

THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP LETTER


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INSPIRING THE CHURCH TO SUPPORT MISSIONS

What defines the existence of the Church in the world is her belief and love expressed in action. Furthermore, it is said that: "Only as the church fulfils her missionary obligation does she justify her existence." (Author unknown.) Therefore, this work shall be discussed from the angle that God supplies his work and has already entrusted his people with all required resources for his work (Psalm 24:1; 2 Cor. 9:10). Thus; for every kingdom project or cause, He requires his people to give wilfully (Exodus 25:2).



Only as the church fulfils her missionary obligation does she justify her existence.

In this article, *missions* is understood simply as a "cause" worthy for one's attention to act or sacrifice with an understanding of the consequences if an appropriate action is not taken to offset or meet with the demands of that particular cause. Practically, what would happen to Rev. Bondo if the Church does not support him in Nigeria? What would happen to EWBC in Swaziland; PWBC in Zambia, XXWBC in Mozambique and to many missionaries scattered all over on the face of this earth? Consequently, "supporting missions" is giving towards a cause that defines the existence of the Church in this world and her love and obedience to the One who died for her.

The word "inspiring" presupposes that there is an 'unwilling nature' among believers not

to support God's cause/missions more especially financially. "... You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give (Ex. 25:2)." It is within this context that the Church must be inspired to support missions. Inspiring has to do with the 'rousing' of emotions and 'upliftment' of heart to be attuned to the cause and thereafter to act in accordance to God's principles and directives.

The Peculiarity of mission

It should be noted that Mission flows from the identity of God and Jesus Christ. Therefore, missions being God's "cause", means the committed participation of God's people in the purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation (World Focus Team). It means going along with God as co-workers. This is a great privilege and a point of inspiration to serve and honour him with all our substance (Prov. 3:9).

The Importance of inspiring the Church to support missions

There are many reasons to as why we should inspire the African Church to support missions and some of the reasons are as follow:


1. She (African Church) is a product of foreign mission.
2. Commanded (Mat. 28:19-20)- the only way we can fully participate in the Great Commission is by sending and

supporting to those who can go to the ends of the earth on our behalf.

3. It helps in recruiting Church members for mission.
4. Safe Investment - Giving to the cause of the gospel is a way to store treasures in heaven that will never fade or fail (Matthew 6:20).
5. Missionaries depend on our support ---- The effectiveness of any field missionary depends on the support she/he gets from the home Churches.
6. There is reward for those who support God's work.
7. It's the only way the African Church could be a mature Church and have her place in this world as a responsible Church.

Pastor/leader as a fundraiser

Inspiring the Church to support missions is not fundraising, yet it is. The reason is that it is much more than asking people for money. Thus, the true objective of inspiring the Church to support missions should not be to raise money, but to raise donors. It should be said that the only way you can raise support (money) continuously is by developing a broad base of dependable individual donors from the Church who are committed to God's cause. The author does not negate money being essential in missions but it is more fruitful to create its base from cheerful individual believers (donors) for sustainability (Phil. 4:15-19). For this to be effectual, much time must be committed to teaching.



Inspiring the Church to support missions is much more than asking people for money.

How to inspire the Church to support missions?

"Whoever believes that giving is an easy matter, makes a mistake; it is a matter of very great difficulty, provided that gifts are made with wisdom, and are not scattered haphazardly and by caprice." – Seneca.

1. Pray for the Church

"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." 1 John 5:14 (NASB)

Inspiring the Church to support missions is not all about the pastor or people involved in the process. It is not much about performance but it is all about God and him alone. It is vital therefore, to seek God to touch his people for a move through his Spirit.

