gospel we are supposed to share?

The gospel message should include preaching the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in our evangelism

"Evangelism must start with the Holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the demands of the law, and the eternal consequences of evil."

Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

Is there a difference between Evangelism and Witnessing?

Witnessing is:

Testifying to the work of God in our lives bears witness to what Christ has done for us; it does not by itself give the content of the Gospel. Living a righteous life manifests the work of the Holy Spirit, but we have not evangelized our neighbor if we have never shared the Gospel with him.

Evangelism is: Sharing the message of Salvation through Christ there in declaring his life, death and resurrection.

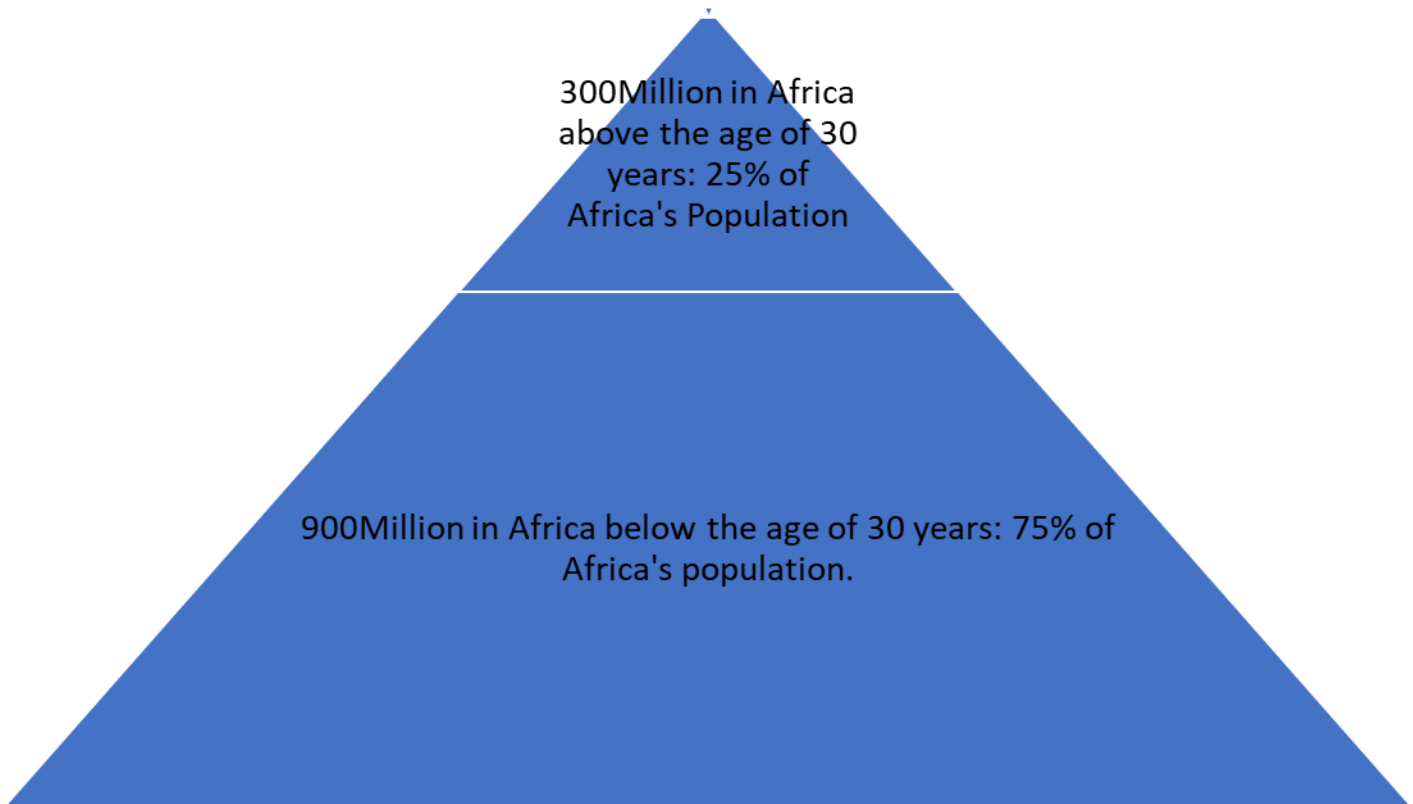
God has created us with different personalities and gifts, and some of us are more adept at the verbal proclamation of the Gospel than others. Nevertheless, declaring the message of salvation through Christ is the responsibility of us all, and we must seek opportunities to preach the Gospel.

