

COMPARING APPLES AND MANGOES: TOWARDS EVALUATING THE AAGA MISSIONS ENTREPRISE¹

Enson Mbilikile Lwesya²

Introduction

In the last few years, there has been a rumbling of frustration and at times outright criticism of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance³ (AAGA) missionary enterprise by a new generation of missionaries from Assemblies of God World Missions⁴ (AGWM).⁵ Some of these young ministers regard the inspirational missional instruction framed in organizations such as Eleventh Hour Institute (EHI), Acts in Africa (AIA) and the World Missions Commissions (WMC) as mere rhetoric. Interestingly, some of the fiercest critics have been part of the process of the development of Africa's missions in the last twenty years. However, in their estimation, they see that the zeal of missions from the African Church is misplaced, the action is absent and it is all fluff. Furthermore, missionary mobilization and deployment are seen not to be commensurate to the missional "preachings" from within the continent.

Basis of the Criticism

The 1990's ushered in a new zest for church planting and missions for the Assemblies of God. The Decade of Harvest, a continent-wide strategic movement pushed, persuaded and challenged the AG-Africa to plant more churches.⁶ By 1997, the call for the formation of the Eleventh Hour Institute (EHI) and the East Africa Regional Missions Board (RMB) became examples and a culmination of different streams of missionary thought and action across the continent. During this time, the number of members and adherents increased from 2 million to about 13 Million at the close of that decade. The incremental realization of the growing Church

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² Enson Lwesya is the Acting Vice-Chancellor of Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) and the current chairperson of the World Missions Commission (WMC) of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance. He holds a DMin from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, MO.

³ Throughout this article Assemblies of God constituency in Africa is abbreviated as AG-Africa.

⁴ Throughout this article Assemblies of God constituency in America is abbreviated as AG-America.

⁵ Older Statesmen such as Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, Dr. Charles Osweke, Dr. Peter Njiri, and others received the harshest criticism.

⁶ Decade of Harvest was an Assemblies of God (America) initiated grand strategy to see the greatest evangelistic results through church planting throughout the world. AG-Africa grew from 2 million members and adherents to about 13 million.

and its place in the economy of God's cosmic business persuaded many Africans to believe that Africa could equally be a bonafide player in the missions enterprise.

The EHI and RMB were officially launched and mobilized with initial missionaries from Malawi, Kenya and Tanzania.⁷ West Africa experienced sparks of cross-border mission zeal and activities. Nigeria sent missionaries to Cameroon and Niger, while Burkina Faso sent missionaries into Ivory Coast and other West African nations. The theological education systems, largely responsible for ministerial formation, grew stronger and more visionary. Graduate study centers were instituted in five countries to buttress the successful undergraduate schools the Assemblies of God operated for some time.⁸ The numbers of members and adherents increased from 2 Million to 13 million during the time. However, with the celebrations of the year 2000, it seems the evangelism emphasis in many national churches stagnated, the inspirational energy zapped, missionary passion and creativity ran out and the many creative promises were soon relegated only to future hopes. Seemingly, the Decade of Harvest benefits did not catapult the AG-Africa to greater missional involvement and expansion. From this vantage point, critics look at the AG-Africa missionary enterprise as foamy promises and great rhetoric but when it comes to actions, its only bare tokenism.

But is the criticism valid? Is there any proof of a missionary enterprise forming let alone growing in AG-Africa? This paper stands on the premise that although the criticism is welcome, however most of it is misplaced and misguided for it compares and contrasts, and wrongly so, the AG-Africa missions with various movements in history. The comparisons are in fact diametrically wrong; it is like comparing apples to mangos while assuming they are the same. The ensuing sections of this paper show how the AG-Africa missions differs with other historical and contemporary missions movements. Furthermore, it surveys the different challenges it faces and above all it attempts to develop a measuring yardstick or a canon for effective and growing missionary enterprises.

The Missionary Task of the Church

Having stated the above, it behooves us to point out the perceived Church's Task. Confusion on defining and describing the mission of God leads to confusion in execution of tasks. Failure to biblically frame a definition and description of what is missions and evangelism obstructs the execution of the same. Defining Missions, surprisingly, is both difficult and contentious. Various Church-related mission documents of the last four decades—Lausanne Covenant (1974), the World Council of Churches' Nairobi Assembly statement on "Confessing Christ Today" (1975) and the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntandi* (1975)—attest to this

⁷The RMB was initially established to become an agency to organize and supervise the missionaries from the East Africa block of Assemblies of God national Churches. Initially, Malawi sent three missionary couples to Sudan, Kenya sent one couple to Sudan, whereas Tanzania one couple to Rwanda. This was a great start. However, National leaders underestimated the power of sovereignty in the national churches as opposed to participation in an association that has less legal cohesion. The results were not good. Eventually each missionary was left to the national churches to support in contrast to the original idea of mobilizing funds from all regional nations to support all regional missionaries.

⁸Graduate Schools were opened in Lome (Togo), Capetown (South Africa), Nairobi (Kenya), Lilongwe (Malawi) and Jos (Nigeria).

challenge.⁹ As in any form of Christian practice, a level of reflection is essential in developing descriptions and definitions for missions. Unfortunately, missional reflection is enshrined in space and time; therefore, it comes with human limitations. To this end, Bosch states that we should never arrogate it to ourselves to delineate mission too sharply and too self-confidently. Ultimately, mission remains undefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our own predilections. The most we can hope for is to formulate some approximations of what mission is all about.¹⁰

One distinctive missional practice shown in the last few decades is to differentiate mission (singular), also known as *missio Dei*, from missions (plural). Mission (singular) refers to the belief and practice that God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privilege to participate. Whereas missions would refer to the particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs of participation in *missio Dei*.¹¹ Additionally, other scholars have tried to separate evangelism, semantically and practically, from mission.

Evangelism is perceived as separate but part of missions. It is the proclamation of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion, announcing forgiveness of sin and inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin a life of service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹² This is the activity of the Church in the earth. Consequently, the missionary task is looked upon as the whole church bringing the whole gospel to the whole world.¹³ With this thought comes awareness that the church is not the sender but the one sent. Its mission (being sent) is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for the sake of its mission.¹⁴ The foregone reflections have shaped the perceptions of missions in various church communities of the world.

Biblical Groundings

God created humanity with the capacity to know and represent him. In declaring man as His co-regent with the capacity to dominate and subdue the earth, God endows humanity with the ability to care for the earth on his behalf. Unfortunately, humanity falls in sin and receives an

⁹For a fuller review of the documents see James Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (ed), *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization I: Basic Statements 1974-1991* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).

¹⁰David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 9.

¹¹Ibid., 10.

¹²Ibid., 10-11. The Conciliar Ecumenical Statements and the Evangelical Protestant Statements of the last four decades all reveal the same essence of differences and connection between Missions and Evangelism.

¹³This statement is indeed a summarization of many statements of many International Missionary Conferences. However, these words are a summary from "Confessing Christ Today", A statement from the World Council of Church's Fifth Assembly held in Nairobi in 1975.

