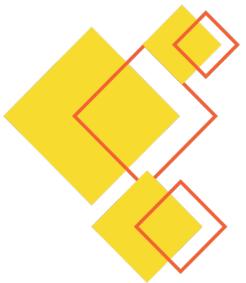




AFRICAN CHURCHES SENDING MISSIONARIES TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

-Ezekiel Ajibade, PhD

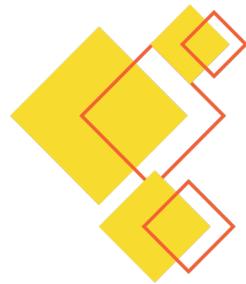


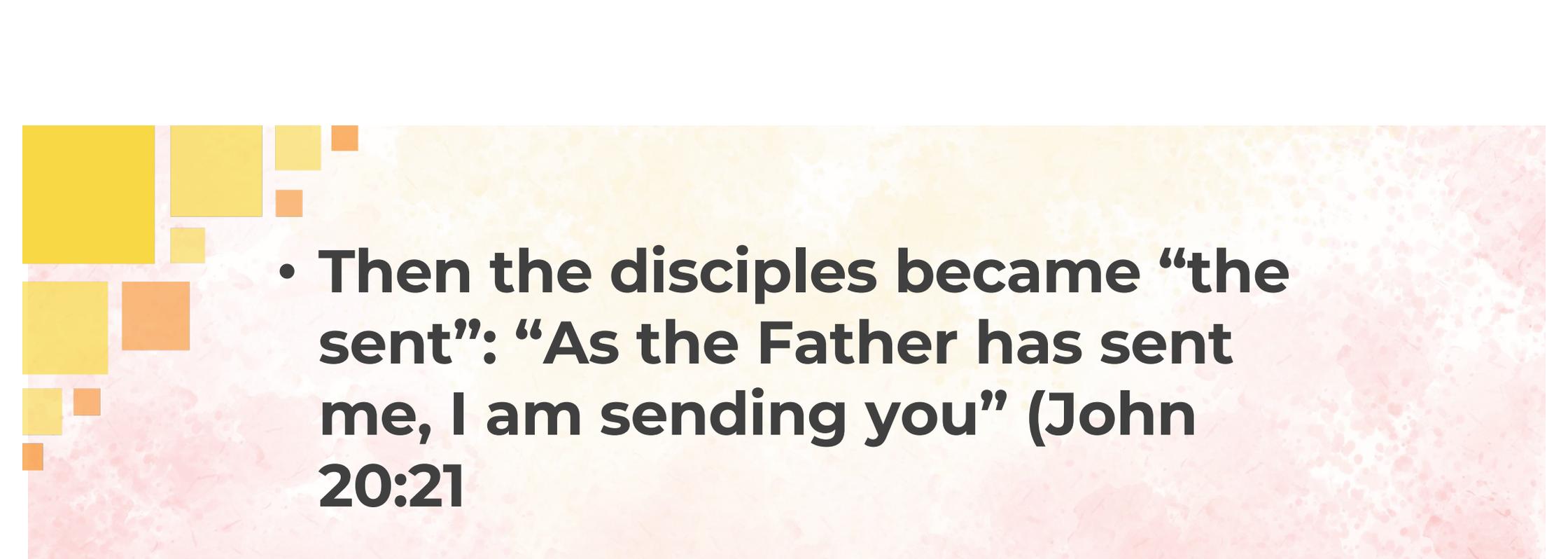


“Sending” and “Going”

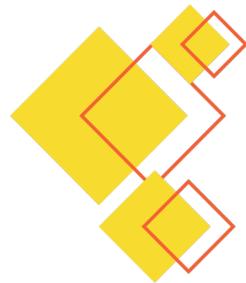
- Some of the most powerful words, not just in the New Testament but even in the entire biblical canon.
- The words “send” and “sent” are used nearly 60 times in John.

God is seen as “one who sends,” and Jesus as the “one who is sent.”



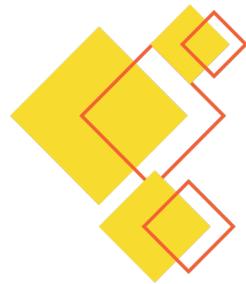
- 
- **Then the disciples became “the sent”:** “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21)

- **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt 28:19-20)**



**You will receive power when
the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses...
to the ends of the earth.**

Acts 1:8



Where is the “Ends of the Earth?”

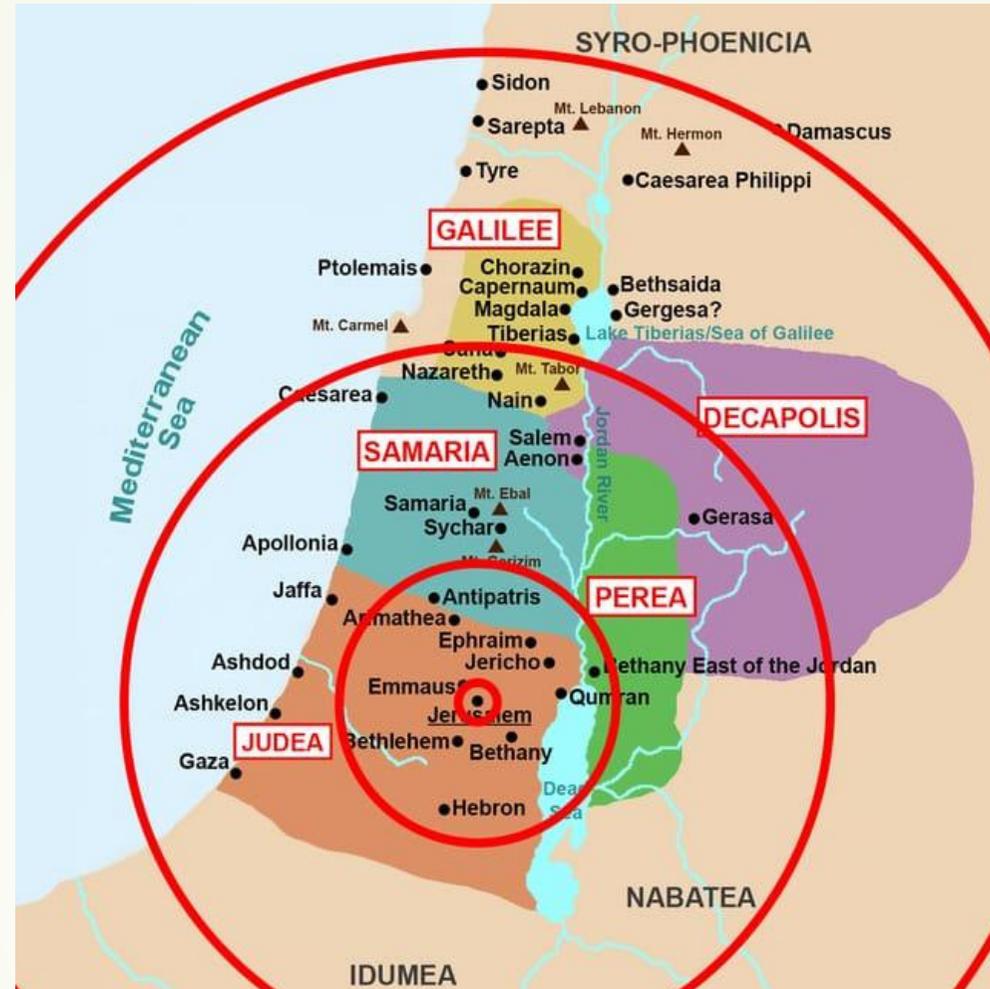
Asia Minor?

