

Against All Hope:
Hope for Africa

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By
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with Scott Allen
and the African Working Group
of Samaritan Strategy Africa



Against All Hope: Hope for Africa
By Darrow L. Miller with Scott Allen and the Africa Working Group (SSA)
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Foreword

Several initiatives are now focusing on the development of Africa—The Africa Union, The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and lately the Commission for Africa led by the government of the United Kingdom. All these could be stillborn unless the worldview of Africans is identified, acknowledged and addressed. Several books in the past have served to provoke the Church to play its role. I recall Professor Kinoti’s “Hope for Africa: And What the Christian Can Do” and Dr. Adeyemo’s “Is Africa Cursed?” There is a need to go beyond diagnosis and move towards prognosis. A vital worldview change must lay the foundation of any lasting political and economic solutions.

Most of the world is acquainted with only bad news coming from Africa. Others have given up hope for the continent. This book demonstrates how, beginning in small ways, change is happening. Transformation is taking root and spreading throughout the continent. This change is from the inside-out, and from the grass-roots up. Though external factors such as colonialism, the slave trade and now global trade imbalances have taken their toll on Africa, the biggest obstacles to Africa are internal. When I first encountered this message it resonated with me as a message whose time has come. Having been involved with a discipleship movement for about 20 years I was convinced that there must be more to being a Christian than waiting to go to heaven. The Good news of the Gospel must begin with personal transformation in response to Jesus Christ as Lord of one’s life. But Jesus Christ is more than that, he is not just Lord of our lives but Lord of the universe. It is imperative, therefore, that those who belong to Him should live as He did - seeking to advance the Kingdom of God, which is His rule and authority in every sphere of personal and public life. This is Good News for Africa.

In the many years that the Church has been present in Africa, personal piety has often been valued over social responsibility. Discipleship and development have often been divorced or compartmentalized—often with polarization to one extreme or the other. Development projects are not easily identified with spiritual impact. The goal of the Great commission is to disciple the nations. The key to this happening is people who are obedient to God—true disciples. The focus of the goal remains on the nations and communities that reflect the glory of God in every area. The presence of Christians in any community should have the effect of salt and light, a blessing to the nations.

Several of us have recognized that alone, we don’t have the ability to saturate Africa with this vital message, but together we can achieve more. The “Africa Working Group” was born as a team of trainers envisioning political, business and Church leaders. Today, over 300 churches in 15 countries and over 3000 church leaders have witnessed the beginning of transformation their communities. As we go into new countries, we meet more people resonating with this message. Against all hope, there is hope for Africa. I invite you to join us in this refreshing work that God is doing among His people.

*Dennis Tongoi
Coordinator
African Working Group/ Samaritan Strategy*

Introduction

Africa: a pleasant continent of promise.¹

Imagine the promise of this continent. Envision your community, your city, or your nation if the Church were:

- embodied in local congregations within walking distance of every person,
- meeting the physical, spiritual, and social needs of the community, and
- functioning intentionally from the biblical worldview, bringing truth to bear in all areas of community life: the family, enterprise, politics, justice, arts, education, communication, science and technology, the environment and agriculture.

Picture a place where such congregations discipled all who responded to the Gospel to obey everything that Christ commanded. Consider a place where Christ is *incarnate* in and through His Church, in such a way that He

- heals the community's deepest wounds,
- redeems their cultures,
- restores their God-given dignity, and
- gives them a hope and a destiny.

Dream of a place where Christ is Lord of life. Where there is:

- individual righteousness
- economic sufficiency for all,
- lasting social peace, and
- justice—even for the poorest of the poor.²

Hold tightly to this picture in your mind, for it is nothing less than the magnificent vision of the coming Kingdom of God. This is the passion of our Saviour's heart. Making it a reality is what Christ lived for, died for, and lives for today. This is the great hope for Africa!

Is Africa Cursed?

Is Africa cursed? Many have asked this question. Many Africans experience a profound sense of hopelessness and despair. It hangs like a dark cloud over the potential of the peoples and nations of this continent. It is manifest in mind-numbing poverty, injustice, corruption, bloodshed, tribalism, broken families, and in the pandemic that is known as AIDS. These external manifestations of despair mirror the internal hopelessness that marks the mindset of the people. The repeated internal messages are: *We are poor and there is nothing we can do about it.* Things have always been this way. *Things will never change.*

The outside world all-too-often reinforces this tragic mindset. Africa was described by its European colonizers as the "dark continent." Today, some call it "a black hole." If you pour aid money in, it disappears.

