

## Global Trends in Mission: What is the Role of the African Church?

Not an easy assignment. Not expert. Not recently exposed to Africa...directly. Been over 20 years since lived in Africa.

Africa come to me. Privilege of partnership with African brothers & sisters in Central Asia and China.

Deep place in my heart. Early years of marriage and ministry. I did not have a white hair on my head when I arrived in Africa. 2 of 3 sons born there, all 3 spent early years of life there. Still remember retired Archbishop Silvanus Wani held firstborn son in his arms and blessed him gave him Kakwa name 'adoke' which means gift, as does his given name Nathan.

Indeed, the African church has been a rich gift to me. Many faithful friends, godly examples, and reliable partners in ministry. For example, the church I now serve in Beijing is about 20% African, and their faithful service is one of the strongest pillars of our ministry. They are the first to come and serve and do not leave until the work is over.

When I recently visited the church I served in Kazakhstan, where we served for 11 years, the first to greet us at the door of the church were two African brothers, faithful friends and partners in the work there.

### **Message > My Prayer for African Church's Role in World Mission**

Old Moses > Seeks God's blessing - SOON to HANDOVER Leadership to Joshua

Deuteronomy 28.1-13

If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock--the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and

blessed when you go out. The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven. The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you. The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear you. The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity--in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground--in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you. The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.

Three Points of HOW I am READING and APPLYING this Text –

### 1. NT Christian

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2.8,9

Saved by GRACE, Not by MY Goodness / Saved by MERCY, Not by MY MERIT

### 2. Now but Not Yet Anticipation

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3.2

In Christ we HAVE it ALL > But do NOT YET HOLD it All

Have PROMISE of ALL Things > NOT YET have FULL POSSESSION of Them

### 3. New Covenant Church

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 1.20

PROMISES to ISRAEL are APPLIED to CHRIST and HIS CHURCH

Blessings NOT for POLITICAL State but for “chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God”  
1 Peter 2.9

Moses Presents Israel with CHALLENGE and OPPORTUNITY

KNOW and ENJOY Rich BLESSINGS of God

Place of PROMINENCE, LEADERSHIP in WORLD > for GOOD & for GOD

Carefully FOLLOW HIM > Would be the HEAD and NOT the TAIL

PROMISES for CHURCH NOW > ASIA, AMERICA, AUSTRALIA --- AFRICA

Why do APPLY this to AFRICA?

### 1. Forged through Suffering

Israel in Egyptian bondage was TAIL > 400 years of BONDAGE SLAVERY

First went to Africa 1980 – Non-Christian Family – Thought was CRAZY

Africa at bottom – life expectancy, health care, economy, epidemics, famine, war,

Still remember SHOCK and FEAR when AIDS Crisis hit Uganda > Common Cup?

The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. Deuteronomy 7.7

African Church knows Lord in UNIQUE Ways because Jesus KNOWN by SCARS

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things...I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead... I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3.8-14

African Church show GLOBAL Church > SERVE WELL NO Starbucks & I Pads  
FRUIT born by SEEDS that FALL Into Earth and DIE – to be RISEN with Jesus

## 2. Freed through Salvation

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. Exodus 2.23-25

Cries Heard by God > Faithful to Covenant Promises to Fathers

God's Answer NOT BASED on THEIR MERIT but HIS MERCY

NOT Redeemed by THEIR GOODNESS but by HIS GRACE

After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, "The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness." No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land..."

Deuteronomy 9.4-5

NOT READ Most Deut 28 > STRONG WARNING to SINNERS of Judgment

Curses 4 X's LONGER than Blessings > HORROR of Sin > Be CAREFUL

SLAVES are FREED by God > Primarily to WORSHIP HIM

Some STRANGE Reason – Holy God invites our UNCLEAN Lips to Praise Him

The LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, `This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.'" Exodus 8.1

EVEN to Ask Question > ROLE of African Church in Mission > WESTERN Idea

We must DO SOMETHING for God > Proud of our ATTAINMENTS

CALL out of SLAVERY to BE Something > PEOPLE for His PRAISE

POWER of AFRICAN Church in Mission > REAL Joy in WORSHIP

CELEBRATION in Being SAVED, SET FREE, for SERVING God in PRAISE  
 Of course WORK to DO, Not Enough Money & Resources think THEY Can DO it  
 WEST > Many RESOURCES think THEY will do GREAT THINGS  
 IMPRESSION > Yes, THEY did SOMETHING but Where was GOD in ALL?

Got NOTHING, God does SOMETHING, Everyone KNOWS WHO did IT!

To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1.12,13

NO DOUBT > AFRICAN Worship – Sincerity, Joy, Brokenness, Humility

CALLING WORLD to Worship TRUE GOD

IN Power of PRAISE to God > We are the HEAD and NEVER the TAIL

### 3. Faithful to Scripture

Primary WARNING of Deut 28 > Hold ON to Word of God

v. 1 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today...

v. 9 The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways...

v. 13 If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them

African Church has been FOOLISH and NAÏVE Enough to BELIEVE BIBLE  
 Understand God's WORLD Changes > But God's WORD REMAINS FIRM  
 God's TRUTH is NOT OUT DATED > Always been AHEAD of its TIME!