THE PROVINCES OF ASIA MINOR 1ST CENTURY A.D.

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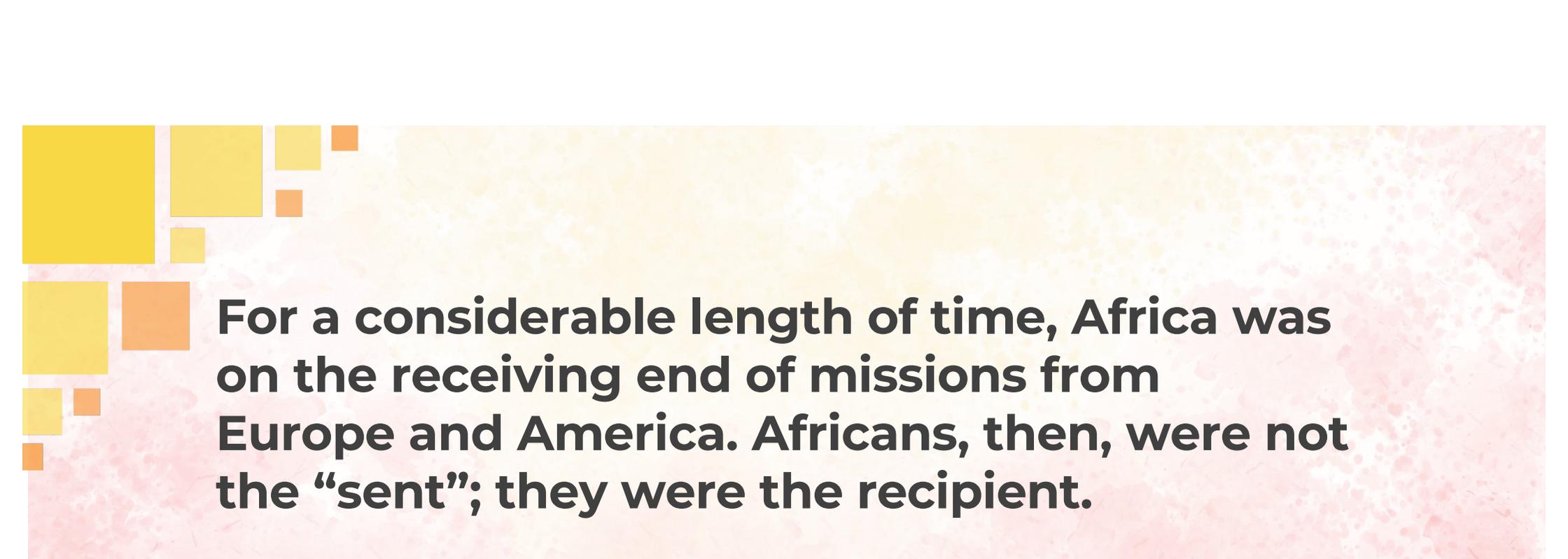


Regions beyond Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria?



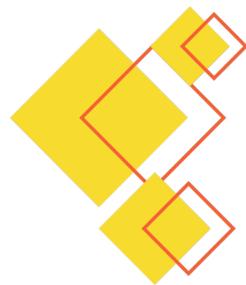
“Metaphorically, “ends of the earth” means “as far as one can go.” All the world. All humanity, and all compartments of humanity. Every race, nationality, ethnic and language group. All peoples everywhere.”

- Len Bartlotti



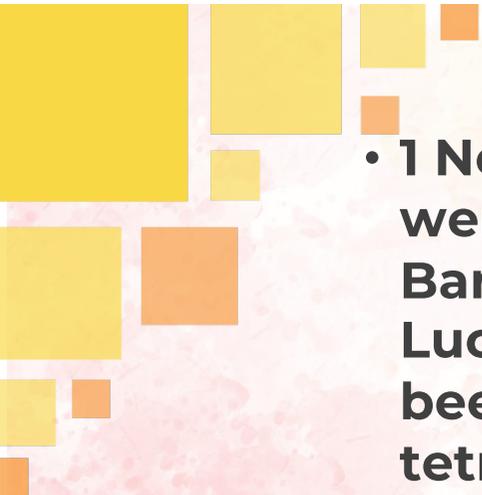
For a considerable length of time, Africa was on the receiving end of missions from Europe and America. Africans, then, were not the “sent”; they were the recipient.

