

THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP LETTER

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HOW CAN AFRICAN CHURCHES SEND MISSIONARIES?

When God called Abraham, he promised to make him into a father of many nations and in him the families of the earth will be blessed, **'...I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'** (Gen. 12:1-3). Today we as Christians are Abraham's seed by faith. These nations/families are not gathered automatically. Jesus knew this hence, before his accession he commanded his disciples to go make disciples of all nations, **'...Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...'** (Mtt. 28:19-20). In fact He made it a condition for the end to come, **'and this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the entire world as a witness to all nations then the end will come'** (Mtt. 24:14).

Over the years efforts have been made by the apostles and other Christians both in ancient and contemporary missions to reach to all nations for the purpose of gathering the nations to the Kingdom of God. In doing so many missionaries have gone across culture in what is known as foreign missions while others stays within cultures in home missions. The history of contemporary missions shows that missions have been in the hands of men and women from Western cultures. In fact this is the reason why missionary work in Africa was preceded by colonialism. This means that with the advent of colonialism (Britain, France, Portugal, Spain etc) came Christianity. In this situation it will be expected that missionary work will be in the hands of foreign white

missionaries. Of the eighty and more missionaries who came to Sierra Leone within a period of one hundred years there was only one black American. Many missionaries suffered from tropical diseases leading to death for many of them. They suffered from culture shock. There was serious language barrier and interpreters have to be employed. Missions in terms of recruitment, training and support in the field were expensive. The leadership was entirely in the hands of the white missionaries hence, people viewed the Christian religion as a white man religion. These factors and many others slowed down the growth of the Church in Africa. The Wesleyan Church for example is found only in seventeen out of fifty-three countries in Africa. Unfortunately there is no longer the presence of white missionaries in Africa. The Church is now a national Church. How can we face the unfinished task of reaching the gospel to all nations in Africa and elsewhere in the world? Africa needs to answer the questions in Rom. 10:13-15, **'for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not**

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heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?' It is no secret that millions of people in Africa and the world over are yearning or rather do not have the opportunity to call upon the name of our Lord and have not been saved because they have not believed. They have not believed because nobody has preached because there is no one sent to them. What is the African Churches doing to send missionaries to these places where people need to call on the Lord and be saved? Today the Church is in better position to send missionaries.

- What are the opportunities the African Church have to send missionaries?
- How can they be recruited, trained and supported?

These are two fundamental questions we need to answer if we are to join the band of missionaries to help the millions of people who need to call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

Opportunities for African Churches to send Missionaries:

African Churches today have great opportunities to send missionaries in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The following are some of the opportunities for sending missions:

- **It minimizes culture shock.** When African Churches begin to send missionaries in other African countries where they share similar cultural practices culture shock is relatively reduced as compared to the white man serving as missionary in Africa.
- **It lessens the cost of recruitment, training and support in the mission field.** Churches in Africa have a better ability to identify potential

candidates for missions. Training can be conducted in some of our theological schools in Africa where it is less expensive and prevent any situation where candidates might not be willing to come back home after training. Support in the mission field might not be as expensive as the white missionary who finds it difficult to cope with adverse conditions such as electricity, food etc.

- **It reduces the misconception that Christianity is a white man religion.** When Islam is propagated by African missionaries, it is viewed as an African religion despite the fact that they pray in an unknown language. If African Churches begin to send missionaries it will be easier for the indigenization of the Church in Africa.

How can they be Recruited, Trained and Supported?

Potential Missionaries will be recruited from among Christians who feel being called to do missions. Once recruited they will be trained in African Theological Schools rather than overseas where they have better opportunity to study in practical terms the culture of the people they will serve after completion of their training. Missionaries can be supported by their local Churches/mission agencies or other international mission agencies; this can be done in partnership.

Our God is a missionary God. He is interested in bringing together all the nations under his rule. He called Abraham to this task, Israel, then Jesus whom sent to die for the world (John. 3:16). Jesus in turn instructed his disciples to help in gathering all the nations. Great men and women have been involved in God's missionary enterprise. Africa churches should not be an exception. Efforts need to be undertaken to ensure that churches in Africa start sending missionaries because of its

divined mandate and the huge opportunities in missions in Africa and elsewhere in the world

(Matthew 28:19-20).