¹⁴Karl Bath, *Church Dogmatics IV/1* (Edinburgh: T & T, 1956), 725.

eternal impact; but inversely God sets in motion his eternal remedy (Rev. 13:8) and continues to pursue human beings with his love. Through his wise counsel, God reveals the way of salvation epitomized by the death of Jesus Christ. In dying, Jesus becomes humanity's substitute (2 Cor. 5: 21). Just as the sin of Adam is imputed to all, the righteousness of Jesus is promised to all who appropriate his finished work on the Cross. Additionally, Jesus founds the Church, a community of people from all nations, tribes, languages and peoples who commit themselves to do his bidding of which the major responsibility is working as a missionary community of God. The Church's work of sharing the good news of the redemptive activity of God, also known as the mission of God is the centre or the *mitte* of all Scriptures.

With simplicity and clear vision, Jesus mobilized a community to fulfill his goals. Indeed, mission dictates developing a missionary community. His vision of spreading the redemptive good news needed a community of workers. Therefore, Jesus starts a movement, consequently, develop it into a world-wide community. This community is to carry on His mission. The African Church, including the AG family, is part of this New Testament Spirit-community. Just as the apostolic church in the New Testament text relies on the power of the Spirit to proclaim the gospel to UPGs, similarly, the African Church is called to depend on him, the Spirit, to do missions.

Apostolic Roots and Future Missions

The action of the Spirit in setting Barnabas and Paul apart and influencing the Antioch Community "sending them" creates a normative of missions with a strong emphasis on local church plants (Acts 13:1-5). Everywhere this apostolic team goes, it preaches and mobilizes converts together who in turn grow those congregations into communities where the word is taught, people matured and ultimately plant other churches (Acts 14:21-28). The New Testament missions movement as depicted in Paul's missionary movements becomes the grounding for all missionary endeavors of the future. Thus, the Acts of the Apostles informs what the church does thereafter.

Theological reflection is always circumscribed in contextual issues. And this has been the greatest challenge of practicing theology anywhere in the world. Self-theologizing, which inevitably leads to contextualization is always messy, it does not satisfy everyone. Here then is the biggest challenge in missions work: Most of the missionary movements in the world, including the AG-Africa missionary enterprise are viewed and evaluated through a missiology fashioned in America. Consequently, the New Testament missionary stories are interpreted using the American missiology grid, which is itself a reflection of its own context. Instead of Africa developing its own missiology through a rigorous reflection of the acts of God in context, it relies on the philosophy already developed by others. In a way, Africa tries to fight Goliath using Saul's armor.

Admittedly, missions from the African soil has not picked up speed as desired by many due to reasons such as lack of commitment, lack of vision, passion, poor management of missions organizations and sheer fear of going to unreached people groups (UPGs).¹⁵ However,

¹⁵A "people group" is a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation etc. or combinations of these. From the viewpoint of evangelization this is the largest possible group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance. An "unreached people group" is a people among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers of resources to evangelize the rest of its members without

this paper stands on an hypothesis that missions in Africa has not picked up aggressively because it is trapped by a Western Missiology not suited for the continent. And therefore, as the missiology changes by aligning with the New Testament, then the missional movement will rapidly grow.

Was Apostle Paul a Cross-Cultural Missionary?

At the heart of the strong criticism against the AG-Africa is the notion that Africa is largely practicing non-authentic missions—inside-country evangelism. Based on the Northern Hemisphere understanding (strong among AG-America), a missionary is one who crosses cultural barriers to bring the gospel to others. What constitutes the barrier may include elements such as language, color, ethnicity, etc. Therefore, in this regard missions is taking the gospel across these barriers to those who have not yet heard. It is going to the unreached, beyond the cultural frontiers. To a certain degree, this also has an element of *going far, beyond easy geographical reach*; because among missiologists that advocate the crossing of cultural barriers, there is a tendency *not to call* those who cross barriers within the same geopolitical boundaries of a nation as “missionaries”. Such workers are regularly called church planters. Consequently, despite the tens of thousands of churches the AG-Africa planted in the last twenty years, of which many were across distinct cultures, the Church is still deemed involved largely in Church planting and not missions work. But is this a correct reading of the New Testament? Was the New Testament Mission across cultures? Was Paul and his apostolic teams *missionary* in the light of the foregone definitions and descriptions?

Paul’s personal cultural orientation was similar to most of all the provinces he took the apostolic teams. Although the Romans had by this time ruled for over 150 years, the Greek empire of Alexander the Great and his posterity forever framed Asia Minor and Western Europe in the Greek culture. The Greek culture and language dictated and influenced the life of all the people in the Roman Empire. Paul and his apostolic team members (most of them) were born and bred in this culture. Although born a Jew, Paul was raised in Tarsus of Cilicia, a city with a Greek culture.¹⁶ Bruce states that whereas Paul is frequently described nowadays as a Hellenistic Jew, but he himself would probably not have accepted that description. If he calls himself a “Hebrew” (2 Corinthians 11:22) or, more emphatically, “a Hebrew born of Hebrews” (Philippians 3:6), he probably uses the word in contradistinction to “Hellenist” as Luke himself does in another connection in Acts 6:1.¹⁷

However, one thing is clear from the records of the Acts of the Apostles: Paul is a practical apostle who uses his double cultural orientation to the advantage of preaching of the gospel. He is a citizen of two nations, Israel and Rome, and a person of two cultures. Paul understood both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures. He was at least bilingual, probably trilingual. He was evidently able to function comfortably, without consciously ‘crossing over’

outside (cross-cultural) assistance. A ‘reached people group’ with adequate indigenous believers and resources to evangelize this group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.

¹⁶Paul was a man of two cultures (Hebrew and Greek) and two nations (Israel and Rome). He was bilingual and extremely talented and passionate about taking the gospel to where Christ was not known.

¹⁷F.F. Bruce, St. Luke’s Portrait of St. Paul. Available on http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ffb/luke-portrait_bruce.pdf (accessed on January 2, 2013).

into one or the other culture, both in Jewish and in Greco-Roman culture.”¹⁸ But as it turns out, Paul went to places where he would be most effective, where he spoke the language, where he could earn a decent living, where he would be sure to meet people with whom he was already familiar.¹⁹

The Greek cultural tapestry—despite shades of differences in most sub-cultural pockets of the Roman Empire—supported the life of the first century. Therefore, discussing Paul’s missionary life forces us to ask critical questions: How many cultural barriers did Paul cross when he went in all these nations and cities? How much culture did the apostolic teams cross knowing that Greek was the language of Asia Minor and West Europe or that the cultural tapestry was Greek and dictated by its morals and rituals? Did Paul really cross significant cultural barriers from what he was? No, he did not cross culture as we may know it today. The Greek culture presented Paul with a medium of communication. He was at home in this language. The biblical text does not present evidence of any attempt to translate the scriptures into the provincial dialects of Asia Minor by the apostolic teams during their missionary travels.

Paul preached in Greek and wrote in Greek and all his converts who read were all expected to read the scriptures in Greek.²⁰ If he did not cross culture barriers, can we call him a missionary using our western missiology that demands one to “cross cultures”? Should the “crossing of culture” motif be a determining factor or the fact of “being sent” by the Lord to preach the word to a people without his knowledge? Schnabel states that moreover, the determining characteristic of the apostles and other missionaries in the New Testament period is not the need to learn other languages or to cross cultural divides. Rather they are characterized by Jesus’ call and commission to proclaim the good news of God’s saving action to all people, Jews and Greeks, no matter where they lived—whether in the same city, in the neighboring region or in another Roman Province.²¹

The Synagogue Factor

Paul’s desire to get to a synagogue reveals another important ingenious missionary practice. His missionary work in most cities always began at the synagogue. Whenever he entered a city, he went straight to this place of worship. There he found kinship of language, faith, and Scripture with the worshipers. Invariably, he was rejected and thrown out whenever he preached the gospel in the synagogues. First, threatened Jewish leaders rejected him each time he preached in the synagogues on the basis that he was bringing a new faith. However, by their own admission, the majority recipients in every synagogue he visited did not think Paul’s message was not necessarily alien to them. Paul visited the synagogue to introduce himself to folks who believed like him. Intentionally, he sought out people of similar culture and belief.