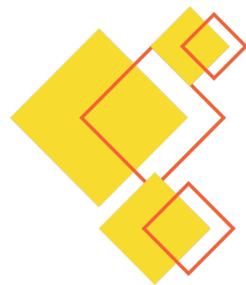
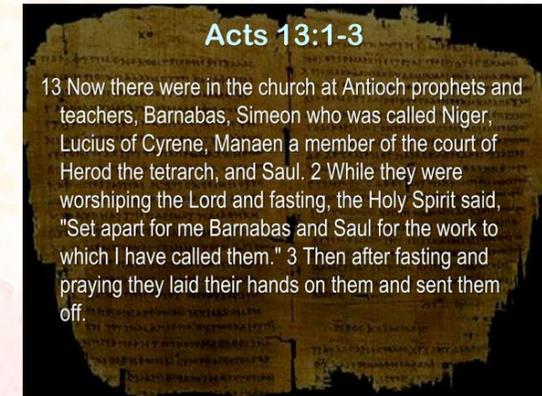
- **How true has this fact been?**
- **For how long was Africa the recipient and not the “sent”?**
- **When did Africa begin to send?**
- **What is the sending state of Africa today?**
- **What is the future of this sending?**



The Place of Africa in the History of Sending

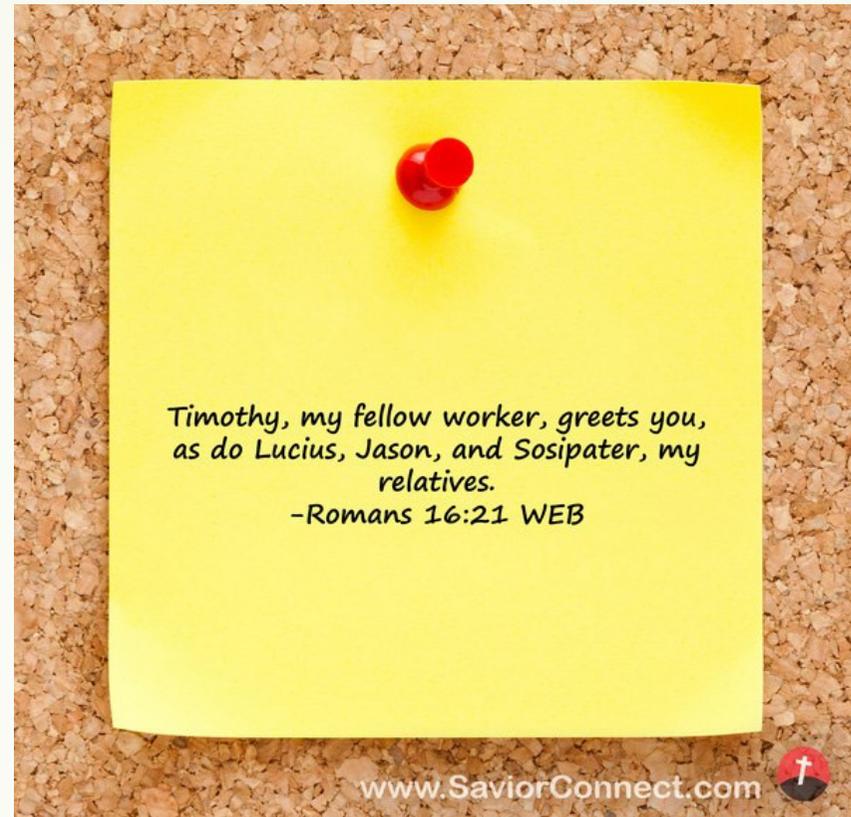


- 
- **1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.**
 - **2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”**
 - **3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**



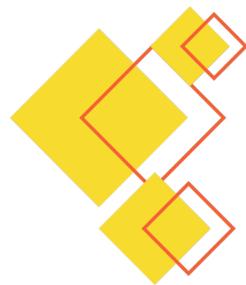
**“Timothy, my
fellow worker,
greet you, as do
Lucius, Jason, and
Sosipater, my
relatives.”**

Romans 16:21, WEB



ACTS 2:8-10

8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? **9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome



Acts 8:26-40

“he went on his way rejoicing”



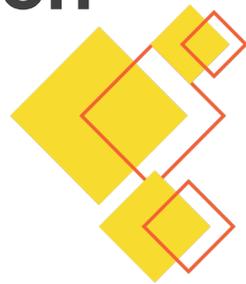
“This man was also sent into the regions of Ethiopia, to preach what he had himself believed.”

- Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3:12:8



Bakos/Djan Darada

To this day, he is honoured in Ethiopian Christianity for bringing Christianity to their soil. He is known as Bakos by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, while the Russian Orthodox Church calls him Djan Darada. Some church Fathers also mentioned that he was martyred. So, he is often commemorated on **January 4 and June 17.**

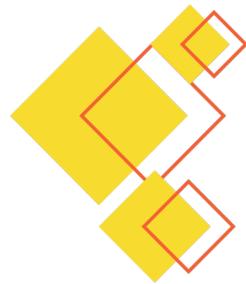


Acts 11:19-23

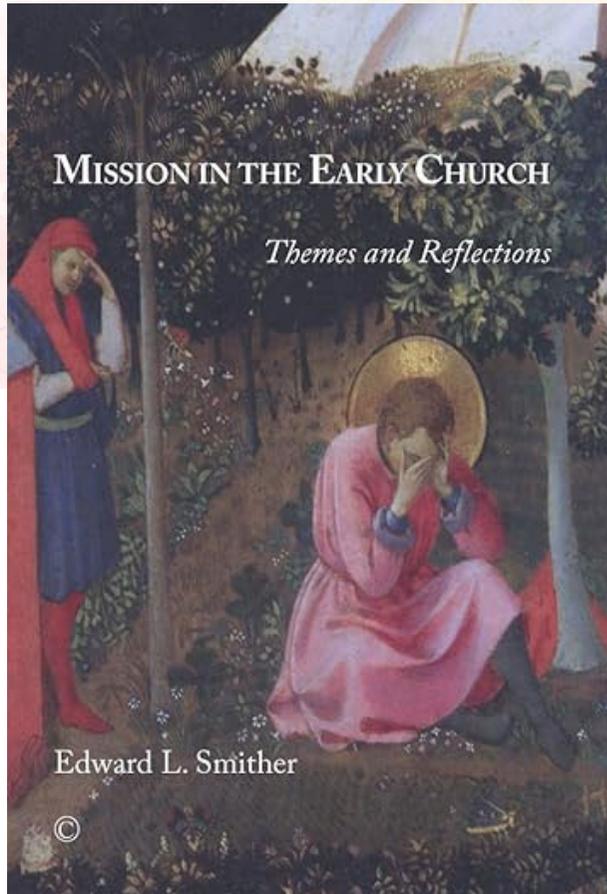
19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. **20** Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. **21** The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. **22** News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.



Biblically, Africans are not strangers to missions. They indeed played a pivotal role. Africans are “table turners!”

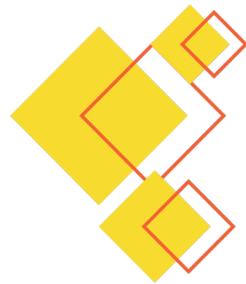


The Early Church Fathers



Edward L. Smither catalogues a “representative profile of intercultural workers” from 100 to 750.