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## PASSION FOR EVANGELISM

A passion for evangelism is to be found in the lives of people who have a hunger to evangelize others since they themselves have freely received salvation by Grace and are thus prepared to give freely to others. They have received Jesus as their Lord and Savior in accordance with John 3:16, which states that, “God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have eternal life” and it is because of that love that we have the passion to transmit the message to others so that they will also have a thirst for Christ. What is really important is to create a movement within our churches to cultivate a lifestyle of evangelism. If we are able, by God’s Grace, to live a Holy life this will serve as a great example for the whole community. People need to have a living example to follow and not just in empty words, but we need to be real living examples of the Gospel.

The foundation for the creation of a reference point for the work of evangelism is in the local church. The Pastor must work diligently to ensure that the members are thoroughly disciplined and well trained with evangelism materials. Each member needs to know how to do his work with diligence. This training must be the first challenge which the Pastor faces and it must be done with great patience, making sure that the basis of that training is rooted in personal evangelism methods. This is so effective since every member has family members and friends who should be spoken to

and invited to come to Christ. A person can share something with his or her friend or brother, neighbor or colleague at school or at work because we have something real to share and therefore we have the ability to share with others. A hungry person cannot give food to someone else who has nothing. Thus the members will have nothing to share if the pastor does not manage to feed the members of his church. He cannot expect to have good results and a good harvest because he has not done a good job of planting. He has not sown the seed well, not cultivated it or watered it and so it is clear that he will not collect a good harvest since this requires persistence and not laziness.

Another aspect of evangelism is to have evangelism groups or teams which work well since the teams are repeatedly or continually in training. In this way the group leader is able to give a daily reminder that our goal is to gain people for Christ and never to send people out without first training them. The Pastor or trainer needs to monitor the work to ensure that it is being done well. He should enjoy hearing the stories or reports of what is

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encountered in the field and should always know how to praise good work and thus encourage the workers. He should recognize and help the evangelists to understand that each day is different. There are days when the sun shines brightly and there are other days that are windy with driving rain and that this is all a part of what happens in the work of evangelism. The Pastor must have the capacity to explain all of this and to train the members to be constant and dependable in their work of evangelism. We must also train people to be diligent in prayer because Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing." That means that we might work a great deal in our own strength and not accomplish anything. Peter fished all night and caught nothing but when Jesus came, everything changed and he experienced just the opposite.

We might design wonderful projects but if we do not have Jesus included in them, we can do nothing. We can lay plans for many good activities but they must be planned and implemented with much prayer and our members must be taught that it is not with human strength that we can do the work of God but it can only be done by the help of the Spirit of God which is made possible through prayer. Even Jesus himself prayed that it would be the Spirit of God that would do the work and we must always pray in faith because without faith, nothing that we do will have any success. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6, "Without Faith it is impossible to please God." In any groups that are created, the person who leads them must encourage a spirit of willingness to work through constant prayer.

There is another very important factor, which is the conservation of the converts which we could compare to nurturing a newly born child. Always when a mother gives birth to a child she has the responsibility to nurture her baby because if that does not happen, the baby will

die. We must always commit a great deal of attention to new converts since all recent converts need to be loved and visited. Especially when they or their children become ill or if other family members have problems, they need to be given special attention on the part of the Pastor. For example, if two people in the same church become ill at the same time, which one should be visited first, the older or the newer member? What might happen if you do not visit the older member and he hears you have visited someone else? He may stop coming to church for a while because we were not able to help him when he was suffering. As a gardener with new plants, when you forget to water the plants, they will die because of neglect. You might say that you did not do that on purpose but that will not prevent the plants from dying. Whatever the justification might be, the plants will die because they were not given the proper attention and it does require a great deal of care for New Converts.