¹⁸Eckhard Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 329.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Rolland Allen, 14.

²¹Echard J. Schnabel, 439.

Paul and the Metropolises

Roland Allen in his seminal book *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours* clearly demonstrates that although Paul constantly viewed his mission work through the eyes of provinces rather than cities, his theory of evangelizing a province was not to preach in every place himself, but to establish centers of Christian life in two or three important places from which the knowledge might spread into the country round.²² Strategically, the Spirit leads Paul into centers from which he might begin; not centers into which life drains but centers from which it spreads abroad. He concentrates on the district or provincial capitals, each of which stands for a whole region.²³ Most of these centers are of Roman Administration, of Hellenic civilization and of Jewish influence. They are keys of the great trade routes.²⁴ Paul thinks regionally, not ethnically; he chooses cities that have a representative character. In each of these he lays the foundations for a Christian community, clearly in the hope that, from these strategic centers, the gospel will be carried into surrounding country side and towns.²⁵

Was Jesus a Missionary of God?

By the same token, can we call Jesus a missionary using the “crossing of culture” motif? Jesus does not cross any significant culture because he ministers within the cultural environment of his birth and upbringing. He came to his own; and he ministered to his own (John 1:10-11). He spoke Aramaic within a Greek Cultural milieu to people same as he. Of course, some may argue that his home is heaven and he came as a missionary into the earth. Well, that thinking negates the fact of his birth, identity and upbringing as a Jew born in Israel. However, we describe him, Jesus is a missionary with an apostolic mandate. No wonder he declares “as the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20: 21 NASB).

Jesus considers His mission all-consuming to His life. He articulates it, demonstrates it by His life and deeds, and passes the same to His mission coalition—the apostles. He comes “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Lucan literature, like other biblical genres, links the narratives of Jesus and the apostolic church in the redemptive scope and history of humanity. Luke believes in the unity and harmony of inspired Scriptures, the massive quotes from the Old Testament demonstrate this fact.²⁶ He, deliberately, connects the new acts of God done in his day to the acts of God he reads in the text (Old Testament). Thus, Luke shows that Jesus sees himself as the Servant, Prophet, and King sent from Yahweh (Luke 4:18) to bring light into the world through the proclamation of the gospel and the provision of acts of mercy as empowered by the Spirit. He is heaven’s missionary to earth. Yet, he is from among the earth. He is the Son of Man, born from man, sent to man.

²²Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: World Dominion Press, 1962), 12.

²³David J. Bosch, 130.

²⁴Roland Allen, 16.

²⁵David J. Bosch, 130.

²⁶Larry D. Pettigrew, *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 20.

Were Apostles Missionaries?

The contemporary apostolic reformation movements challenge both the theological presuppositions and practices of contemporary evangelical mission activities and thereby, force the church to redefine the word “missionary.”²⁷ The English word “apostle,” a transliteration of the Greek *apostolos* derives from *apostellein*, to send.²⁸ The word “apostle” means “one sent.” Its meaning is kindred to the word “ambassador” (2 Cor. 5:20), the messenger whom a king sent to foreign powers, and also to our modern word “missionary,” which equally means “one sent.” The word “apostle” is translated “messenger” in 2 Corinthians 8:23 and Philippians 2:25. It came to mean one who is sent on a specific mission and acts with full authority on behalf of the sender. What do these apostles do in biblical narrative to warrant the use of this term?

In the biblical text, the apostles are learners and itinerant evangelists. Later, their main duties are preaching, teaching, and administration.²⁹ This is the niche the contemporary apostolic reformation exploits in which the apostles are defined as fathers, mentors, and supervisors of other ministers. Despite the gospel’s advance across the cultural borders of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Damascus, Antioch, and the rest of Asia Minor, the apostles are not defined by their crossing of any of these cultural barriers, for they minister within the confinement of their cultures, but it is the essence *being sent* and leadership responsibility thrust on them that defines them as apostles. In those days, every one ministered wherever they went. Philip, running away from the persecution in Jerusalem, ministers Christ cross-culturally to Samaritans. Interestingly, Luke refers to Philip, who is likely a Gentile (by reason of his name) and crosses cultures to preach in Samaria, as an evangelist” and not as an “apostle” (Acts 8:4-8; 21:8). Could it be that these definitions are more bound by the descriptions of people’s *giftedness* instead of the ability to cross cultural barriers? The Jerusalem apostles and Paul do not just measure up to the contemporary definition of a missionary!

In the scriptures *everyone* is sent to preach the gospel. Jesus sends the apostles to evangelize within Israel on two occasions (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-17). Later on He commands His community to go out to proclaim the goodness of the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). In the Acts of the Apostles, all kinds of people go out to preach. Despite the giftedness, prophets, teachers and evangelists all go out as missionaries (Acts 8:4-8; 11:19-24; 15:31-33). Some even evangelize as they run from persecution. The emphasis is not on which person goes for mission, but that the church goes out to accomplish God’s work. Everyone is a minister and, in this sense, every member of the Jesus community is sent out as missionaries into the entire world to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20).

²⁷Apostolic Reformation movements are contemporary ministerial networks demanding the recognition of “apostles” as a legitimate category of New Testament ministries such as pastors, evangelists, and teachers, which are fully recognized and appreciated by the Church. The difficulties, however, evolve from the definitions, descriptions, identity, and authority of the present day apostles.

²⁸Everett F. Harrison, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Carl F. Henry, eds., *Wycliff Dictionary of Theology* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 57.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 58.

What Then is Missions?

Luke 24:47-48 gives the twin themes of proclamation and witness. Whether presented as “proclamation” (*kērussō*), “announcement of good news” (*euangelizomai*, cf. *katangellō*) or “witness” (*martureō* and cognates), the missionary’s primary activity is to tell “the truth to the world about God’s action in Christ. Precisely then, all things considered, missions should be the conscious effort on the part of the church, in its corporate capacity, or through voluntary agencies, to proclaim the gospel (and all it implies) among peoples and regions where it is still unknown or only inadequately known. Missions is not only a department of the church, but the church itself in its complete expression, that is, in its identification of itself with the world.

Others insist (especially out of AG-America) on the following working definition of missions: it is the establishment of Christ’s work across cultural and language barriers, with planting a church for that culture as the main thrust. Evangelism on the other hand, is the process and activity of reaching out to a people among which the Church of Jesus Christ already exists. Evangelism includes church growth activities in a place where the gospel has been for some time. However, it does seem that the boundaries of the two disciplines—missions and evangelism—are superficial and cannot be substantiated by biblical reflection as demonstrated above in the discussion on the Pauline form of missions. Therefore, missions should be perceived as global evangelization, a concept Jesus wished the Church followed to the letter.