After establishing what evangelism is, how then as Wesleyan Churches in Africa can we be effective in reaching Contemporary Africa. Lets begin by looking at some facts:

The population of Africa has grown rapidly over the past century, and consequently shows a large youth bulge, further reinforced by a low life expectancy of below 50 years in some African countries.

- Africa has a total population of 1.2 Billion people currently on the Continent
- 75% of the population is below 30 years that is: 900 Million.
- 41% of the population is below 15 years that is 492 Million out of 900Million is below age 15.
- 25% of the African population is over the age of 30 years that is: 300million people.
- It is estimated that 500million people live in the urban centers of Africa.
- Out of 1.2billion people on the continent only almost 400 Million claim to belong to a protestant church and 400 Million to the catholic church
- This leave 500million people belonging to the others category

Demographic Statistics of Population in Africa



Sources: Wikipedia, Worldometers.

Therefore, is the evangelical church in Africa paying attention to these facts?

This youth bulge impacts heavily on evangelism and the methods we use as a church in reaching out to a young and youthful population in Africa currently called the millennials largely below 25 years but for our purposes, the age bracket is below 30 of the millennials we reach.

Can we describe their lifestyle habits and trends of a typical non believing millennial in Africa?

(In groups of 3 or two discuss and list down the above)

1. Heavy on Mobile use
2. Heavy on Social Media
3. Tech Savvy they live on digital technology; their lives are on their smartphones which serves as their playroom, their educator, their library, their social piece, their movie theater, their entertainment, their yellow pages to name a few.
4. Have no memory of colonization
5. Heavy breakdown in family culture
6. Educated hustlers because of growing unemployment
7. Nationalistic in outlook and globally aware and in touch
8. Heavily interested and into the Creative Arts: Music, drama, poetry
9. Heavy on entertainment and engaged in the use of drugs, alcohol and quite promiscuous
10. Breakdown of traditional, cultural values and norms and social structures
 - a. Have no respect for authority structures
 - b. Very individualistic
 - c. Break down of social norms and structures
 - d. Despise tradition, fixed way of thinking, instead they are very open minded, accommodating and non-judgmental
11. They are setting the trends and parents are following them.
12. They are very mobile, quick to seize opportunities and move to explore and engage in new ventures.

I have been engaged in the church planting movement in our country through sourcing, training and sending church planters to plant churches in the urban centers of our nations and beyond the borders of our nation. My husband and I have planted directly two churches in Kenya's urban centers and currently Pastor the 2nd church we have planted. The most interesting thing we observed in both towns is that many of the churches were struggling to effectively reach the bulk of the population and so the young people became a huge untapped resource. The main obstacle in many of the churches is that they were planted years back and have stuck to methods of reaching their communities that worked years back. Therefore, the main complaint that we have today among the millennials is that the church has ceased to be relevant. So, when we landed in both towns we began attracting millennials and quickly became targeted by the other churches as young people found a home where the gospel was uncompromisingly preached but in ways that could relate with them. Young people don't want us to compromise the truth, they want to hear the truth, the message of the gospel. Our problem is that we are not changing our methods. A cross section of the church has gotten frozen in time to a season and time where the methods we employ today worked years ago, but then we get frustrated why we are not being effective in our evangelism in contemporary Africa. As long as our methodologies do not encourage, facilitate sinful indulgences we have an obligation to effectively reach the contemporary generation with the gospel.

Mark 2:19-21 New Living Translation (NLT)

19 Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. They can't fast while the groom is with them.²⁰ But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

21 "Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

Therefore, I would like us to answer the question:

In what ways as the Wesleyan Churches can we reach the bulk of our youth populations with the gospel message with the above understanding of contemporary trends and habits?

(In groups of 3 discuss)

- 1. Finding the right people to lead this generation.**
- 2. Have authentic and creative home grown models of ministry.**
- 3. Tap into their natural hungers.**

Media

Social Media

Relationships: Parenting classes (Tess story)

Money

Nationality issues

Arts: Concerts and Events where they utilize their talents and gifts in the Arts and then we use this platform to publicly proclaim the gospel

Entertainment and Fun: Parties, Mathew Parties idea gotten from Mathew also known as Levi.

Mark 2:15 -17

¹⁵ Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) ¹⁶ But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees^[b] saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?^[c]"

¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

4. Authentic and real/listening and preaching

5. Excellence: Doing the best with whatever we have

7. Mentors and spiritual parents

8. Emphasis on transformation (Celebrate testimonies of salvation and transformation)

9. Listening to outsiders

1 Corinthians 9:22 (NLT)

²² When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.