How can we have a strong church which is always growing or how can we have a church which is continually planting other churches? Our whole foundation for this lies in training that is with the purpose of planting more churches. Our members need to become mature so that they can help us achieve this objective. We must have a specific goal for growth. How many members must we gain for Christ this year? A plan of activities without a plan of action will not result in any work being done. How to achieve our planned goal requires a great amount of care in the distribution of work assignments. In accordance with our goals we must assign the work based upon people's strength or ability. For example, a child who is 10 years old cannot carry the same weight as one who is 20 years old. If you do not properly distribute the tasks, you could talk all you want but you will never reach your target. You need to know how to place people where they are most suited, assigning certain

people for specific work, always encouraging those who manage to produce good results and helping those who do not manage.

New church planting is not always easy. You need to understand that sometimes certain communities are not yet ripe for harvesting or perhaps they may be saturated, which means that they are already full of other churches. One needs to conduct a preliminary survey to explore whether we might plant a church in that particular zone or not. Planting a church in the city is different from planting outside of the city in a rural area. Many times it is much more expensive and often requires a rental to be paid. However, it is worthwhile to begin work in the City since that is where many of the more educated people are to be found. Church planting in any city requires a Pastor who speaks the national language of the country very fluently and who has a higher academic capacity and who is capable to teach others so that they can reach people with a higher academic level. This will generate a greater financial stability for the church with tithes coming from people who have greater prosperity and will enable the city church to more rapidly reach a level of financial maturity.

That greater financial capacity could be used for media evangelism through radio or television ministry in as much as one may have people who have sufficient training and experience to do this kind of ministry always giving full attention to the purpose of winning more people for Christ. There needs to be a willingness or determination to achieve success in the three fold measures of the church growth: namely, numerical growth, spiritual growth and financial growth.

**1) Numerical growth** means more members, more Bible study cells, more preaching points, more churches and more districts. We will

succeed in doing this if we do not stop and we are constantly producing new leaders with abilities to lead the church, like the twelve who were well able to lead 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 and 1000 believers and even 2000, 3000, 5000 or 10.000. Always when we have a tendency to rapid numerical growth, we need to also prepare our members for growing spiritually through discipleship.

**2) Spiritual growth** takes time and it requires us to work hard to reach these objectives because without spiritual development we will not have people who are reaching new levels of spiritual maturity. Where the Spirit of God does not reign, we will not have the fruit of the Spirit being produced. We will simply be training people for numerical growth but we will end up working alone.

In order to experience rapid and sustained growth we need to invest ourselves in other groups of people so that they will also invest themselves in others. To experience rapid growth, train people so that they will also train other people as associates. Be very careful to never work alone. Jesus, the Divine Son of God, did not work alone. He looked for the Apostles in order to invest Himself in them. He instructed the Apostles and sent them out on Great missions. On another day, the Apostles of Jesus became satisfied with one of the missions on which they had been sent by Jesus. The brought a glorious report telling Jesus that the demons were obedient to them. They were very satisfied, but Jesus said, "Do not rejoice that the demons are obedient to you, but rejoice that your names are written in the Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus did not work alone.

Any person who gardens alone reduces his effectiveness greatly and cannot be compared to someone who works with 2, 10 or even 20

other people. We need to always be teaching others how to do the work of God in order to reach many people. One person can only be in one place at any time but 20 people can be in 20 different places at the same time and for this reason, the results will be multiplied in a positive way.

**3)** The third area of growth is **economic growth**. This is perhaps the most difficult of the three, but we must work diligently in the area of teaching about tithing. We do not have any other stronger instrument to help the Church to become self-sufficient which is the resource for providing the salaries of the Pastors. Take the time that is required to train people about the tithe. We must work with the feeling that the Church must not live its whole life with the attitude of continually asking. We need to understand that it is only in giving that we will really be blessed. Yes we are in Africa and that is not the important thing. We must give to God says Malachi 3:8-10 and He has promised to open the windows of heaven and to pour out more blessings upon us as we are faithful to Him in tithing. Because the Devil knows about this area, he darkens our vision so that we do not tithe so that we will not be blessed with much more. Pastors desert the

work of God and go to looking for work to at least have something to wear. The thing that needs to be taught is that God has great power and that the house of God is not a house of beggars for alms. God's House has great riches, power to conquer and is equipped for Great Commission Evangelism.