The Frontier mission movement advocates that Christian World Mission is the redemptive activities of the church in societies where the church is not found.³⁰ Thus a missionary is one who crosses out of a society that has an existing church movement over cultural boundaries to bring the gospel to a society that does not have the church. They maintain a sharp distinction between *evangelism*, which is the work of the church among its own people in the same cultural group, and *mission*, which means crossing a cultural boundary to bring an initial penetration of the gospel among a cultural group. These cultural boundaries that must be crossed in order to bring the gospel to a new group become the new “frontiers” of mission, which is where the name of this movement is taken from.³¹

Furthermore, Ralph Winter who initiated the Frontier Missions philosophy through his 1974 Lausanne presentation expresses missions as evangelization using what is now popularly known as the E-Scale. According to Winter the master pattern of the expansion of the Christian movement is first for special E-2 and E-3 efforts to cross cultural barriers into new communities and to establish strong, on-going, vigorously evangelizing denominations, and then for that national church to carry the work forward on the really high-powered E-1 level. We are thus forced to believe that until every tribe and tongue has a strong, powerfully evangelizing church in it, and thus an E-1 witness with it, E-2 and E-3 efforts coming from the outside are still essential and highly urgent.³² What Winter strives to point out is that in the missiological reality of today, most “missionaries” in this narrow sense who are crossing real cultural boundaries do so in order to work among a culture where there is an already existing church movement of some

³⁰Ralph Winter, “The Meaning of ‘Mission,’” *Mission Frontiers Bulletin* (March-April 1998), 15.

³¹Alan Johnson, “The Frontier Mission Movement’s Understanding of the Modern Mission: Part 1” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (18:2 Summer 2001), 82.

³²Ralph Winter, “The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism,” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 220.

sort. This he terms “regular” missions, which is involved in all kinds of good work of assisting the growing national church. These include doing works of compassion, training leaders and discipling new believers. The term “frontier” is then reserved for another kind of cross-cultural work, the kind where there is no existing church movement among a particular people.³³

Agreed, for the sake of organized and planned church work, the two practices may need individual emphasis. Although missions can be deemed a form of world evangelization, cross-cultural evangelism (Missions), which Ralph Winter calls E-2 and E-3 have segregated emphasis. If mission, which is the more challenging of the two, is less emphasized, the church generally downplays it. The Church tends to evangelize people it is familiar with, whose languages it knows, and whose environment it appreciates. Thus, it may be necessary to accept the contentious descriptions and demarcations because the practical implications outweigh the debate over theological terminologies.

Rethinking Our Definitions

The deconstruction of the “Crossing Culture” motif is significant on three accounts. First, it then reveals that our definitions and descriptions of who is a missionary are not necessarily biblically controlled. The realization is disheartening because then, the endeared term of missionary, whose etymology comes from Latin rather than Greek, could be the cause of many fragmented views of apostolic work. Second, it brings us to a realization that missions may not be necessarily crossing cultures. However, it may include traveling longer distances and crossing “geographical” boundaries and minister to people who may have or not have a culture like that of a missionary. Paul is indeed a missionary in Ephesus where the Greek Culture and language, which is equally his, dictates the life of the city. Similarly, an African who preaches and starts a church in London among Africans is no less a missionary.

Third, it equally challenges the grounds of his *being sent* by the Antioch Church. What does it mean to “being sent” in this regard? The sending theology is a belief and practice of mobilizing personnel and funds for missions; it is a concept that has grown with distinction through Western Missions. Evidently, a missionary has a community from home that recognizes him as their representative to the nations. Through this community, prayer and financial support is raised for the missionary. Mwamvuni claims that there is an adequate inference that the Antioch church is such a sending base for the Paul’s apostolic teams. He states that Acts 13:1–4 which confirms and amplifies the apostolic motif as earlier practiced by Jesus (John 20:21) also etymologically reveals the basis for the sending structure. Although the English translations for verses 3 and 4 both use the word “sent”, the Greek rendering for the word used in verse 3 is “*apolouo*”, which means “to free fully or dismiss” (cf. Matt. 14:22; Mark 8:9; Luke 8:38), while verse 4 uses “*ekpempo*”, meaning “to dispatch or send forth” (cf. Acts 17:10)³⁴ This shows that the Holy Spirit (God) sent forth Saul and Barnabas, while the church set them free to go.

Furthermore, in Mwamvuni’s estimation the reception of the apostles on their return journeys reveals the church’s responsibility and participation in the sending of the apostles. Just as Jesus prepares a debriefing time for his disciples whenever they get back from ministry (Luke

³³Alan Johnson, “Major Concepts in Frontier Missions: Part 2”, *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (18:2 Summer 2001), 90.

³⁴Milward Mwamvuni, *Misssionary Care: How Is The Two-Thirds-World Church Doing?* Vo.3 Issue 1. Available on <http://www.antsonline.org/Vol1111a4.html>. (Accessed on 01 January 2013).

10:1 – 20), Saul and Barnabas also go back for debriefing to their “sending” church (cf. Acts 14:26 – 28). With these references, he deduces that there is some kind of continuous link and care for the “sent” by the “senders.”³⁵ I still insist, however, that this philosophy and practice of a missionary’s support coming from the home church is equally informed by the pragmatic experiences of Western Missions. Although Paul strongly believes in a sending community for missionaries (Rom.10: 13-15) there is no scriptural evidence that the Antioch Church (the sending base) provides any financial support other than becoming a community of rest and accountability.

Granted, they could have supported his apostolic team, but Luke or Paul do not write about it, nor refer to it in a minimalist sense. What we get from his tentmaking texts is his passion to raise funds for the gospel outreaches (Acts 18:3; 1Th. 2:9; 2 Th. 3:8; 2 Cor. 11:8-9). Melvin Hodges concurs that in a pioneer work, unless the national evangelist receives help from neighboring churches, it may be necessary for him to find some secular employment until the church is fully established.³⁶ Admittedly, other people refresh Paul and his apostolic team. The Philippian church is one such community that stands with him and sends financial support (Phi. 1:5; the Macedonian Church of 2 Cor. 8:1-9). The interesting aspect is that these were the churches he planted revealing the fact that a missionary can financially partner with a recipient Church in doing missions.

The fact that Paul never crosses any significant cultural barriers behooves us to have respect for those who do. Cross-cultural work is no mean feat. It is a lot of work and takes a lot of years. One has to learn to be a member of the recipient community culturally before penetrating it with the gospel. Does this then justify the African church slowness in cross-cultural mission involvement? Absolutely, not! It simply underscores the reality that cross-cultural work does not represent the totality of its missions work.

It is clear then that the formation of a missiology appropriate to the African context must transcend the notion that a missionary, who is a modern equivalent of an apostle, must cross cultural barriers and work towards the conversion and discipleship of the people in the host culture. Such missiological constructs previously formulated to influence people to *intentionally cross barriers* in preaching Christ have led to a skewed missionary image. These well-intentioned definitions and descriptions create missions done only by the “expert career missionary” supported by huge budgets from the sending agency. A missiological perspective that has inexorably led to stunting of the African missions movement.