Prayer also serves to destroy other barriers that might impede people not support missions or a cause. One day as we were about to raise funds for the Church, we overheard a small group of pastors conniving not to give and there were also prepared to draw a large group into the same fold. We resolved to pray to God standing on his promises. God helped us to raise a large sum of money that I have ever raised locally as a mission director

2. Change of heart/mind (Rom 12:2)

It is impossible to inspire Church people to support missions if they lack appropriate behaviours and perceptions. The Bible outlines that the issue of giving towards God's cause, is the issue of heart and mind (Ex. 25:2; 2 Cor 9: 6-7). No individual must be forced to give towards God's cause/missions if she/he is unwilling. However, it is the work of the leader/pastor or fundraiser to turn the unwilling hearts to be willing through a painstaking process that seeks for patience. In most cases the issue of supporting missions by the African


Church has been marred by misconceptions that has held her not to be financially involved in missions. One will just give attention to only two of the most dangerous misconceptions (author's opinion) and they are as follow:

a. We are poor syndrome

The devil has used this string to such a degree that the African Church has become a victim of not even seeing what she possesses as valuable to support missions. The Macedonian Churches stand out as our model. Their extreme poverty or "rock bottom poverty" as translated by Phillip Hughes (1962:288) did not diminish their ability to be generous, instead, their poverty welled up in rich generosity (2 Cor. 8:1-2). Conversely, poverty is not an escape route for irresponsibility in the kingdom of God.

b. Fear of losing Church members

This misconception among some of the pastors and leaders plays against the cause to inspire the Church to support missions in Africa. We don't own people. These are God's people and must be attuned to God's principles. It should be brought to our attention that the most valuable resource the Kingdom of God has ever possessed and cherished is its manpower. The driving force behind the expansion of God's kingdom through the preaching of the Word is not money but its people who are empowered by God's Spirit to be witnesses. Therefore, preventing them from supporting financially God's work is a practical way of dragging God's people to extreme poverty and living an unfulfilled life.



The driving force behind the expansion of God's kingdom through the preaching of the Word is not money but its people who are empowered by God's Spirit to be witnesses.

3. State the cause/mission clearly

In most cases, pastors or spiritual fundraisers think that people are highly motivated to support missions or to give by firing a series of verses towards them. That is very wrong and unproductive to a certain degree. One can raise a monthly support for missions without even citing some scriptures. Scripture citation does not make a cause/missions spiritual. In fact, missions is ever spiritual because it is meant to expand God's kingdom and has its identity in God. You can inspire the Church to support missions or a cause by doing it professionally as follows:

State the cause clearly by indicating three elements:

1. State the ideal: "What it should be like if the Church supports mission/cause"
2. State the current situation: "The present situation must reveal the gap between 'the current situation and the 'Ideal state'".
3. State the consequences: "What would happen if we don't support missions or our missionary in Nigeria- Rev. Bondo"

4. Know your audience

It is difficult to inspire people in the Church whom you don't know in most cases. One has to acknowledge the diversity of God's people presented in our Churches. We have people of different status and levels of maturity in the body of Christ. This helps to engage fully with your Church members from all walks of life. For instance, I have observed that most business people are inspired to support missions or a cause when the message is communicated to them in numbers and graphs or from a business language perspective. This calls for the speaker to bring about valid

information based on facts (how much is needed, methods of giving, etc.) not on feelings. One has seen potential donors or supporters of our institutions and kingdom projects from this crop of believers walking away without any commitment because the cause/ mission endeavour lacked substantive information.

Some people understand things as they are delivered from the pulpit and some need a 'sit down' for a face to face meeting. One found this model to be effective and the reasons being:

- i. Relaxed environment
- ii. Heartfelt connections
- iii. Quality time and involvement of all concerned
- iv. Long- time commitments are likely to be generated


5. Speak with conviction

You cannot inspire the Church to support missions or any cause if the Church senses that the pastor, leaders or fundraiser is disengaged from the message. Let what you are saying not only be heard by your audience but be felt too. Connect your audience firstly, to God, secondly, to your emotions and then to the cause. Be the message!