### **OUR VISION**

We think that we can advance a great deal in the area of evangelization through the use of Audio Visual evangelism tools like the Jesus Film. Already at this time in many cases in Mozambique, this method is continuing to attract thousands of people especially in the rural areas. We continue to be committed to personal evangelism, Church planting in areas where we have not yet entered. We expect to have success through the involvement of the whole church all the time. Always putting Christ Jesus above everything else in order to have success we must be fully committed to the training of leaders in all areas through our theological education programs including our Bible Colleges and our Seminary without which it is impossible for us to develop. In all these efforts may His blessing be ours.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE AFRICAN HARVEST FIELD

Jesus said, "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." (John 4:35) Certainly the harvest is ripe in Africa right now. The church (both the Church universal as well as the Wesleyan Church in particular) is growing more rapidly in Africa right now than it is anywhere else in the world. Scholars tell us that within the next decade Africa will have a

higher percentage of Christians in its population than any other continent.

A wise farmer surveys his fields at harvest time to determine where the harvest is ripest so that he might wisely deploy his workers. There is no greater shame than for a harvest to rot in the field, simply because there was no one ready to

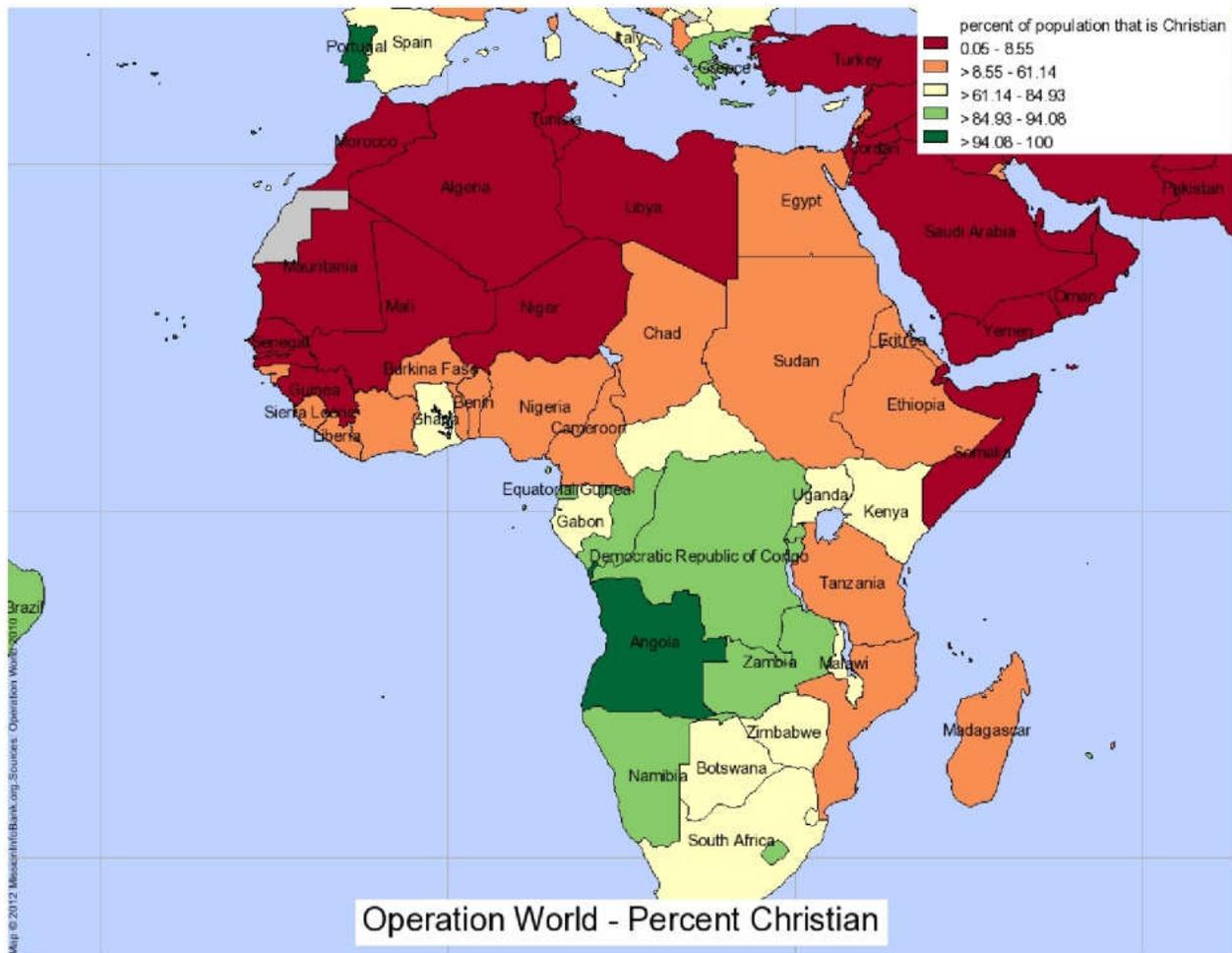
reap the harvest or the workers were too busy doing something else. The aim of this article is to help us to look on fields and see where we should invest our time, energy, and other resources in order to reap the maximum harvest for our Master.