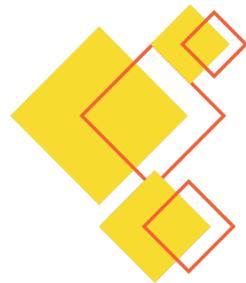
- Official full-time missionaries,
- Bivocational missionaries
- Everyday Christians who were committed to missions.





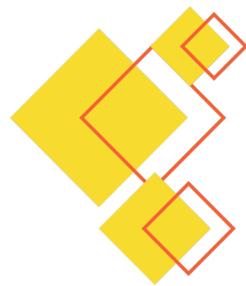
Origen

“functioned as a missionary-teacher in a cross-cultural context. After a number of years of leading the Alexandria school and confronting the Gnostic heresies in Egypt, Origen migrated to Palestinian Caesarea, where he established a school and taught theology and philosophy. He used philosophy to convert many to Christ, impacting Palestine and influencing his disciples, one of whom was Gregory Thaumaturgus, who replicated this in Asia Minor.



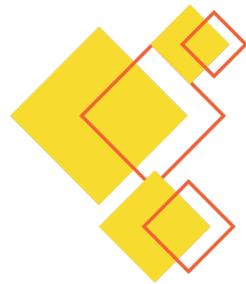


The early Christian mission had a nature of anonymity because many Christian laymen participated in this volunteer missionary movement. For them, **every Christian was a witness.**



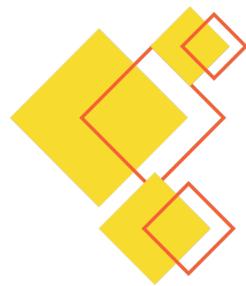


The Church grew significantly enough that it could send 70 bishops from a single African province to the council of Carthage of 220, just 40 years after the first literary reference to Christianity in Africa.





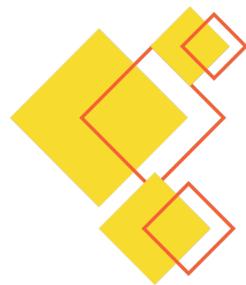
Unfortunately, due to a lack of contextualisation, by the time the Vandals and the Muslims invaded, the spread of Christianity was brought almost to a halt, and the task of re-evangelising Africa later became a call for Western Missionary organisations.





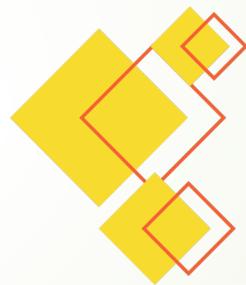
The Rise of African Missions

The church in Africa has come of age enough to know that it must transition from a mission field to a mission force.



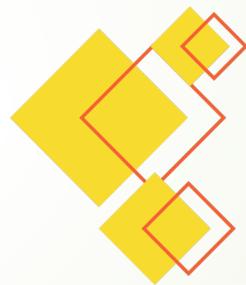
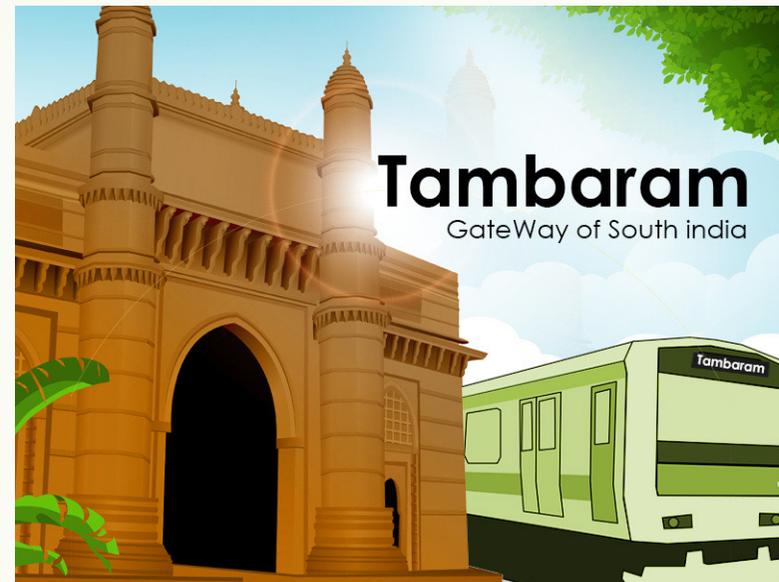


There seemed to be an initial hesitancy in accommodating the reality of African participation in global missions. The trend was actually an accusation of domination and flow of missionary endeavour from one direction alone – West.



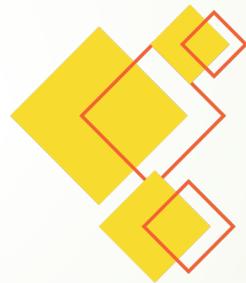


- Conference of the International Missionary Council held in Tambaram, Madras, India, in 1938



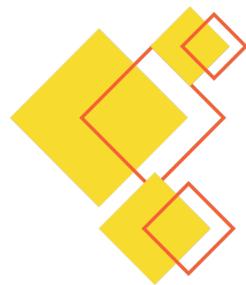


John Gatu, the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, in 1971, requested Western Missionaries to stop sending money and personnel for at least five years so that, in his words, **“the short man may learn how to hang his knapsack by his reach.”**



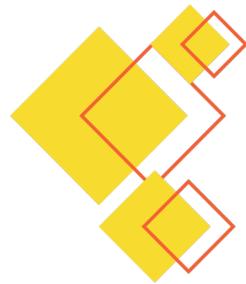


This was a symbolic end to a paradigm of colonial missions. By the beginning of the 1980s, the Lutheran World Federation sent its first missionaries to Germany.



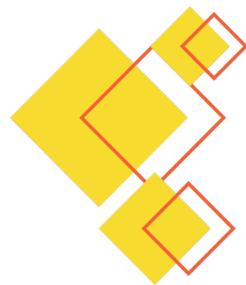


We should not imagine that African participation in mission also ended with the early church fathers or started again after the efforts to indigenise in the 19th century. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was a missionary with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). As at 1841, he participated in the CMS Niger Expedition, exploring the use of agriculture “as an access ministry for missions in West Africa.”