6. Act on conviction

Convictions ought to be translated in action. Be the role model of a cause. "Imitate me as I imitate Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). Let the Church or your audience know about your commitment to missions/cause. The Bible says it was in the heart of David to build a house (the temple) for God (2 Chron. 6:7). In most cases, the visions of our leaders die in their hearts or prematurely because they don't commit themselves to role model their convictions. David role modelled that which was in his heart by providing resources for

the mission (1Chron. 29:1-4) and in turn, the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work were inspired to give willingly (vv.6-8). This act had a great bearing on the masses as revealed in verse 9, "*The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord*".



Let the Church or your audience know about your commitment to missions/cause.

7. Challenge the Church for action

David role modelled his conviction by giving as a way of teaching but he also challenged them to do the same (2 Chron. 29:5). Though this is not a prescriptive guideline, one suggests that challenging the Church for action must be based on the ideals of the cause (mission). Pick one project or a missionary to support. This helps the Church to be always conscious of their commitment. Having said that, the issue here is not about money but a commitment to support missions or a cause.

8. Inspire the Church through contacts and prayer

Establish a viable system and process for supporting missions (a period of commitment – One time, monthly; every 3 months, 6 months or annually). Get their contacts. Contact them not to remind them of their commitment but to appreciate them and to pray with them more especially for their needs. Share your joy with them (2 Chron. 29: 9).

9. Inspire the Church through invitations

Invite the missionary whom the Church had chosen to support to come and share their

experience with the Church. Invite also other gifted pastors to talk about the importance of supporting missions. This brings a threefold blessing:

- i. It revives the desire of the old donors
- ii. It brings new long term commitments into the fold
- iii. It captivates the hearts of those who have no 'long or short term' commitments to give a viable one-time support.

10.Keep inspiring the Church through feedbacks

Let the Church know in what ways their support has been a blessing to the missionaries on the ground. Furthermore, in what ways the project had been a blessing to the Church and the community? In 2012, I was invited to share on missions at EWBC



in Swaziland. Prior to 2012, EWBC, supported one of our youngest Church Planters and missionary in Niassa. I shared with the students and staff on how their support helped the missionary to plant 3 Churches. They were all overjoyed and at the end, they were inspired to go an extra mile by committing more funds to help the same missionary. Before that, they were unwilling to send the funds.

Another magic form of feedback is to keep saying "Thank You". That is how Paul kept getting support from the Philippians.

Conclusion

It is possible for the African Church to support missions if it really becomes part of our message as leaders and we become the message. Let our Churches see our seriousness about it.

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## **HOW THE WESLEYAN CHURCH IN AFRICA CAN OBEY THE GREAT COMMISSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Great Commission as stated in Matthew 28: 18---20 is one of the most neglected passages in the Wesleyan Church of Africa. The Wesleyan Church has been in Africa before a majority of African countries gained their independence. Meanwhile, our church has one of the

lowest growth rates among churches in Africa. Many indigenous churches of Africa born in the 60s and 70s have spread like wild fire in the harmmatan. Let me hasten to say that there are several reasons why the Wesleyan Church has grown very little. Neglect of the great commission has been one major reason.



## **WHY THE WESLEYAN CHURCH OF AFRICA HAS NOT OBEYED THE GREAT COMMISSION TO THE FULLEST**

There are several reasons why the Great Commission has not been obeyed by the Wesleyan Church in African.

First, most leaders do not obey or observe the Great Commission so their followers do not. In fact, some leaders rather play the role of Chief Executive of a business corporation than obey the Great Commission. They are so busy with many schedules that soul winning has been neglected. Since everything rises and falls on the leader, the church has become a seating rather than a sending church. Souls of unbelievers are perishing because there is none to reach to them. The missionaries who brought the denomination to Africa were not going out much to win souls. Thus, those they groomed (most of which are today's leaders), are not observing the Great Commission as well. Leaders teach the Great commission in Bible Colleges, seminaries, seminars and so on, but they do not practice what they teach as far as the Great Commission is concerned. Talk is cheap, so our members judge us by what we do and not what we say. Equipping the saints to go and win souls is good but going out with them is better.