Is Africa cursed?

Your answer to this question will depend on your worldview.

Those who hold a biblical worldview will see the nations of Africa as no more blessed or cursed than any other nation. God extends His grace to all peoples. “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Mt. 5:45). Indeed, we see tremendous evidence of God’s “common grace” in Africa. Despair is overshadowed, if only for brief moments, by bursts of laughter—by dancing, colors, textures and music which are so rich—so uniquely African.

God created the universe with a defined order. He established physical laws to govern the natural universe. There are moral laws which establish the foundations for personal godliness and corporate justice. Metaphysical laws define the bounds of reality. Aesthetic laws establish the realm of beauty. As nations understand and follow God’s ordinances, blessing is a *natural* consequence. When nations consciously or unconsciously break God’s ordinances, their people will experience brokenness. We find this principle revealed in Deuteronomy 30:15-19:

See, I set before you today *life and prosperity, death and destruction*. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you *life and death, blessings and curses*. *Now choose life*, so that you and your children may live (Deut. 30:15-19, author’s italics added).

This principle applies not only to ancient Israel, but to all nations in all times. His laws create the foundations for life, freedom, justice and social peace. When they are followed, blessings naturally follow. When they are disobeyed, people experience the negative consequences. How can this curse be lifted? When *God’s people*—not the nation as a whole—humble themselves and pray:

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Ch. 7:14).

The Church is God’s key agent in social and cultural transformation. It has the crucial responsibility of leading its nation in mourning for their sin. When they do, God promises to hear their cry and heal their land. Today, God is stirring within the hearts of believers across Africa. A great cry is beginning to rise up to the throne of grace. Healing is coming! In the midst of her hopelessness and despair, a new dawn of hope is rising. Against all hope, there *is* hope for Africa—a hope discovered in the pages of Scripture and in the biblical worldview that flows from it. Truly, if the nations of Africa were operating on the basis of the biblical worldview in all areas of life and society, they would be leading the world.

In the pages that follow we will examine how God has blessed the continent of Africa. Then we will turn to a paradox: Why, if Africa is the wealthiest continent on the face of the earth in terms of her natural resources, is she is also the most impoverished? What lies at the root of this quandary? Finally, we will explore the promises of God contained in His Word, upon which the healing and transformation of Africa depend. We pray that you will gain fresh insight and hope in what follows.

Africa is Blessed!

Despite its brokenness and despair, Africa is a continent of unimaginable abundance. More than any other land mass in the world, Africa is distinctly blessed. In this section, we'll look at the blessings of Africa in four areas: (1) her natural resources, (2) her historical contribution in God's unfolding redemptive plan, (3) the richness of her people, and (4) the incredible growth of the Church across the continent during the last century.

Natural Resources

Would you believe...? Before reading further, ponder the implications of this graphic. What does it reveal about the wealth of the African continent? Write your thoughts in the reflection box below.

Comparison of Africa's Land Space



Reflections:

Africa is the second largest continent on earth—second only to Asia. Her land mass covers 30,212,000 square kilometers, which is 22.3% of the world’s total land area.³ The Sahara Desert alone, home to seven African nations, represents approximately 6% of earth’s total land area.⁴ Africa is blessed in its sheer size. It is larger than the combined land masses of China, India, Western Europe, Argentina, New Zealand and the continental United States.⁵

Africa is home to over 874 million people, or about 14% of the world population. Think about this for a moment. 14% of the world’s population lives on more than 22% of its total land area. The combined population of China, India, Europe, Argentina, New Zealand and the United States is approximately 3.3 billion people or 54% of the world population⁶. If this other 54% of the world’s population inhabit land that is equal to the land mass of Africa, what does that tell you about the African continent? Write your thoughts down in the reflection box below.

Reflections:

Africa is the *world’s richest continent* in terms of natural resources. Chika Onyeani, writing in the African Sun Times states, “Africa continues to be demonized as the poorest continent in the world, yet it is the richest continent in terms of natural resources.”⁷ Similarly Dr. Walter Williams, Professor of Economics at George Mason University, has written: “In terms of natural resources, Africa is the *world’s richest continent* [author’s italics].”⁸

Agriculture

It has been said that Zambia, Zimbabwe, and The Democratic Republic of Congo have the agricultural potential to feed the entire continent. Farming, herding, ranching and commercial crops mark the African landscape. Africa has the ability to not only feed her own people, but to be an exporter of food to other nations. She has the potential to become one of the breadbaskets of the world. And yet this vast potential goes untapped. Millions of acres of untilled farmland attest to the untapped potential of the continent.⁹