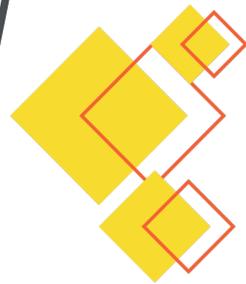


John C. Taylor, started his ministry in Onitsha (south-eastern Nigeria) in 1857 and it spread to the Gambia in West Africa. At his farewell service in Bathurst (now Banjul), an elder said:





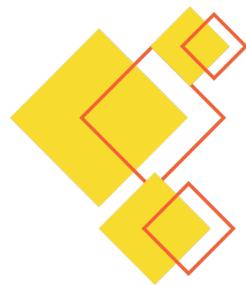
Thank God, Thank God! Go my son, and tell the happy news to the heathen. Oh, is the word true, that our children too can go out like white men and preach the Gospel? If anyone had told us this in bygone years, who would have believed it? Lord, send plenty more of our children.





Indigenous Missions

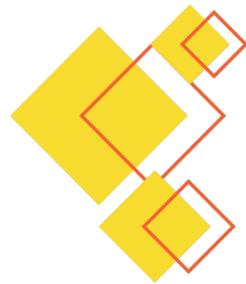
- 
- 
- CAPRO (Nigeria),
 - NEMA (Nigeria),
 - CMF (Nigeria),
 - Global Missions Board of the NBC (Nigeria)
 - African Inland Missions (Kenya),
 - African Christian Missions International (Kenya),
 - Global Link Africa (Uganda).
 - Ghana Evangelical Mission Association (Ghana).
 - ETC



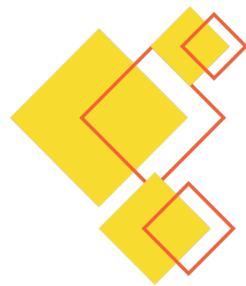
Calvary Ministries (CAPRO)



- Began as an outreach to the unreached people group of Northern Nigeria in 1975
- **Vision:** “indigenous, autonomous and self-propagating community of believers formed among unreached people groups of Africa and the rest of the world



- 
- 800 missionaries from 27 countries operating in 45 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, America and Asia.
 - Faith-based, indigenous African missionary movement
 - They do not pay missionaries any salary
 - Partner with Christians and individuals to raise funds to holistically care for their missionaries (Accommodation, health, children's education).

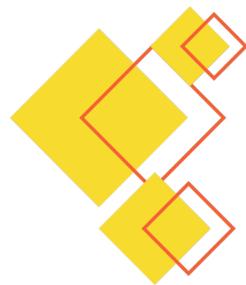




Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association

NEMA began in 1982 with the membership of six mission agencies:

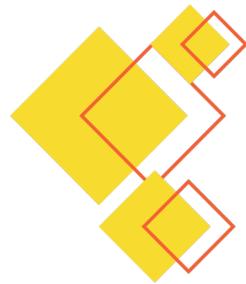
- Evangelical Missionary Society of ECWA,
- Calvary Ministries (CAPRO),
- His Grace Evangelical Movement (HIGEM),
- Christ Ambassador Evangelical Movement (CAET),
- Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF)
- Community Missions Board of COCIN.

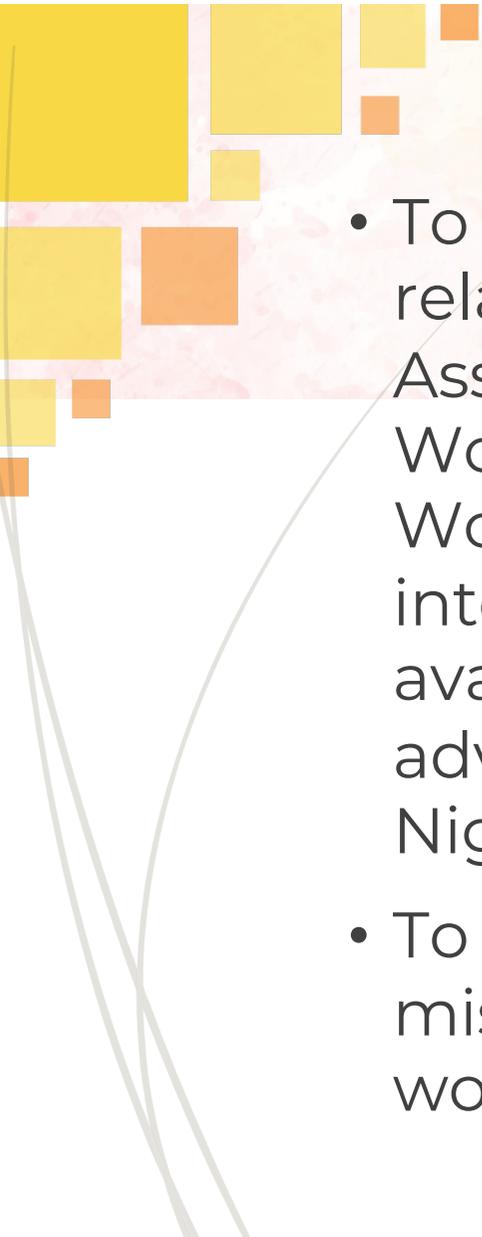


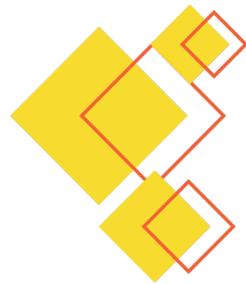


Aims and Objectives

- To motivate and encourage the establishment of more indigenous mission agencies from among the evangelicals where none exist.
- To promote sound relationships and cooperation between various mission groups.
- To establish institutions for research and missionary training and organise missionary conferences, seminars and workshops to raise the level of mission awareness in the country.



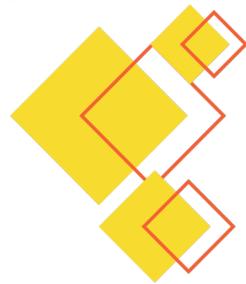
- 
- To liaise with and maintain good working relations with the mission commission of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (A.E.A.), World Evangelical Fellowship (W.E.F.), Third World Missions Association (TWMA) and other international ministries or bodies seeking to avail their ministry potentials to the advantage of the missions movement in Nigeria.
 - To cooperate and work with other national missions movements in other parts of the world.