*Souls of unbelievers are perishing because there is none to reach them.*

Second, The church is not obeying the Great Commission because we have the wrong priorities. The Wesleyan Church of Africa is leaving better things for good things. For example, instead of getting more involved with soul winning, we are deeply involved with social activities such as traveling abroad to raise funds abroad, having parties and seminars. As much as

these activities are good, soul winning is better. Nowadays, the Great Commission rates very low in the Wesleyan church of Africa. It is easier to give money for evangelism than to win souls yourself. It is also easier to complain and criticize our leaders than to win souls. It is easier to serve on governing boards of churches than to win souls. Once a church begins to go out to win souls, growth becomes automatic. Let us be sincere with ourselves. The Wesleyan Church of Africa is not growing.

Third, Most Wesleyan Churches in Africa are overly dependent on the Mother Church of North America and other overseas missions. The dependency syndrome has made members to consider the church a foreign based church rather than take ownership of the church. Obeying the Great Commission requires funding but most churches in Africa are still heavily dependent on going abroad to raise funds.

Fourth, lack of discipleship training for spiritual maturity. Once a soul is won, discipleship should begin to mold said person.

## **HOW CAN THE WESLEYAN CHURCH OF AFRICA OBEY THE GREAT COMMISSION**

The Wesleyan Church of Africa needs to do the following in order to be able to obey the Great Commission.

One, observance of the Great Commission should be a yardstick for membership and leadership. Jesus has commissioned all to win souls. We have no excuse for disobeying this. Acts 1:8 says " You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the world". Therefore,

the purpose of the power was not to speak in tongues as some think it is, the purpose of the power is to witness. Soul winning should not be neglected at all. I want to suggest that on the statistical portion of our reports as leaders, we include the hours we put in monthly as leader of the church. Such reporting will encourage leaders to put in time witnessing and it will also reflect practical ministry. Once leaders are expected to be practical, they will require their followers to be like minded. As superintendents begin to go out for evangelism, pastors will follow and then members will do likewise.

*Observance of the Great Commission should be a yardstick for leadership.*

Two, if we want the Great Commission to be obeyed in our church, evangelism must be backed by vigorous discipleship. It is one thing to win a soul and completely another thing to have such Christians become self reproducing. The creatures of God's creation are able to reproduce themselves. For example, a human species reproduces

another human species but a motor manufacturing plant is only able to produce motors but cannot produce another motor manufacturing plant. Therefore, spiritual beings should be able to reproduce another spiritual being through soul winning. So one of the reasons why the Great Commission has been low in our church is that people have not been disciplined to win souls.

Three, if the Wesleyan Church must make a meaningful contribution towards the Great Commission, we must be self sustainable. Let us not deceive ourselves fellow Africans. We can only live up to the true meaning of our name (partners) when we are able to make meaningful contributions towards the partnership. Partners are equals. We continue to have churches on the continent that are almost fifty years old yet cannot adequately run the Jesus film without contributions from abroad. Africa, let us begin to look above and not abroad. It is very difficult for a dependent church to obey the Great Commission to the fullest. Jesus promised us that it is not possible for the gates of hell to prevail against the church.



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SMOOTH LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS


Leadership is a divine institution established to take care of people in families, institutions and nations and help them become

productive to enhance peace and development, 'Then the Lord took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work

it and take care of it' (Gen. 2:15). Leadership is ordained and sustained by God through humanity. As humans grow old and die, become sick, choose another career, retire and many other factors, leadership transits from one person to another and from one generation to another. When God called Abraham, He promised him to make him into a great nation. The fulfillment of this promise began with Isaac and continued with Jacob and eventually in the birth of nations. As a nomadic people, Israel was ruled by the patriarchs. This continued until Israel settled in Egypt where they became a formidable nation and then moved to Canaan and settled as a nation. In Canaan God became their king and later they were ruled by judges and kings. God established an eternal kingdom through David until Jesus the King of kings was born and became the eternal King.