Water

Africa is home to some of the greatest rivers in the world—The Nile, Congo, Niger, and Zambezi to name a few. The Nile, the longest river in the world¹⁰, has a basin that covers 10% of the continent. Some call it the umbilical cord of the continent. While some countries suffer disadvantages from being landlocked, a majority of African nations have access to oceans. According to Dr. Adeyemo Tokunboh, “If Africa could dam major rivers, there would be enough water to plant crops in the worst drought stricken areas.”¹¹

Africa's Major Rivers and Lakes



Minerals

Deposits of most of the world's known minerals exist in Africa—often in significant quantities. Many African nations are leading suppliers of particular minerals to world markets.

The Democratic Republic of Congo contains 90% of the world's cobalt, and 85% of its platinum. Sierra Leone has the world's largest supply of titanium¹². African mines produce most of the world's diamonds,¹³ half of the world's gold, and a fifth of the world's copper.¹⁴ The largest known repository of Columbite-tantalite, used in the manufacture of circuit boards for such modern electronics as pagers, cellular telephones and laptop computers, is found in the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹⁵ Similarly, the Congo has the largest supply of radium used in the treatment of cancer.¹⁶

Energy

Africa has a virtually unlimited energy potential. She has 40% of the world's hydro electric potential¹⁷ and is home to 7% of the world's proven oil reserves—more than North America, Europe, Russia and the Asia-Pacific region combined.¹⁸ Libya, Nigeria and Angola are among the world's top ten oil producers. The continent has 7% of the world's proven natural gas reserves and 6% of the world's coal reserves.¹⁹ Concerning

the solar potential of Africa, Dr. Adeyemo writes, “The Sahara Desert alone covers a solar energy field area of about 9,065,000 kilometers, which [holds the potential to produce] more than Africa’s [energy] needs for all her domestic electrical appliances.”²⁰

Natural Laws

Natural laws are ordinances that God embedded into the structure of the cosmos as a means of governing the physical universe, like the law of gravity. We gain insight into these laws in Genesis 1:14-18:

And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:14-18).

God gave men and women the privilege and responsibility of serving as His Vice Regents—of governing in His stead (Gen. 1:26-28). These inbuilt natural laws aid man in developing creation. As we discover these laws through science, we can tap their potential in the creation of tools and other technical devices as we exercise dominion over creation. These natural laws should be considered a resource that Africans can leverage in the development of their nations.

Natural Beauty

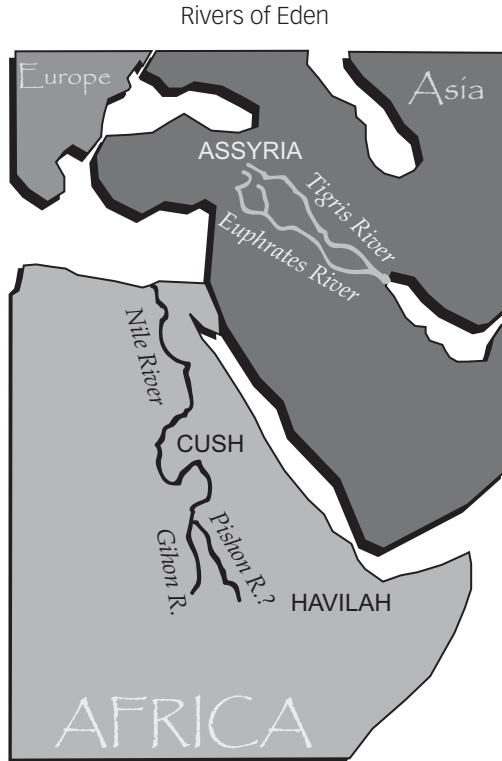
From the stark deserts in the north, to the verdant tropical forests in the south, to the vast diversity of plant and animal life, and the beautiful coastline, Africa is a place of immense natural beauty. Picture the endless horizon of the wildebeest migration or the dazzling underwater universe of tropical coral reefs in the Indian Ocean. The natural beauty of Africa testifies to the glory of the Creator and the magnificent blessing He has given to Africa. If Africa were more socially peaceful and less impoverished, millions of tourists from around the world would flock to her shores to enjoy her unique beauty.