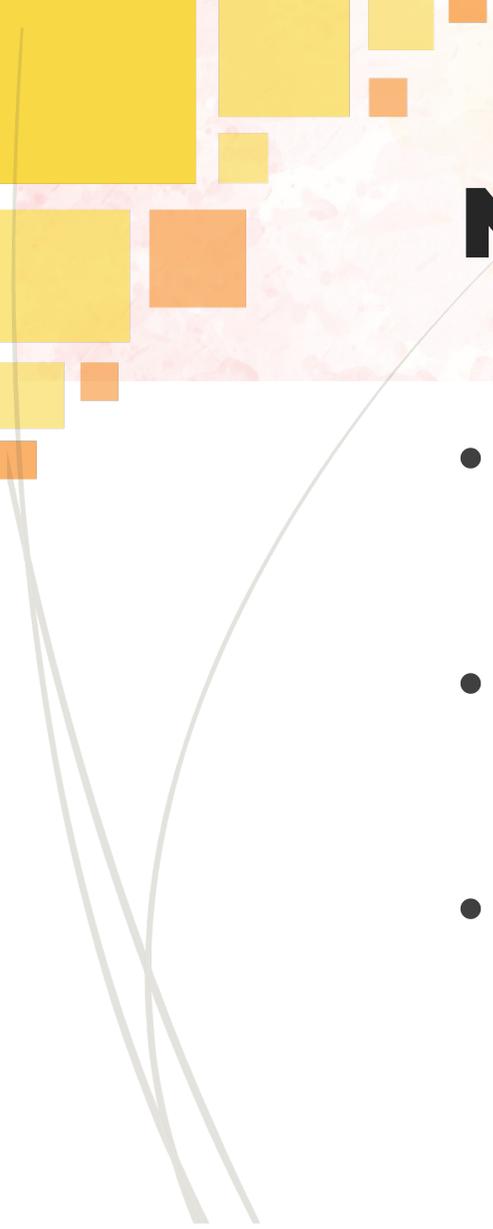




“if the whole world will be evangelized, the missionaries must be sent from every corner of the world. The idea of sending countries and receiving countries is long overdue for a change.”

- *Panya Baba*





NEMA TODAY

- A coalition of 95 churches and mission organisations
- Operates among 250 unreached people groups in 56 countries
- Has 5,200 Nigerian Missionaries working across the globe.



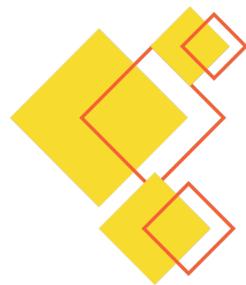


Through its vision 5015 launched in 2005, it attempted to mobilise and train 50,000 Nigerians in 15 years to reach the core Northern Nigeria Sahel region of Africa, the Horn of Africa, North Africa, Arabian Peninsula and the region around Jerusalem. As of 2020, 4,000 Nigerian Missionaries were placed in 31 of the 34 targeted countries. Having not met its target, it continued with the initiative in mission 50:15 Plus.





The face of a mission has changed from Western to global. And although we have only mentioned two large organisations from Nigeria, Africa is taking its place in the task of being sent to the ends of the earth.





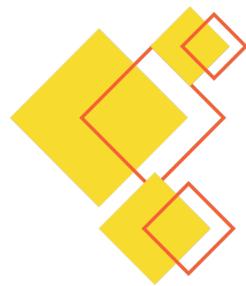
Africans are not just impacting the church in Africa, they are doing so across the globe. This is especially seen in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where many churches are either planted, pastored, or attended by Africans. In Dubai, five of the pastors at the Evangelical Christian Church of Dubai are from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia, or Ghana. In Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, the Evangelical Community Church Abu Dhabi has elders from Ethiopia and Kenya, and New Life Church in Abu Dhabi is led by a plurality of elders that includes several elders from Angola and South Africa.





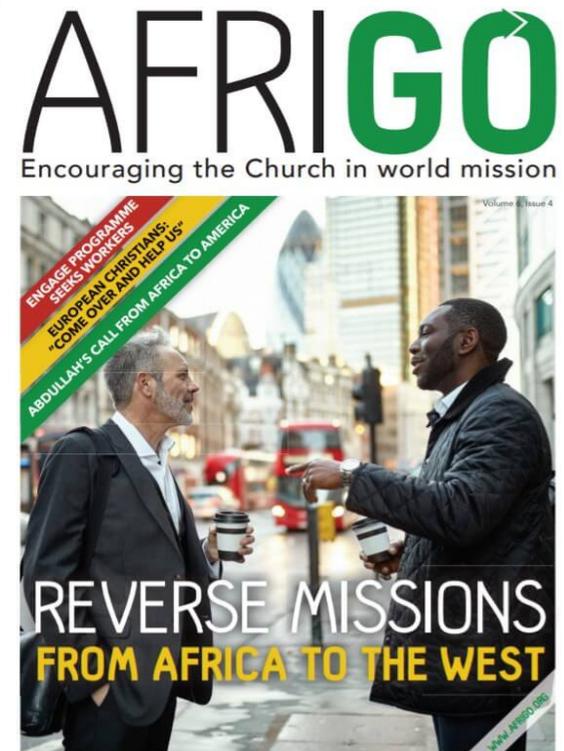
In God's kindness, the faith of African Christians is not contained within the continent, but is being taken by Africans to the ends of the earth for God's glory.

- *Yasmin Erasmus*

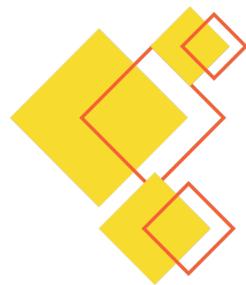


The Realities of Today: The Reverse Mission

A situation where those who were once recipients of missionary endeavours now take the same mission back and serve as missionaries among those who brought the gospel to them.