WESTERN Church > SCIENCE shapes our View of SCRIPTURE

Modern THEORY Homosexuality NOT CHOICE but a GENETIC DESIGN  
 Church must NOW APPROVE – Even Celebrate – Gift of Homosexuality!  
 4 American Denominations – Promote Gay MARRIAGE and ORDINATION

NARROW MINDED Christians in Africa > DO have Genetic Design  
 BORN SINNERS – Sexual Sin, Selfish, Proud, Liars, Cheats, Hatred  
 Not called to CELEBRATE this DESIGN but CRUCIFY It by Repentance & Faith

1983 Letter from American Couple > Struggled with INFERTILITY  
 Long Description of Visits to Doctors, Tests, Clinics, Procedures > All FAILED  
 Read Letter aloud to DAYNA while Teenage Lugbara Christian Sister Visited  
 She spontaneously began to SING in Lugbara, these words:

Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. Genesis 25.21

American Friends sought Children thru Expensive INFERTILITY Treatments  
 African Sister sang SIMPLE SONG to God who Open's Womb by PRAYER  
 NOT that I do NOT WANT African's ACCESS LATEST & BEST in Health Care!  
 NOT Want MODERNIZATION to BLIND Africa to TRUTH > God is HEALER!

African Churches and Christians > Believe MAKER and MESSAGE  
 Helping CHRISTIAN World Not Slide into RELATIVISM and UNBELIEF  
 If UNBELIEF becomes STANDARD in Church and World > Already Many Places  
 AFRICA will always be BACKWARD and INFERIOR to their SUPERIOR IDEAS

I can ONLY Pray God HELPS ME to REMAIN so FOOLISH and FAITHFUL!

SEE God as LORD of ALL of LIFE – No SACRED / SECULAR Distinctions

Every Part of Life under Authority of WORD of God: Surrender to GLORY of God

#### 4. Unafraid to Stand

1980 – quickly learned I was a “Muzungu” > GREAT CURIOSITY to Everyone!

1983 > People of West Nile told Kids White Man would EAT Them

GREETING Small Kids created many TERRIFYING SCREAMS > RAN Away!

Our Boys some of First Muzungu’s born in West Nile after Idi Amin’s Reign

DOZENS of People came to CHURCHES – Not for my Sermon – See our KIDS!

Walking with Nigerian in Almaty > City buses stopped Main Street > All to See!

ASIANS stop you to TAKE PICTURE! Sometimes LAUGHTER and MOCKING!

BEIJING has a PARK where LOCALS go to LAUGH at their Own DWARFS!

Being STRANGER can HURT > PAINFUL Feeling you are some kind of FREAK!

PEOPLE of ISRAEL > Going into NEW LAND to be FREAKS!

STRENGTH will be in HOW DIFFERENT they are from their NEIGHBORS

Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them. However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... Deuteronomy 28.14,15

Were COMMANDED to LOVE their NEIGHBORS, but NOT be LIKE Them.

CANNOT Stand ALONE in STRANGE SOCIETY by YOURSELF for LONG

NEED SUPPORT, PRAYERS, LOVE, ENCOURAGEMENT, CHALLENGE

JESUS sent his KINGDOM Workers out 2 X 2 – Support, Security, Survival

WESTERN Church strongly REFLECTS Western INDIVIDUALISM  
 West > BROKEN Relations, Torn Families, Indifference to Needs of Neighbors  
 AFRICANS more SENSITIVE to OTHERS > Understand part of GROUP  
 BORN into FAMILY – DIE as Part of FAMILY – EXCESS is TRIBALISM  
 African CHURCH marked by GROUP Solidarity > Place of LOVE & SUPPORT

### 5. Fixed on the City of God

Deuteronomy > Words of MOSES for People in TRANSIT to PROMISED LAND  
 But NOT There YET > MOSES would SEE the LAND but Never STEP Upon IT

Most Africans have NO PROBLEM Understanding the EARTHY Promises of  
 Deut 28 are PICTURES of NEW HEAVEN and NEW EARTH  
 Don't See BIBLE as just BLESSING BOX to Pull out their OWN Mercedes BENZ  
 ONLY a few AFRICAN TV Preachers OWN AIRPLANES, VILLAS, FLEETS  
 PROMISES of Deut 28 > Point to PROMISE KEEPING, PROVIDER, GOD  
 HE is JEHOVAH JIREH – PRAY in Faith to FATHER in HEAVEN who LOVES  
 What HE GIVES us for OUR GOOD > Is for the PRAISE of HIS GLORY!

AFRICANS who DIG GRAVES for their OWN LOVED ONES know Life SHORT  
 AFRICANS Church has URGENT Awareness that THIS LIFE is Only Time to  
 GET READY for the NEXT LIFE – FIND God and BE FOUND by GOD

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world,  
 and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be  
 content with that.

1 Timothy 6.6-8

AFRICAN Church Faithful like Moses call World – Simple, Significant Choice:

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction... Now choose life, so that you and your children may live! Deuteronomy 30.11-19

What ROLE AFRICAN CHURCH in GLOBAL MISSION? – It can be like this:

The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Deuteronomy 28.13

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