A Rich Heritage

It was the Middle East and Africa that served as the birthplace and early homeland of the Judeo-Christian faith—not Europe or North America. Let’s examine some of the pivotal references to Africa found in the Scriptures. The Garden of Eden is identified by four rivers:

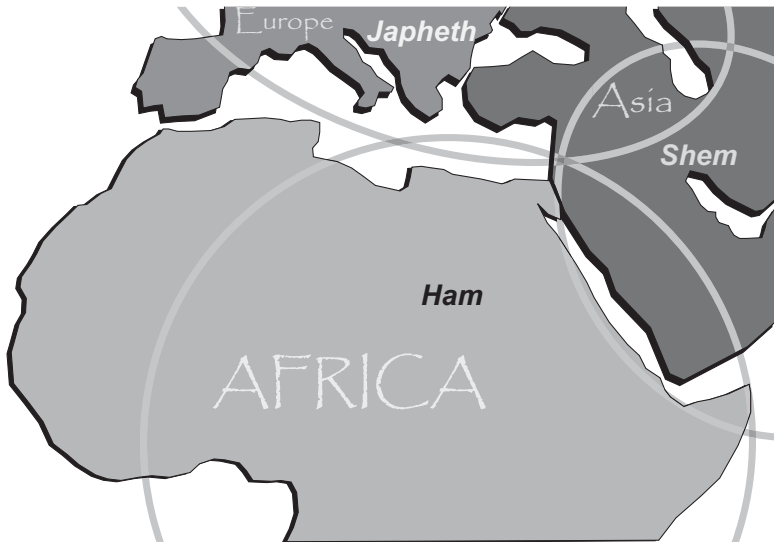
A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates (Gen. 2:10-14).

Two of the rivers mentioned in this passage, the Pishon and the Gihon, are considered to be in Africa (while two are in modern-day Iraq). The Gihon is assumed by most Bible scholars to be the mighty Nile River that flows through northeastern Africa (specifically through what is today Egypt, Sudan) and whose headwaters are in Uganda, the heart of Africa. The true location of the Pishon has not been agreed upon by modern archeologists, but one possible theory puts its location near the upper Nile.



The Family of Nations described in Genesis 10:1 and 1 Chronicles 1:4-23 records that the sons of Noah spread in three directions following the Great Flood. The Semites settled in modern day Iraq along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys and into much of what has historically been known as Arabia. The Japhethites moved north around the Black Sea in what is today Turkey, Southern Russia, and into Western Europe as far as Spain. The Hamites moved south to lower Asia Minor (present day Armenia), along the Syrian and Phillistine coasts, the Red Sea coast of Arabia and into Africa.

Sons of Noah



One of the descendents of Ham was Nimrod, son of Cush, "... a mighty hunter before the Lord" (Gen. 10:8-9). The ancient land of Cush, named for the Cushites, extended from the city on the Nile of Aswan in the north to the confluence of the White and Blue Niles in the south, marked by the modern capital of Sudan, Khartoum.

Beginning in Isaiah 10, the Prophet Isaiah rebukes the nation of Israel, and those with whom she has contact, for breaking God's ordinances. The clear message of judgment and salvation extends to the kingdoms north of Judah such as Assyria (Ch. 13-14) and Tyre (Ch. 23) and to the south in Africa, to the mighty nations of Cush (ancient home of the Cushites, later known as the Nubian people) and Egypt (Ch. 18- 20). Part of this text reads (Is. 18:1-7):

Woe to the land of whirring wings
along the rivers of Cush,
²which sends envoys by sea
in papyrus boats over the water.
Go, swift messengers,
to a people tall and smooth-skinned,
to a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers.
³All you people of the world,
you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains,
you will see it,
and when a trumpet sounds,

you will hear it.

⁴This is what the LORD says to me:

“I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place,
like shimmering heat in the sunshine,
like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.”

⁵For, before the harvest, when the blossom is gone
and the flower becomes a ripening grape,
he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives,
and cut down and take away the spreading branches.

⁶They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey
and to the wild animals;
the birds will feed on them all summer,
the wild animals all winter.