<https://afrigo.org/issues/volume-6-4/>





Three Reasons for Reverse Missions

- The same God who called the European missionaries is the one calling missionaries from the Global South
- Global missions have no headquarters, permanent address or postcode.
- The Global church (especially the Western Church/post-Christian church) can learn about God from the Global South

- *Israel Olofinjana*





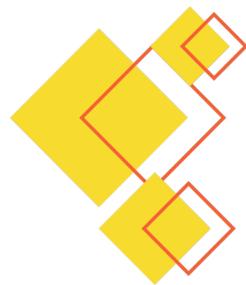
Two Factors Fuelling Reverse Missions

1. Deliberate evangelization

2. Migration

Christian diaspora today presents several opportunities for gospel witness. Modern globalization has accelerated the movement of peoples and also expanded the opportunities for Christian believers who are scattered to serve as witnesses for Christ. Second, through migration due to various reasons, millions of refugees, students and businesses people move around the globe and through such movements, they come in contact with the gospel

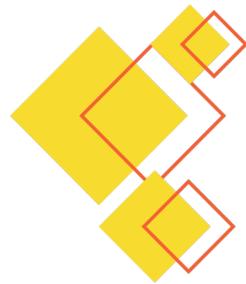
- Ezekiel Ajani





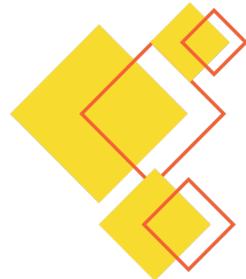
Statistics

- As of 2020, it is estimated that Europe ranked as the leading destination for African migrants outside Africa.
- That year 11 million African-born migrants lived in European countries
 - Nearly 5 million resided in Asia
 - About 3 million in North America.
- As of that year, more than 19.5 million Africans were living in different regions of the world.

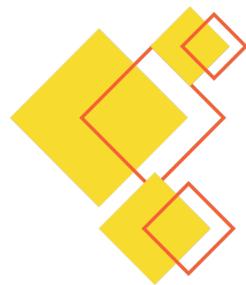




Specific to Nigeria, in a survey in 2019, Pew Research noted that 45% of Nigerian adults said they plan to move to another country within the next three years. Another survey in 2021 revealed that seven in ten Nigerians planned to relocate if they got the opportunity. Some specific statistics about this relocation revealed that 20,085 Nigerians relocated to Canada in 2022.



When some of these Africans migrate, they go along with their faith. Thus, reverse mission has been the source of many church-planting endeavours by African churches abroad.





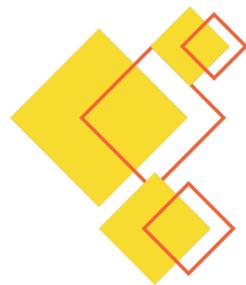
The Example of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)

- RCCG has grown from a little house fellowship in 1952 to a global ministry having branches across 197 countries with over 40,000 parishes and 9 million members.

How?

- It was their vision to have a church within five minutes walking distance in every developing country and five minutes' driving distance in every developed country. It also envisioned having a member of RCCG in every family of all nations.

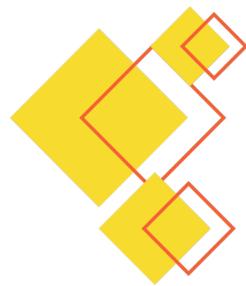
But that is not just it?





The church's exponential growth in Europe and America is owed to a "humble gathering of a few worshippers in a Nigerian student's living room.

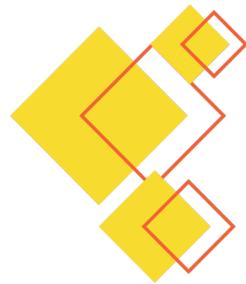
- Leke Sanusi, the continental pastor of RCCG in Europe





Major Challenges of the Reverse Mission

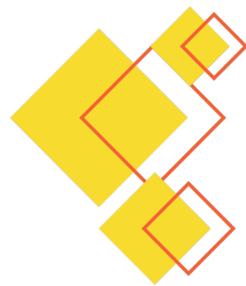
While the reverse mission has helped in several ways to shape host communities and their outreach paradigm, it is often rare to find churches in this category adequately assimilating the host community into their membership. Most of the African-led churches in the West end up with a membership composition that is predominantly of their respective homeland mother churches.





Why

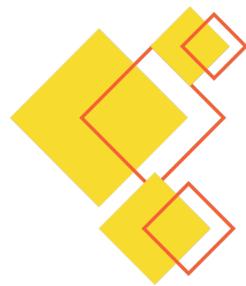
- racial stereotyping or labelling
- lack of cultural assimilation
 - the style of worship
 - personnel and finances



The Success Story of Sunday Adelaja – Pastor of Ukraine Church with 99% Christian whites



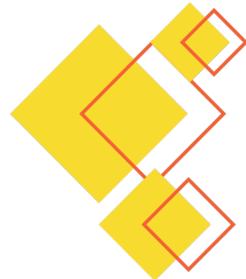
“I saw myself standing before a crowd of about 200,000 white people preaching the gospel. All kinds of things were happening. The Lord showed me all the things that were to happen in my ministry.”



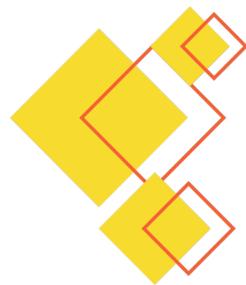


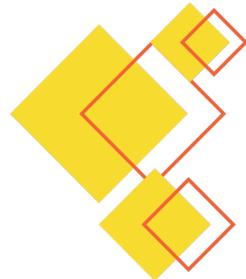
Typical of many immigrant churches, his church began with a prayer meeting in his two-bedroom apartment, attended by only seven fellow African students.



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- Opening 700 branches in 35 countries
 - More than 50 daughter churches function in the Kiev region
 - More than 100 daughter and satellite churches exist in the cities and villages of Ukraine
 - More than 200 churches in the countries of the former Soviet Union, the USA, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Holland have been founded
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- 20,000 members in Kiev's Central Church
 - More than 1,000,000 citizens of Ukraine have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior
 - More than 2,087 home groups with 3,000 leaders of home groups and outreaches
 - Social work is being carried out in 26 educational institutions reaching 170,000 people
 - The church is ministering in 35 nursing homes, helping 65,000 elderly people

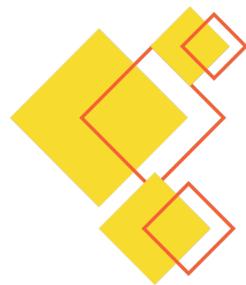


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- Churches have been opened in 30 prisons, counting more than 10,000 members
 - More than 2,000 people have been set free from drug and alcohol addictions in the church's Love Rehabilitation Center
 - 2,000 people are fed daily in the church's soup kitchen "Stephania"
 - Hundreds of street and abandoned kids are ministered to through outreaches
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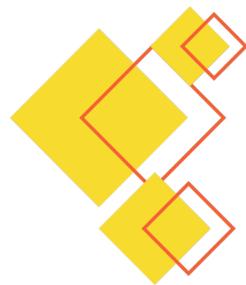


His success story was hinged on grassroots outreach and social work, use of cell group structure, cultural adaptation focusing on practical Christianity rather than traditional doctrine, and empowerment

Unfortunately, a few scandals surrounding him did not help his ministry, and the war in Ukraine brought the work almost to an end.