Africa’s Diversity: Challenges against Corporate Missions

Africa moves painfully slow on the issues of joint-efforts of missions within the continent and beyond. One aspect of the criticism identifies lack of cooperation and coordination within the cooperative efforts of AAGA. Although many reasons abound for this malaise, one of these includes the place of diversity in the many people groups of Africa’s people. For one to understand the negative long reach of diversity one has to unravel Africa’s conflicted identity as revealed in its historical background. Africa’s identity is intrinsically wrapped in what historically happened to it as a people. Today, just as in the 1950’s the struggles of indigenization

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Melvin Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, (Springfield MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 87.

of Africa's organizations and dreams are dogged by serious misunderstanding of the identity of its people. The differences between western mission agencies and the recipient's perceptions create tensions spilling in various sectors of Africa. One biggest challenge is the self-perceptions of Africans derived from their environment which do not use the *Image of God* motif as clearly portrayed in the Scriptures.³⁷

Who is an African? It is hard to generalize anything about Africa. The continent is large, its people so diverse with thousands of languages and dialects. Africa covers 20% of the world mass, with a population of 1 billion, speaking over 2000 languages, in 53 countries, all with their own beliefs, different traditions and histories. Whatever summarization we make of its people and land is in part myopic and potential oversimplifications at best. Yet, there are some things so common all over Africa to be used as a summation for the whole continent. Africa's people include the northerners of the Arab-descent found in countries such as Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt; the Nilotic peoples from the northeastern part of Africa in countries such as Ethiopia, Eritria, Rwanda, Djibouti; the Bantu peoples found in the west, central and southern parts of Africa; and other smaller groupings such as the San, Pygmies, etc.³⁸

Africa: Its History and Beliefs

Worldviews, which are the basic assumptions about reality, lie behind the beliefs and behaviors of a culture determining humanity's conception of reality.³⁹ Thus, to a certain degree Africa's worldviews creates and determines its identity and destiny. This is much more than the "Colonization of the mind." Worldviews color the reality of our perception. Admittedly, the way Africa conceives and acts out reality reveals that the continent is shackled by many things, chief being its worldviews.

Another facet of *Africanity* is the impact religion has on it. Africans are a religious people. Christianity has the most followers (59%) followed by Islam, (28%). Animism a belief that purports that nature is pregnant with the spirit has since time immemorial aligned itself with the religious beliefs of an African. Although statisticians claim that it now accounts only for 7% of Africa's population, it is so pervasive that people take it with them as they join other religions. One can just see how the multiplicities of "prophetic" movements with dubious theological concoction have sway on Africa's populations. Additionally, animism is the founding spirituality of all UPGs of Africa. Other religions such as Hinduism, Baha'i, and Judaism, account for the remaining 6 % of Africa's population.

As already intimated, the solution to Africa's "backwardness" and "slowness" is not easy to postulate: for many "solutions" have already been tried to no avail. Could the answer be though in a sum total of various suggested solutions? Whatever the solution, part of that answer is Africa's acceptance of what it is as derived through self-discovery and the mastery of owning its destiny. Africans must realize their nature and essence. They are created in the image of God just like any other peoples. Because all peoples are created in the *image of God*, then they are equal and should be free. Self-discovery begins in learning to accept our identity and image

³⁷A major part of this section is gleaned from Lessons 2 of Enson Lwesya, *Emerging Leadership Issues in Africa: Doctoral Study Guide*. Lome, Togo: Pan-Africa Theological Seminary, 2009.

³⁸Ibid, 15.

³⁹Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House 1985), 45.

Ethnicity, Teams and Collaboratives

Africa is so rich in people diversity. Unfortunately, Africa's diversity has sometimes been its weakness instead of its strength. Tribalism, regionalism, nepotism rocks all forms of societies. The difficulties of developing a united front of missions from among national churches and across Africa lies in part to the challenges created by Africa's ethnocentrism. Most initiatives at the continent level dismally fail because of the propensity to protect nationhood or sovereignty. The answer to the divisive nature of tribalism is found in a clear articulation of the need to working in teams, or collaboratives. This approach does two things: First, it opens up individuals to the understanding of the intrapersonal differences essential for team building. Second, it discusses approaches that help people develop work teams, collaboratives, and organizations despite the evident and visible differences such as tribalism. AG-Africa continues to move slowly in developing a multi-national collaborative for mission because national churches are extremely introverted, caring less what happens beyond the geopolitical boundaries in the guise of sovereignty. Unfortunately, national leaders fail to see the benefit of collaborating across the continent.⁴⁰

Team work is contingent on the collective use of individual strengths, and giftedness is the essence of teamwork and leadership. Inversely individual brilliance remains meaningful when anchored in collective efforts of humanity. Biblical passages dealing with the giftedness of every believer are normally set within the analogous context of the human body with different functional parts. Each member of the body is essential, significant and serves a particular function. These texts (1 Cor. 12: 12-27; Rom. 12: 3-6; Eph. 4: 7-16) reveal that function of each part is for the common good of the whole body. The success of team leadership lies in this fact: leadership is for benefit of community.⁴¹ The same philosophy must be applied on the continental level where national churches bring specific strengths for continent-wide missions.

Team work (collaborative) and leadership are not only essential to a community (organizations) but it is also the essence of exponential growth for all forms of institutions (effect, impact or results). Organizations that perfect working and leading by teams—emphasising and appreciating the role and giftedness of each member—usually receive the best for their intervention (work, ministry & missions). In this case, African church leaders must develop a “beyond-mindset”, by not only thinking for missions that lies within the geo-political boundaries of their nations. They have to start collaboratives, develop links, or networks for missions with leaders from other nations.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., 15-16. Teams or collaboratives do not just happen; there is a particular and distinct process of team development. One important observation of team development is that the team's cohesion and effectiveness tend to grow worse before they reach peak performance levels. And indeed, the previous AG-Africa collaboratives for missions have not worked well. Could it be that a lot of aspects needed for team development have not been considered? As teams develop, they experience growing pains. However, many levels are in the team development cycle, effective teams reveal specific characteristics. Patrick Lenciano explains that functioning teams are vibrant and active. Members of such teams (1) trust each other; (2) give attention to agreed upon results; (3) are not afraid of conflict that arise among them; (4) they are passionate and committed to the mission and vision of their organizations; and finally (5) they are accountable for their individual behaviour, results and direction of the organization. Strong and well-performing teams are grounded on the premise that teams work well when the qualifications, responsibilities and expectations of members are well articulated.

Although teams seem to naturally occur in communities, they do not develop automatically. Africa wrestles with team development in its various communities. First, Africa is diverse with thousands different ethnic groups and peoples. This diversity, though a great ingredient for effective teams poses a challenge at the beginning of the creation of teams. Second, the cultural-philosophical understanding of tribes tends to unravel the desire to develop multi-cultural teams at workplaces. Tribalism—the negative inward-looking bigotry practiced by tribes men continues to destroy the essence of building teams. This cancer tends to grow even in contexts that should not sustain them such as the church.⁴³ Unfortunately, sometimes leaders who should know that the church is a community of people from all tribes, languages, peoples still stumble over the issues of ethnicity. However big the challenges of developing a missionary movement are, one giant solution is embedded in the development of leaders with a world vision. The success of collaborative leadership lies in this fact: leadership is for the benefit of community. And in this case, it is for the benefit of the Church, an organization existing for the purpose of “seeking and saving that which is lost” (Luke 19:10).

Missional Organizations of AG-Africa

The missional involvement of AG-Africa is slowly growing stronger. Admittedly, the steps are too slow and at times they seem retrogressive. Over the last twenty years various national churches and regions of AG-Africa have attempted to initiate various missional organizations and projects. Assemblies of God National churches from West Africa such as Nigeria Assemblies of God sent missionaries into Cameron, Niger, etc; Burkina Faso sent missionaries into Ivory Coast and Guinea Bissau. Countries from other regions equally started. Assemblies of God national churches from Malawi, Kenya and Tanzania also sent missionaries.⁴⁴ Understandably, all these attempts are on national levels. The following initiatives were started with the aim of inspiring, sensitizing and coordinating the work of missions across the continent.

