

ICWC and Africa Leaders' Summit

January 27-February 2, 2012

The (Wesleyan Church of) African Church is Richer Than You (We)Think

Comment [JPT1]: Allow me to adjust the topic to "The Wesleyan Church of Africa is Richer Than We Think."

Introduction

In my careful search of the Scriptures, I have discovered that God's loving, obedient children gave *hilariously*, *sacrificially*, and *unconditionally* to His work, despite their socio-economic statuses (Exodus 3:21, 22; 12:35, 36; 25:2; 35:21-36:7). The same can be true of 21st Century Wesleyans of Africa. However, we MUST first of all rid ourselves of *dependency syndrome*, which Professor Glenn Schwartz¹ attributes to our distorted, self-defeating mentality "that we are poor and that...there is nothing (we) can do about it" (Toga 2006:1). Secondly, we MUST recognize the abundance of resources that we have in Africa. The truth is,

AFRICA IS RICH, AND NOT POOR

I. It is Rich in Natural Resources

The "poverty" of Sub-Saharan Africa, whereby "The average poor person...is estimated to live on only 70 cents per day," is due primarily to "bad domestic government policies..." rather than lack of natural resources.² In fact, "The continent is believed to hold 90% of the world's [cobalt](#), 90% of its [platinum](#), 50% of its [gold](#), 98% of its [chromium](#), 70% of its [tantalite](#), 64% of its [manganese](#) and one-third of its [uranium](#). The [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) (DRC) has 70% of the world's [coltan](#) (a mineral used in most mobile phones in the world). The DRC also has more than 30% of the world's [diamond](#) reserves, while [Guinea](#) is the world's largest exporter of [bauxite](#)."³ In addition to these elements, many Sub-Saharan Africa countries have Rain Forests, Rivers, Lakes, Rich Soil, and access to the Atlantic Ocean that CAN provide NEEDED economic empowerment for those who are able to utilize them, including the Church.

¹ Taken from his "*Issues of Dependency And Self-Reliance Among Mission-Established Institutions*," a paper presented at the Africa Wesleyan World Fellowship Church Regional Leadership Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 25th-29th May 1998 (p. 8), by Daphne Niemack.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa#Biodiversity>, January 10, 2012.

³ Ibid.

II. *It is Rich in Human Resources*

The Continent is blessed with men and women of variant academic and professional skills, which enable them to develop and sustain themselves, their various countries and institutions. For example, the 2011 Forbes' list of billionaires as of November 2011 shows 16 African billionaires and over 40 millionaires residing in Africa. Some of them reside in countries where the Wesleyan Church is:

1. Nigeria: 12. Prominent amongst them is the 54 years old Aliko Dangote. His net worth is \$10.1billion, as of November 2011! (<http://www.therichest.org/nation/richest-people-in-africa-2011/>).
2. South Africa: 24. Two prominent names are (1) 65 years old De Beers (living in Johannesburg). His net worth is \$6.5 billion; (2) Johann Rupert has the net worth of \$4.7 billion(<http://www.therichest.org/nation/richest-people-in-africa-2011/>
3. Zimbabwe: 1

The African Church exists within this very Africa that has these "*rich human*" and *natural resources*. The Urban Churches, especially, have some of these rich individuals and families, while the Rural have the forests, rivers, and soil at their disposal. Our local churches do have members who are skilled in utilizing our soil, forests, and rivers.

WHAT THE AFRICAN CHURCH NEEDS TO DO TO UTILIZE THE RICHES ON THE CONTINENT

At the 2010 District Conference of the Wesleyan Church of Liberia, we did a *resource* evaluation of all of our local churches. We discovered that all of them— even the 'poverty-mentality' churches— had considerable material and skilled human resources, which could provide members' livelihood and adequate support for their churches. For instance, our churches have all or some of the following skilled workers:

- a. Builders
- b. Farmers
- c. Carpenters
- d. Fishers
- e. Hunters
- f. Traders

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g. Tree fellers

In order for us to utilize our rich resources and stop depending on Global Partners for our sustenance, and get into *true* “partnership” with them, I propose that we do the following:

1. Teach our members that it is *their spiritual responsibility* to support their churches, Exod. 25:1-8; 35:4-36:7; Num. 18; Neh. 13:4-11; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 10:1-10; Luke 10:1-7; 1Cor. 9:3-14; Gal. 6:6; 1Tim. 5:17, 18.
 - a. By means of their monetary offerings
 - b. By means of offerings in kind (i.e. edible and non-edible goods)
 - c. By means of their man-power offerings
 - d. By means of their tithes
2. Teach our members to *learn and utilize skills* that will empower them financially (It is reported of Rev. John Wesley that he said, “Make as much money as you can to give as much as you can” (Toga 2006). Rev. Nicholas Bhengu, Pastor of the Assemblies of God in South Africa, went to America several years ago to beg for money for his church. When he arrived in America, “God told him to back home and get the money from his own people,” by (1) teaching the women to make something with their hands, so that they could earn a living; by (2) teaching the women to give of what they earn back to God in thanksgiving (Ibid.)
3. Encourage our members to engage in various manageable businesses, according to the needs of their communities.
4. Encourage our local churches/denominations to engage in various businesses, according to the needs of their communities.⁴
5. Instruct our rural members to provide Man-power offerings to build and maintain our buildings and other properties.

If we do observe these five proposals, I envision us (The Wesleyan Church of Africa) achieving at two vital results in the shortest possible time:

1. We shall become a General Conference.
2. We shall become FINANCIAL Partners with Global Partners.

Thanks.

⁴ This is different from #3 above!