The history of Israel's leadership and other cultures all over the world shows that leaders come and go passing on the mantle of leadership from one person to another and from one generation to another. One thing that is true in life is that leaders come and go but leadership stays forever. Many people will be curious to know:

1. How leadership transits from one person to another;
2. Whether or not leadership transition is peaceful or chaotic;
3. The benefits of peaceful leadership transition and
4. Things needed for a smooth leadership transition for Church Institutions.



Leadership transition is critical for the stability of institutions and nations.

Leadership transition is critical for the stability of institutions and nations. Many

leaders have come and gone, some in a peaceful manner and others chaotic. In this article, an effort will be made to examine the nature and benefits of a smooth leadership transition. One of the outstanding Old Testament leadership transitions is that of Moses to Joshua. This article will consider the leadership transition of Moses to Joshua as a framework for discussion.

Leadership transition is an exit plan leaders have in preparation to usher in new leaders without a noticeable break in the organizational performance. Bishop Camille in his talk given at the Berlin European Leaders forum in 2009 defined leadership transition as, "The preparation and releasing process by which existing leaders help emerging leaders to assume responsibility with its task, roles and functions."

Leadership transition is critical for organizational and nation building, stability and sustainability. A nation can go through crisis when a leader leaves without a smooth succession plan; this is true for families, organizations or firms. It therefore makes sense for leaders to give thoughtful considerations to smooth leadership transition. While some organizations have a constitutional leadership transition plan, most of these plans are flouted. This can be true for Church organizations. It is my desire that the leadership transition of Moses to Joshua will serve as a guide to the Church.

Moses was one of Israel's most successful leaders. He became a leader at the peak of Israel's rebellion. Moses was now an old man and debarred from entering the Promised Land due to disobedience. Moses knew Israel had to cross the Jordan and subdue first Jericho and then take the entire land of Canaan. Israel needed a leader to continue the process of subduing and settling in the Promise Land. Joshua

succeeded Moses and continued the unfinished task. He settled Israel in Canaan. How did this happen? Moses' leadership transition to Joshua happened in three stages over a long period of forty years.

Stage One: Preparing the Successor:


Succession plans begin with God and not humans. Forty years before the death of Moses God had already begun the process of preparing Joshua for the task of leading Israel across the Jordan to possess the land. God ensured three areas of leadership preparedness: Military leadership; spiritual leadership; and his faith. In military preparedness, Joshua was selected by Moses to lead the Israelites army into battle against the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8-16); in spiritual preparedness Joshua was with Moses to the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments (Ex. 24:13), was present when Moses smashed the two tablets (Ex. 32:19) and guided the tent of meeting (Ex. 33:11); in faith preparedness, Joshua was among the twelve spies who went to spy the land (Num. 13:8) and among the two, he and Caleb returned with good report.

For forty years Joshua was going through these tests; unfortunately Joshua was least aware that God was preparing him thorough Moses to succeed him (Moses).

Stage Two: Identification and Confirmation of the Leader:

Joshua went through a screening process to become Israel's next leader. Moses was now old and by God's judgment he will not enter the Promise Land. Moses knew and was satisfied that he will not enter the Promise Land; he was concerned about who will succeed him. Moses never asked for more time, rather he asked God to give a shepherd who will lead Israel and ensure their settlement in Canaan, "May the Lord, the God who gives breath to all living things appoint someone over this community, to go

and come in before them, one who lead them and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd" (Num. 27:16-17). Moses' passionate plea for a new leader was honored by God. God asked him to appoint Joshua as the new leader, "So the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him'" (Num 27:18).