Eleventh Hour Institute

In 1997 during the East Africa Leadership II meeting a call for the formation of a mobile missions school was made.⁴⁵ It was to be a vehicle to raise awareness of mission and inspire the church’s involvement in spreading the gospel to all nations. The first Eleventh Hour Institute (EHI) session was held in Lilongwe, Malawi with 165 leaders from East Africa in attendance. From there on, the AAGA Executive requested that the EHI should become a continent wide initiative much more than for one region (EAST Africa). With a strong partnership with Africa’s Hope, the EHI phenomenon was transported to many countries. For ten years, the EHI went to

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Originally, the East Africa countries formed the Regional Missions Board as a Mobilization and Sending agency for the countries. And through this outfit, even though it never worked well, the church sent missionaries from Malawi (three families), Kenya (one family) and from Tanzania (two families)

⁴⁵Lazarus Chakwera called for the formation of a Mobile mission institute when he challenged the Leaders of East Africa preaching from the parable of the Eleventh Hour laborers (Mathew 20). The following year, he and John York assembled a curriculum whose lessons were written by many practitioners of missions. In fact, Lazarus Chakwera used the EHI concept was central to the design of his doctoral project.

more than 15 nations of Africa encouraging the national churches to institute organizations for missions.

On major criticism, the slowness of the missional growth in the AG-Africa stems from the outstanding success of the EHI. The passion exhibited in the various sessions of EHI across the continent, the creation of many national missional departments in various national churches created a great hope for a mass movement in the mobilization and sending of missionaries. But somehow, many of those who have watched the progress of the EHI, they think its impact has not been commensurate with the missionaries sent out! Admittedly, the criticism is obvious; yet it is misplaced. A correct evaluation of any intervention, organization or project begins with a clear understanding of its original purpose. The EHI was never meant to mobilize and send missionaries; its aim was to raise awareness and sensitize the Church (es) to become involved in missions. It is impossible to create a continent-wide sending agency with the present configuration of AAGA, which is merely a loose association of national churches. Part of the EHI sessions always included strategy sessions that led the national churches develop missional goals including the creation of missional departments in countries. Therefore, it is the national churches mission departments that should be developing the strategy for mobilizing and sending missionaries to different nations. Trying to evaluate the EHI with a mobilization and sending motif shows a lack of understanding of its purpose and giving it a new and impossible task.

World Mission Commission

The WMC for AAGA was provisionally instituted in January 2000 during the AAGA Executive and later ratified by the Indianapolis AAGA General Assembly in August of the same year.⁴⁶ It was an expressed desire of many leaders both from AG-Africa and AG-America that the impact of the Decade of Harvest needed proper channeling towards the formation of a powerful missional movement from Africa. Hence there was a call for the creation of an organization to coordinate the missionary activity under the care of the AAGA Executives. The WMC was created to fulfill three main purposes. First, it was to work towards prioritizing efforts to reach unreached peoples by the national churches of Africa. This was to include conducting deliberate research into the location and nature of all of Africa's unreached peoples, wherever they may be found; sourcing accurate and useful statistics and information on unreached peoples to the national church mission's agencies across Africa; and also allocating primary mission's responsibility for specific unreached peoples to those national churches interested.

Second, the WMC was to provide coordination of existing and new missionary endeavors across the continent. As a service to the national churches of Africa the WMC was to, a) maintain a data base of current missionary endeavors being actively pursued across the continent as well as those missionary endeavors projected for future implementation; b) provide an official listing of all Assemblies of God missionaries representing Assemblies of God national churches, including their place of assignment, ministry activity, and length of service and c) serve as a forum for discussion, strategic planning, decision-making and conflict resolution concerning the deployment of national church missionary personnel across the continent.

⁴⁶Don Tucker (AAGA Secretary), John York (ATTS Director) and John Ikoni (Nigeria Secretary) sponsored a letter that called for the formation of the World Missions Commission (December 1, 1999). The sponsors of the Resolution asked for a provisional creation of the Commission and the appointment of its Chairman even before a full discussion by the General Assembly. Therefore, the resolution asked that the WMC be set by January 2000 and later ratified in a General Assembly to be held later in August of that year (Indianapolis).

Third, the WMC was to encourage the establishment and function of regional missions departments, along the geographical divisions of the official AAGA regions (a total of five at this time) with the following intentions: a) The ongoing implementation of the “Eleventh Hour Institute” concept of mission training in each region of the continent, and in individual countries requesting the same, in close collaboration with ATTS⁴⁷ as the leading agency in this function. At that time the Resolution called for a timetable for implementation of the EHI program was to established as a first priority of the WMC and b) the development of an AAGA Research effort, focused upon world missions efforts, but not limited to that function.⁴⁸

Unfortunately, the WMC did not adequately fulfill its purpose in the first ten years of its existence. Not one of its three major purposes received adequate attention. There was virtually no movement in any of its emphasis except for a missions meeting held in Burkina Faso in 2005.⁴⁹ However, in the 2010 AAGA General Assembly held in South Africa the leaders rekindled a new zeal for the operations and performance of the WMC. The WMC leaders resolved to improve and started to facilitate meetings in three year cycles; while at the same time they resolved to find means for data collection and information storage of missions-related issue. First, the WMC conducts Pentecostal Missional Consultations for missiologists and reflective practitioners. During these consultations involve a presentation of well written papers which are later published. Second, the following year the meetings are held by regional leaders within the configuration of the regions. Third, the WMC organizes a triennial congress which brings all national leaders for a time of envisioning for missions. It is hoped that the rest of the purposes of the WMC will be engaged in the near future.

Acts in Africa Initiative

The Acts in Africa Initiative (AIA), a ministry commissioned by the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance and the Assemblies of God World Missions, USA (Africa Office), exists to help inspire a new Pentecostal awakening in the Africa Assemblies of God resulting in the greatest evangelistic and missionary advance in the history of the continent. As a service agency, AIA aims to point the various working partners towards the importance of spirit-empowered missions. AG-Africa statistics are encouraging: The Assemblies of God in Africa is experiencing exponential growth with about 16 million constituents meeting in more than 50 thousand churches in 50 countries in sub-Sahara Africa and the Indian Ocean Basin. This is up from 2.1 million constituents and 12 thousand churches in 1990. However, another form of statistics shows that only 19% of AG-Africa 16 million strong memberships are baptized in the Holy Spirit. AIA sees itself as a service arm helping national church leaders of AG-Africa to assume as part of their job description of intentionally leading their constituents to understand and

⁴⁷ATTS is an acronym for Africa Theological Training Service also known as Africa’s Hope. This was started in the early 1990s at the beginning of the Decade of Harvest strategy to facilitate, coordinate and encourage the efficiency of Theological Training in AG-Africa. Dr. John York, a visionary and intense missiologist set it up and saw its great expansion as it became a great and influential organization within the General Council of Assemblies of God.

⁴⁸For the Letter that Sponsored WMC Resolution, the WMC Resolution and the WMC Constitution see the Denny Miller & Enson Lwesya (editors) *Globalizing Pentecostal Missions in Africa* (Springfield, MO: AIA Publications, 2011), 185-192.