The Size of the Harvest Remaining

You may recall the story of a shoe manufacturer who sent a salesman to a new country to sell shoes. The salesman quickly emailed back after his arrival to say he was returning home because “There is no one to

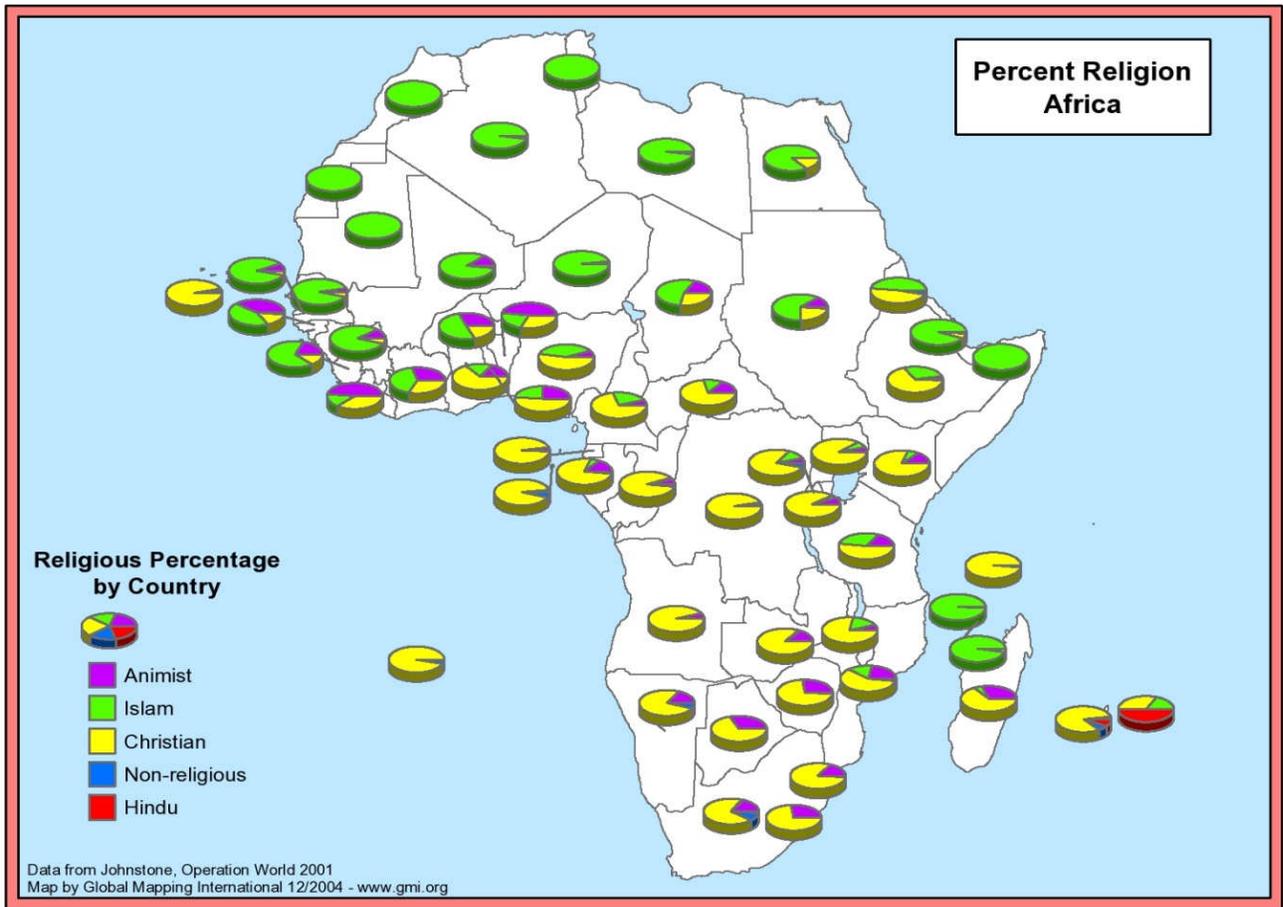
sell to because no one in this country wears shoes!” The company sent a second salesman a little later who quickly emailed back after his arrival to ask that that the company ship him a larger stock of shoes because, “The opportunities are massive because no one in this country wears shoes!” The truth is that the greatest harvest remains in those countries where very are very few believers.