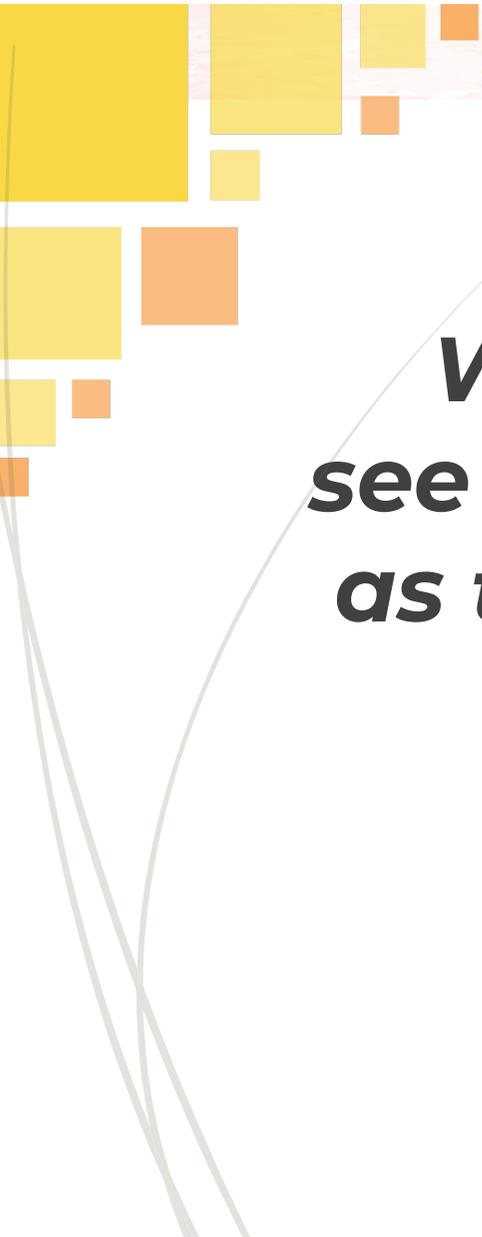
Africa Can Win the Ends of the Earth



- Our biblical and historical antecedents
- Largest Global Christian population
- Global representation (20 million by 2030)
- Youth population bustling with energy and spiritual life

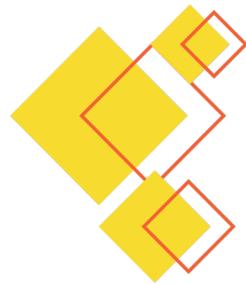
We must realise our potential

- emerging middle class that can support missions if well-disciplined and mobilised
- resilience to survive difficult situations
- culture of community
- awareness of the supernatural



***We must
see mission
as the task
of the
church***

- train our members to be mission-minded
- teach stewardship that supports mission work.
- value the place of networking
- Develop strategies and strategic plans on how to send missionaries to the ends of the earth
- Develop sustainable finance and support systems.
- Revise our curriculum in theological institutions and mission schools to embrace contemporary realities.

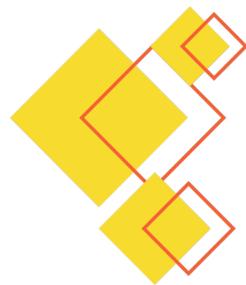




***We must
strengthen
the
phenomenon
of reverse
missions***



- Intentionally prepare our youths for missions at home and abroad
- Include cultural assimilation, contextual style of worship, strong balance between vocation and mission responsibility in our curriculum for them.
- Take Marketplace Ministry serious
- Encourage only responsible (but missional) legal migration
- Be aware and alarmed of the arrival of “border walls”



***We must
develop
relevant /
contextual
Communication
methods***

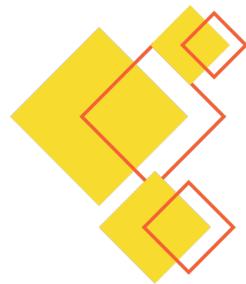
- Train in culture and communication
- Imbibe Oral methodologies. 80% of the world has gone oral
- Develop skills in *digital* communication.

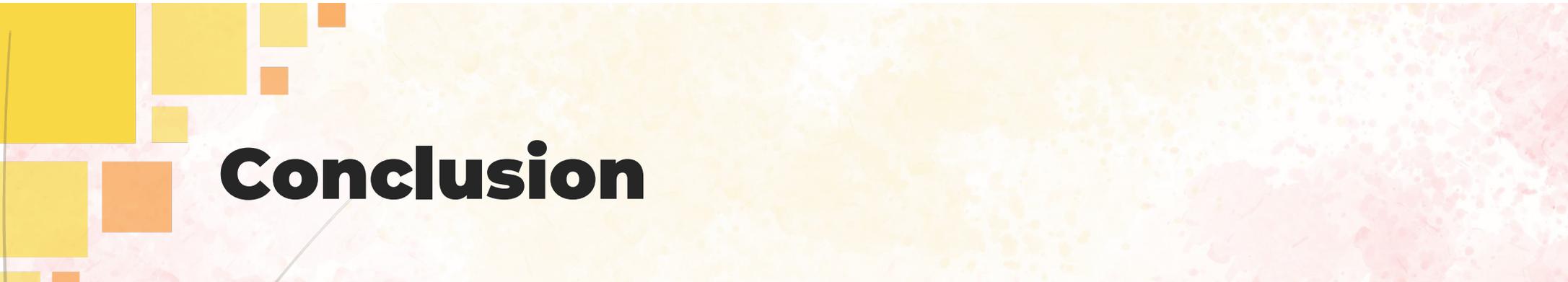




***We need to
research and
write***

We need to research and write about African-immigrant churches that are flourishing through multicultural engagement or participation.





Conclusion

“The growth of Christianity in Africa from 9.4 percent of the population in 1910 to more than 50 percent in many African countries today is the fruit of God’s work through these missionaries. The African church has a debt of gratitude to pay. It has a responsibility to give back its best ... to send missionaries into the rest of the world, including to countries in the West that are becoming post-Christian.”