⁴⁹The WMC in its 2011 Executive Leadership meeting held Brackenhurst concluded that lack of commitment by the leaders and inadequate financial resources for its operations contributed to the dismal failure of the WMC.

experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The leaders of AIA and AAGA are consumed with the understanding that only a revival will shift these figures upward, without which AG-Africa cannot become a missional organization filled and led by the Holy Spirit⁵⁰.

Maturing a Missions Organization

Despite the continued great missionary inspirational preaching reverberating in most of AG-Africa national churches, the constituent missions organizations have not proportionally grown in maturity. There is slow growth; and the fact remains that despite phenomenal numerical growth of AG-Africa in the last twenty years, most of its national churches do not have mature missions departments. This picture reveals the reality that missions maturity is never an issue of instantaneous miracles. Pedrozo and Walz who have worked with the Argentina Assemblies of the God missions department and seen it grow, categorically state that a missions department takes time to mature. They further highlight important missional principles. First, everything that is worth something takes time to grow or create. On the way to missional maturity, leaders of such organizations make mistakes, confront and win battles, and gain experiences impossible to get from books or theory. Second, in order to achieve maturity a missions department must have the right leaders in place. Many times, a country is ripe for blessing, but the right leader has not been formed, or is not willing serve, or has not been selected to take on the challenge. As well, a real challenge for most of our sending-South nations is that they do not have a missions leaders with missionary experience.⁵¹

The biggest challenge AG-Africa national churches face is lack of mature missions departments. Unfortunately, some still do not have the departments at all. Just like any growing organizations, missions departments go through organizational growth cycles, albeit unique to themselves.⁵² Pedrozo and Walz recognize five critical stages of growth for missional maturity:

⁵⁰Acts in Africa Initiative, an AAGA affiliate champions the Decade of Pentecost, a grand strategy influencing national churches to emphasize the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is hoped that 10 million new converts will be reached through intentional spirit-empowered efforts.

⁵¹Antonio Pedrozo and Walz, "Missional Mentoring: How National Churches with Strong and Effective Missions Outreaches Can Mentor Those Without?" in *Globalizing Pentecostal Missions*, edited by Miller and Enson Lwesya (Springfield, MO: AIA Publications, 2011), 91.

⁵²Pedrozo and Walz identify ten (10) characteristics of maturing Missional agencies worth noting. They include 1. *Long-term missionaries*. A mature missions sending department will have sent long-term missionaries outside of its country who speak the languages of the people they are working with. They will have overcome the barriers of time (short-term only missionaries), distance (just going to near-by nations), language (speaking only the language of the sending country) and religion (reaching people within the same or similar religious context). Each barrier requires a greater effort than the previous. 2. *Income*. Their income is constantly growing, and has possibly even surpassed the income of the general headquarters. You know that you have a mature missions vision when this condition no longer bothers church leaders nor causes jealousy among them. 3. *Pastoral care*. The department provides pastoral care to the missionaries in the field. The missionaries are understood and ministered to. This can also be done by local churches. A missions agency should never be seen to take the place of the local church in loving and caring for missionaries on the field. 4. *Executive director*. They have full-time administrative personal with one or more of the executive team dedicated full-time to missions. If the executive director is married to both his church and to the full-time job of leading the missions department, he will be severely limited in his ability to move the work forward. 5. *Good reputation*. The missions department has a good image and a positive reputation when it comes to the administration of financial resources. Because those administering the finances are transparent in their use of money, there are no legitimate questions about their integrity. 6. *Savings*. The department is not living day by day but has savings in the bank which will allow it to respond effectively to emergencies. 7. *Decision-making team*. The

Pioneer stage where the growth is very slow; *Battle stage* embedded with challenges that scares the leadership; *Growth Stage* fruit and permanence seen by the Christians in a national church; *Consolidation Stage* here a solid structure is organized in anticipation of future growth, and finally; *Respect Stage* where the agency and its leadership has earned a good testimony and name in the national church.⁵³

Leadership and Missions in AG-Africa

Pedrozo and Walz reveal the critical place of strong leadership apart from stable structures for the development of the missional vision in a national church.⁵⁴ The two—strong leaders and stable structures—are symbiotically related. However, the fact still stands that mature and visionary leaders are key to functioning, serious, and strong sending structures. Unfortunately, the Indigenous Philosophy, a hallmark of Assemblies of God theological foundations, creates its own dark shadows. The desire to make local and national churches self-sustaining in every way possible creates an aggressive and independent culture persuading such communities to have blinkers that do not allow them to see anything beyond their boundaries. Unless, leaders develop a world vision, all they see are the natural and convenient geo-political boundaries.

Therefore, it is essential that ministers are intentionally trained and equipped with leadership skills. Based on the curriculums in most ministerial formation training systems of Africa, it is evident that they are geared towards producing pastors (preachers) and not leaders. Thus, the majority of the ministers genuinely care for the flock but they don't really lead. By and large, the majority of AG-Africa local church ministers need radical re-training as leaders to lead the church in the expansion of the Kingdom of God beyond geo-political boundaries and across various forms of cultural barriers. Not only must the pastor be seen as a missional leader, he (she) must also be equipped to raise up local missions lay leaders. As leader of the church, the pastor is the inspirer and must be willing to instill the missionary vision into the church.⁵⁵

Second, national church leaders from AG-Africa churches must learn to lead their constituents to look beyond their sovereign geo-political boundaries. The Church as a missionary people of God views the nations without the gospel as its reason for existence. However, just like in the case of local church ministers, the indigenous philosophy “erroneously” persuades the national leaders to focus on the development of the national church functions while underplaying the need to look beyond geo-political boundaries. If the Church's purpose is to seek and serve

responsibility of making decisions does not fall on one person only, but there is a team that constantly decides, executes, and evaluates decisions. 8. *English competency*. To ensure that international communication is not limited there is one or more persons in the team who speak English. 9. *Missionary training*. There are training programs to prepare and orient future missionary candidates to the work. 10. *Promotion*. There are programs to motivate and mobilize the churches in all areas, including children, youth, intercessory prayer, promotion, and information sharing to the local churches. Page 91-92

⁵³Pedrozo and Walz, 92.

⁵⁴Antonio Pedrozo and Walz, “Missional Mentoring: How National Churches with Strong and Effective Missions Outreaches Can Mentor Those Without?” in *Globalizing Pentecostal Missions*, edited by Denzil Miller and Enson Lwesya (Springfield, MO: AIA Publications, 2011), 115.

⁵⁵Pedrozo and Walz, 106.

that which is lost, then national church leaders must deliberately go beyond a conserving mentality and embrace a sending theology and initiate structures for the same. Not only will a sending vision require leadership on a local level, including both pastors and lay leaders, it will also require committed leadership on a national level.⁵⁶

Pedrozo and Walz conclude, and rightly so, that developing a “sending vision” rests on the development of the leadership capacity within a community. They observe that many times a country is ripe for harvest but the right leader has not been formed, or is not willing, or has not been selected to take up the challenge.⁵⁷ The formation and operationalization of the missions department is equally a leadership issue. Leaders facilitate the creating, casting, and communication of missions’ vision. Leaders not only initiate the process; they maintain the momentum. The inspirational tone of the various Eleventh Hour Institutes conducted across Africa to sensitize and raise missional awareness is dampened by leaders who fail to maintain the process. One aspect of maintaining momentum is efficiency in managing the processes and systems of a “sending vision.” This is done by assuring the community of givers of financial accountability and ensuring the sent missionaries of continued support. Leaders of effective missionary sending systems are essential to Africa’s move into full participation in the *missio Dei*.⁵⁸

Third, on the larger scale of nations and continent, AG-Africa desperately needs to demonstrate leadership in envisioning missions and developing a theology of collaboration. Unlike the New Pentecostals who assume an absence of *their* national churches in recipient nations and aggressively send missionaries to open such, there is a form of an Assemblies of God Church in most African nations. Therefore, when AG-Africa missionaries go to other countries they invariably go to places where there is a national church; this necessitates collaboration from both the sending and receiving communities. Missionaries from Assemblies of God do not go to other countries to plant churches that are controlled from the mother church headquarters; they plant indigenous movements, with the capacity to have nationals lead by themselves. Although this is counter-intuitive to a missionary pioneering ethic, it is intensely New Testament philosophy and practice. It has great benefits for it anchors the work in the hearts and hands of the nationals who above all else are contextually suited to lead the church.