The map that follows shows what percentages of the people in each country in Africa are classified as Christian.



The map that follows shows the percentages of people in each country in Africa that are adherents of differing religions. As noted

above, the greatest harvest can be found in those countries where the highest number of people are not Christ followers.



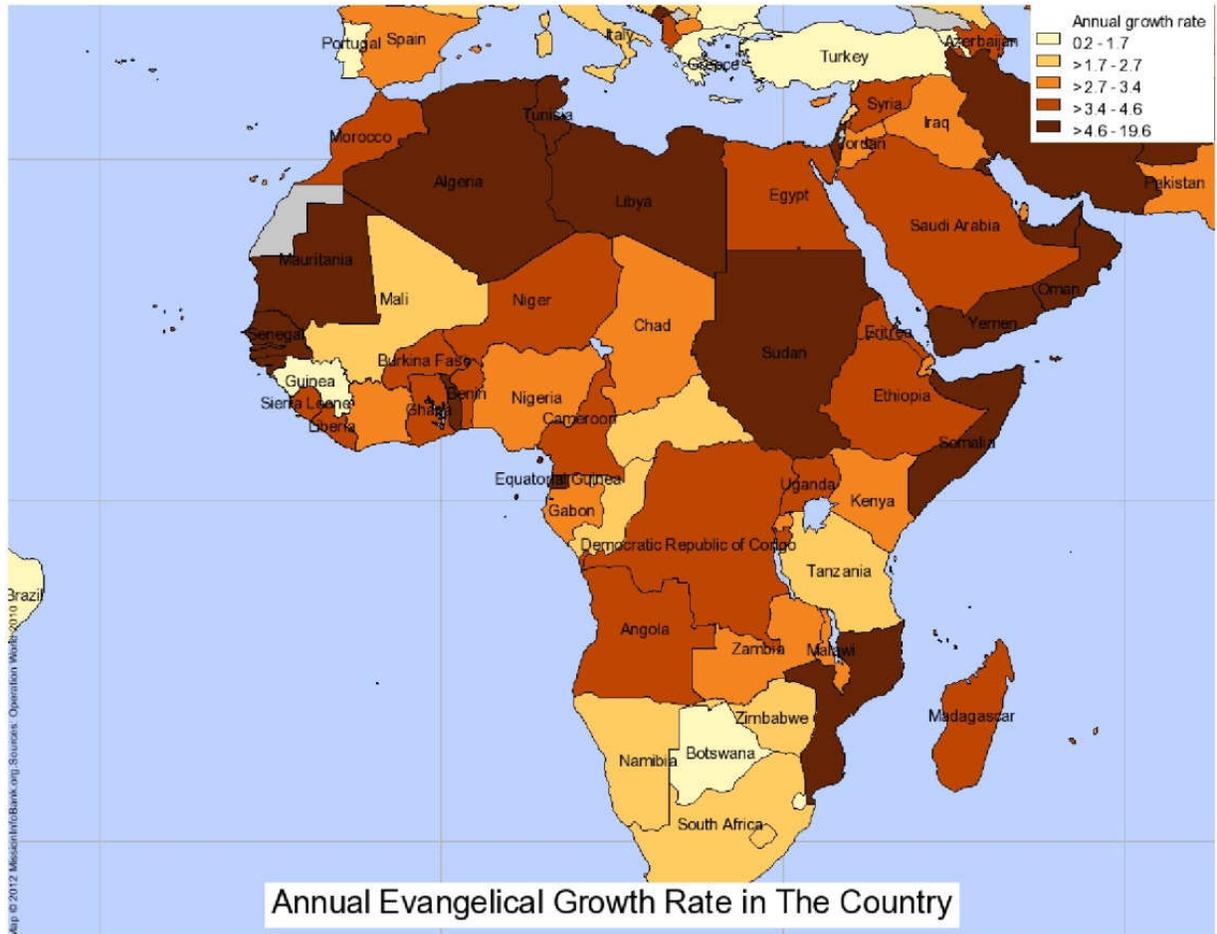
The Ripeness of the Harvest

A second question we might ask is, “Where is the harvest ripe and most ready to be harvested?” In other words, “Where are people most responsive to the Gospel? Where is the church growing most rapidly?”

In his book, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, author Henry Blackaby argues that if we wish to see God’s hand of blessing on our work and ministry we need to look and see where God is already at work and

join Him in what He is doing. This is opposite the approach we often take in ministry where we start working and then ask God to join us in what we are doing. We can expect to be part of reaping a great harvest if we see where God has ripened people’s hearts for the gospel and is blessing the efforts of those who are working with them.

The following map shows where evangelical Christianity is growing fastest across Africa at the present time.



The Hidden Pockets

Even within countries that are heavily evangelized there are often pockets of people who have not been reached with the gospel. The [Joshua Project](#) defines an unreached people as “a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and

resources to evangelize this people group.” The table below lists the number of unreached people groups in each country in Africa, the number of people in those unreached people groups, and the percent of unreached peoples in each country as a whole. Details about the unreached people groups in each country can be found of the Joshua Project’s [website](#).

Country	Population	Unreached people groups	Number of people in unreached people groups	Unreached people as a % of the population	Primary Religion
Algeria	35,959,930	36	35,930,950	99.92	Islam
Angola	19,325,530	2	4,480	0.02	Christianity
Benin	8,925,810	13	873,390	9.79	Christianity