Moses never asked for more time, rather he asked God to give a shepherd who will lead Israel.

Stage Three: Ordaining the Successor:

Joshua was prepared and identified and confirmed by God. Moses was instructed to ordain his successor. Moses was asked to encourage and strengthen Joshua (Deut. 1:38; 3:18; 31). Joshua was to be ordained before Eleazar the priest and the entire congregation. Moses was to relinquish some of his authority to Joshua so that the people could not begin to obey him (Num. 27:19-20).


As much as there are records of smooth leadership transition in the Bible, Moses to Joshua leadership transition is classic and worth emulating. It reveals the following:

1. God's interest and role in preparing leaders for a smooth transition.
2. The role of Moses in identifying, developing and mentoring potential leaders
3. The ability of Moses to accept that his end has come and the need to identify a potential leader to take after him
4. The willingness of Moses to relinquish some authorities to his successor in preparation for a smooth transition.

Every Christian who wishes to have a successful leadership transition must follow in these patterns. For a smooth transition Christian leaders should do five things:

First, Christian leaders should discover that smooth leadership transition is God's agenda for the fulfillment of His purpose. Every leader should keep in mind that God desires a smooth leadership transition for any organization; he chooses and replaces leaders to fulfill his purpose for that institution. God chose Moses to be Israel's leader for forty years. God knew Moses' task was ended hence he ushered in another person who will continue the unfinished task.

Second, Christian leaders should engage in the business of recognizing and developing potential leaders. In this way Christian leaders should be able to see the greater picture of the organization and develop competencies necessary to successfully complete the next step of God's plan. In the case of Moses and Joshua, God needed somebody who can combine political, military and spiritual competencies to cross the Jordan and take the land of Canaan. These competencies were found in Joshua. The ultimate task of leaders in developing competencies is teaching and training not promising the person of being the next leader. For forty years God worked with Joshua for forty years without letting him know that he will be the next leader. Christian leaders should rely on God to guide them and build competencies on young and potential leaders.



Christian leaders should engage in the business of recognizing and developing potential leaders..

Third, Christian leaders should mentor potential people. God identified Joshua as a potential leader to replace Moses in the future. God never disclosed this plan to Moses. However, Moses became Joshua's guide and advisor throughout the forty years he was with him. Joshua became a political and military leader through the mentorship of Moses.

Fourth, Christian leaders should know and accept that they have come to the end of their leadership career. Some institutions have time limits for leaders but this has been abused; others are appointed for life. In any situation, leaders who desire peaceful leadership transition must know that the end has come and should quit. This was what Moses did. Moses knew his career as a leader has come to end; God has judged that he will not enter the Promise land. The best for him was therefore to identify and ordain a successor. This he did and handed over power peacefully.

Finally, Christian leaders should be able to delegate some of their powers to ordained successors. This means when the institution may have identified a successor the existing leaders should be willing to relinquish some of his powers to the successor until such a time when the transition is complete. When Moses ordained Joshua God asked him to give some of his powers to Joshua so that the people will now begin to obey and accept him as the next leader (Num. 27:20).

God and Moses were deeply concerned about the state of Israel at the death of Moses. God knew about this situation forty years ago hence he prepared Joshua for the task ahead. Moses mentored Joshua throughout his career and he asked God to give Israel a successor. Moses was satisfied with Joshua as God's choice. At the command of God, Moses ordained

Joshua in the presence of Eleazar and the congregation of Israel. The people accepted Joshua; they obeyed his command until they crossed the Jordan and settled in Canaan. This was a smooth transition. Are you in the business of leadership? Who are you making? Are you preparing for your exit by raising others? What can you learn from Moses to Joshua leadership transition?

Christian brothers and sisters, as I conclude make it a duty to learn from Moses to Joshua leadership transition. Keep in mind that leaders are not born, they are made just like anything else, through hard work. Make leaders to succeed you and save your institution from chaos and collapse.

God bless you.



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