The WMC is strategically set to drive continent-wide collaboration for missions. There are two obstacles, however, against the development of this collaboration. First, most national churches lack vision for missions that is cross-cultural and across geo-political boundaries. WMC cannot coordinate work that does not exist. Its existence is meaningful when many national churches want to go to the other nations to speak the word of Christ. Second, the WMC must be capacitated with resources to do its job effectively. The logical way to mobilize resources is from its constituents. However, the members who are intensely independent due to the DNA of the AAGA philosophy as a non-binding legal association do not see it as a necessity.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., 114.

⁵⁸Enson Lwesya, “Missional Mentoring: a Response” in *Globalizing Pentecostal Missions in Africa*, edited by Denzil Miller and Enson Lwesya (Springfield, MO: AIA Publications, 2011), 114.

Confluence

Although it is difficult to evaluate a movement with diverse characteristics as the missions enterprise of AG-Africa, it is still essential that a form of yardstick is followed to help those working within it to find ways of gauging their performances. As a confluence of the tributaries of ideas from the foregone discussions, one thing is clear: AG-Africa is called to follow the New Testament missions philosophy and methods in attempting to become a church that pursues Jesus’ goal of “seeking and saving that which is lost” (Luke 19:10). Yet, it is equally abundantly clear that what we call New Testament missions methods are most of times sanitized by contextual practices of other global church communities. AG-Africa, lives under the shadow of AG-America and unwittingly is bewitched by its missionary methods. Like father, like son; AG-Africa apes the father (AG-America) in how it does missions. However, the greatest difficult is that AG-Africa has inherent contextual challenges of diversity, for the national churches are not one continent-wide Church. Due to a zillion differences of nations, tribes and peoples, AG-Africa is not one monolithic community, and therefore, its constituents do not see things and act the same way.

Compounding the situation is attempting to follow very challenging AG-America’s missionary philosophy and practices. Over the last hundred years, the American church has generated specific biblical conclusions as regards to cross-cultural missions and unreached people groups (UPGs). The reality however is that each church community must self-theologize and contextualize the biblical antecedents while at the same time being cognizant of the historical precedents from other global church communities. It should be understood antecedents do not always fashion the same philosophies and practices for all contexts. This is what makes practicing theology challenging. It tends to spawn different contextual practices. To highlight this challenge, David Bosch, in his book *Transforming Mission*, points out that from the very beginning there have been differing theologies of mission and that “there are no immutable and objectively correct ‘laws of mission’ to which exegesis of Scripture give us access and which provide us with blueprints we can apply in every situation”⁵⁹ It is abundantly clear then, that a lot of missions philosophies on crossing-culture are contextual applications despite being framed as biblical dictates by its proponents. Therefore, I suggest that Africa “be allowed” to practice missionary methods that are “doable” yet biblically acceptable. How do we do this? One way is to adopt more flexible missionary categories that are relevant to the context. The AG-Latin America categories are a wonderful stage to begin from.⁶⁰ Table 1 below is self explanatory:

MISSIONARY CATEGORIES						
#	CATEGOR Y TYPE	ECONOMIC RELATIONS HIP	TIME ON THE FIELD	TIME OF DEPUTATION WHEN HOME	REQUIREM ENTS OF SCHOOL OF MISSIONS	OBSERVATIONS

⁵⁹David Bosch, page 8.

⁶⁰Pedrozo and Walz, 182.

1	Fully Appointed	Fully supported from sending country	3 years, 4 years possible upon request	6-12Months	Required during deputation	
2	Missionary in Training	Fully supported from sending country	3 years	6-12 Months	Required during deputation	First term: under supervision of a mentor. After: promoted to fully appointed
3	SHORT TERM	Fully supported from sending country	1 year, renewable for a 2nd year	6 months	Required before leaving	Must be under the supervision of a missionary
4	Missionary Pastor	Support can be shared by the local church they pastor	5 years and then renewable	Flexible according to need and situation	Required once every five years	Must be submissive to Sending Church Missions Leaders and not just to receiving country
5	Ministerial Support	Support can be shared by the local church they pastor	5 years and then renewable	Flexible according to need and situation	Required once every five years	Must be in full time ministry without secular employment
6	BIVOCATIONAL	Receives most of their support from work	5 years and then renewable	Flexible according to need and situation	Required once every five years	Though they do not depend on sending country, they can receive offerings
7	ETHNIC GROUPS IN COUNTRY	Can receive support from churches	Ongoing as need requires	Flexible according to need and situation	Required once every five years	Is within the country but to another culture/ethnic group

Table 1: Missionary Categories

Apart from the challenges of organizing a mission sending structure within the national church, the challenging issue is resource mobilization and finances being the core aspect. Not every national church within the AG-Africa boasts of financial stability, let alone financial independence within their missions departments. Because of this perennial financial challenges and lack of proper organization in Missions departments, categories 3-6 are the likely and flexible ways of sending missionaries from AG-Africa. But the challenge is that there is still stigma against these categories from both within AG-Africa and some “missionaries from AG-America.

Each of the missionary categories identified above as most likely for AG-Africa faces unique challenges. Category 3 (Short Term) is challenged by people lack of infrastructure to raise the necessary funds. And because of the scarcity of employment, people are afraid to resign from a job for a year. It is likely that on their return from the one-year missionary work they may not find a job. Categories 4-5 are the most flexible of the four likely categories for AG-Africa. In these two categories, the missionary is permitted to receive financial support from the church they plant within a mission field. It is easier for an experienced and effective minister to consider planting a church in a metropolis of another African Country. Category 6 is the both innovative yet and biblical. Paul used it extensively. But it still carries a lot of stigma. For instance,

significant leaders from the Malawi Church (some even in the Missions department) have not come to a place of accepting their own successful tent-making missionaries. Why? Because to most AG-Africa leaders only category 1-2 are missionaries. The rest of the categories are aberration of the truth.

CONCLUSION

Along with the church worldwide, the Africa AG shares the awesome responsibility of taking the message of Christ every nation, tongue, tribe, and people on the face of the earth. The AG missionary movement in Africa must, therefore, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, employ every strategic means possible to accomplish that end. In doing so, it must prayerfully and humbly reflect on the biblical model as to how it will approach the task. And it must align itself with what the Spirit is doing in the world today. Like Jesus, the church must learn to do only what it sees the Father doing (cf. John 5: 19). This will call for courage in order to resist outside pressures and to boldly follow the Lord for the harvest. May the Africa AG fully do its part in fulfilling Christ's command to take the gospel to all nations before He comes again—when “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11: 15).

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