Botswana	2,020,390	1	100	0.00	Christianity
Burkina Faso	16,814,040	28	4,097,040	24.37	Islam
Burundi	8,569,100	3	13,900	0.16	Christianity
Cameroon	19,919,890	16	2,671,280	13.41	Christianity
Cape Verde	499,710	0	-	-	Christianity
Central African Republic	4,460,150	7	439,990	9.86	Christianity
Chad	10,453,130	71	5,533,240	52.93	Islam
Comoros	747,690	8	743,660	99.46	Islam
Congo, DRC	67,372,410	4	205,100	0.30	Christianity
Congo, Republic of the	4,112,420	3	8,880	0.22	Christianity
Cote d'Ivoire	19,849,890	35	5,598,270	28.20	Islam
Djibouti	887,020	6	870,610	98.15	Islam
Egypt	81,691,620	22	10,745,620	13.15	Islam
Equatorial Guinea	682,860	2	15,440	2.26	Christianity
Eritrea	5,380,790	8	2,243,700	41.70	Islam
Ethiopia	84,290,700	32	16,426,310	19.49	Christianity
Gabon	1,503,300	4	23,660	1.57	Christianity
Gambia	1,696,080	17	1,460,420	86.11	Islam
Ghana	23,995,740	22	2,394,210	9.98	Christianity
Guinea	9,928,770	30	8,496,290	85.57	Islam
Guinea-Bissau	1,500,400	20	707,770	47.17	Islam
Kenya	41,037,520	38	4,604,650	11.22	Christianity
Lesotho	2,185,670	1	490	0.02	Christianity
Liberia	3,951,660	5	684,200	17.31	Ethnic Religions
Libya	6,280,230	28	5,671,860	90.31	Islam
Madagascar	20,771,630	11	1,435,640	6.91	Christianity
Malawi	15,201,450	4	114,000	0.75	Christianity
Mali	15,796,290	39	14,459,300	91.54	Islam
Mauritania	3,518,350	15	3,507,540	99.69	Islam
Mauritius	1,293,680	5	471,870	36.48	Hinduism
Mayotte	202,080	8	197,930	97.95	Islam
Morocco	32,075,420	26	32,064,080	99.96	Islam
Mozambique	23,243,360	8	527,940	2.27	Christianity
Namibia	2,320,110	2	350	0.02	Christianity
Niger	15,468,200	29	15,196,730	98.25	Islam
Nigeria	161,465,590	112	54,621,850	33.83	Christianity
Reunion	807,300	4	46,790	5.80	Christianity
Rwanda	10,934,170	3	19,040	0.17	Christianity
Saint Helena	4,050	0	-	-	Christianity
Sao Tome and Principe	164,120	0	-	-	Christianity
Senegal	12,465,550	29	10,263,700	82.34	Islam
Seychelles	86,060	2	560	0.65	Christianity
Sierra Leone	5,936,860	14	1,263,350	21.28	Islam

Somalia	9,420,130	17	9,418,350	99.98	Islam
South Africa	49,105,370	5	1,018,700	2.07	Christianity
South Sudan	10,416,410	13	157,570	1.51	Christianity
Sudan	35,407,630	128	20,350,910	57.48	Islam
Swaziland	1,182,770	1	700	0.06	Christianity
Tanzania	45,561,110	37	5,807,670	12.75	Christianity
Togo	6,142,030	7	389,810	6.35	Christianity
Tunisia	10,507,050	16	10,396,710	98.95	Islam
Uganda	33,503,150	6	353,740	1.06	Christianity
Western Sahara	545,590	10	545,120	99.91	Islam
Zambia	13,387,710	4	75,220	0.56	Christianity
Zimbabwe	12,656,980	3	7,140	0.06	Christianity

The Accessibility of the Harvest

While having a vision to reach Africa for Christ may be a worthy vision, the more important thing to see clearly is what God would have us do next. What is the harvest field that he wants us to be laboring in right now?

If God is calling us to start working in a new field then we can trust that He is already at work to provide that which is needed to do the work He is calling us to do. If we look at the ways He has been equipping us, it may give us an idea about where it is He wants us to work. For example, has He given us people with connections to a place/people where we have not yet labored? Or, perhaps, has He given us people with a passion to reach into a previously unreached area or to a previously unreached group of people? Has He given us people with gifts such as language or professional abilities

that can open doors into previously unreached areas? Maybe He has given us people with a similar vision with whom we can join in partnership, with each partner sharing their various gifts and resources in order to reap a new harvest. As we see how God has been equipping us as a church it may become velar where it is that he wants us to focus our attention and energies next.

Jesus said: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Luke 10:2) This certainly is true of Africa. May God help us to open our eyes to see the harvest around us, and then empower us to raise up and equip the workers needed so that the harvest is not lost.

(Maps in this article come from [Global Mapping International](#).)

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