⁷At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD Almighty
from a people tall and smooth-skinned,
from a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers—
the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion,
the place of the Name of the LORD Almighty. ²¹

In the book of Ezekiel (29:9) we find God takes pride of ownership of the river he has made, the Nile, the home of the Egyptian and Cushite peoples: “Egypt will become a desolate wasteland. Then they will know that I am the LORD. “Because you said, *“The Nile is mine; I made it,”* [Author’s italics added] ¹⁰ therefore I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt a ruin and a desolate waste from Migdol to Aswan, as far as the border of Cush. ²²

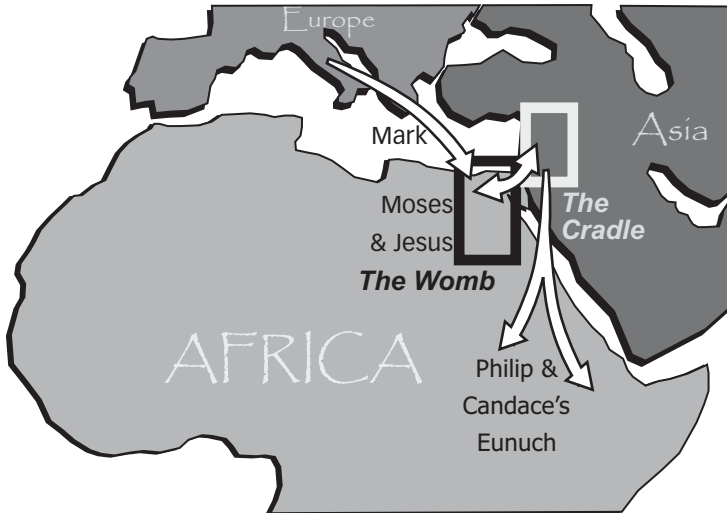
From the beginning, God’s **eye was on Africa.**

If the Middle East was the birthplace of the Judeo Christian faith, Africa was the *womb*. While the Jewish people were clearly Semites (descendents of Shem), it was in Africa where Jacob and his sons sought refuge.

“I am God, the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, *for I will make you into a great nation there.* I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes” (Gen. 46:3-4, author’s italics added).

God instructed Jacob to go to Africa. Why? Because God was going to forge the Hebrew people into a great nation, and the beginning of that formation took place in the womb of Africa.

The Birthplace of Judeo-Christianity



We observe that the man whom God chose to lead His people to freedom from enslavement was Moses, the *Prince of Egypt*. Moses was raised in the palace of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. There God prepared him to lead His people from Africa, the place of their national formation, to their promised land. Moses, the *lawgiver*, was used of God to give the world one of its greatest blessings, the Ten Commandments. The Decalogue provides the nations of the world with the moral-legal foundation needed to form free, just and compassionate societies.

Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, in their book on the history of the Sudanese Church, note the introduction of the word *Aithiopia* into the Greek translation of the Old Testament. They write:

“When the Old Testament was translated for the first time into Greek, around 300 B.C. in Alexandria, the translators rendered the word Hebrew *Kush* with the Greek word *Aithiopia*, a country to the south of their known world. *Aithiopia* (which comes from the word *aithiops* – black face) was therefore a very imprecise term that could be applied to all of Africa (as it was known then)... So when the Greek Bible translation (the Septuagint...) used the word *Ethiopia*, it was a very general term for the Hebrew word *Kush*. *Kush* was a very specific term for the country immediately south of Egypt along the Nile.... It is true that a second, broader meaning of *Kush* is sometimes found in the Bible, which encompasses all the areas south of Egypt, including all of Sudan and neighboring countries.”²³

There are two things to note here. First, the word *Kush* refers to both a specific kingdom along the banks of the Nile, in what today is the South of Egypt and the North of Sudan, and it also refers to a much larger area extending into the heart of Africa. Second, and perhaps more important for us, God had an interest in and infolded “dark faced” people into the biblical narrative. The kingdom of *Kush* became known as the Meroitic Empire between, approximately, 700 B.C. and 300 A.D. ²⁴

Africa played key roles in the life of Jesus. Shortly after His birth, when King Herod threatened His life, God appeared to Joseph in a dream and instructed him to take Jesus to Africa for a place of *refuge*. So God sent His Son to Africa for safety during the Herodian massacre of the innocent boys.

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." ¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son" (Mt. 2:13-15).



The prophet Hosea foretold this episode in the life of our Savior, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos. 11:1). At the other end of his earthly life, God used another African, Simon the Cyrene (Cyrene is modern-day Libya), to aid Jesus at His moment of great suffering.

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross" (Mk. 5:21).

Following Christ's death and resurrection, we read how the Gospel spread to Africa, initially through the treasurer of the government of Candace, Queen of *Aithiopia*.

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it" (Ac. 8:26-29).

Werner points out that there was a Jewish colony on Elephantine Island opposite the town of Aswan. They argue the Jews brought with them the “One and only God – by contrast with the many gods of ancient Egypt and of Meroe.”²⁵ This may account for this *Aithiopian* government official’s travel to Jerusalem to worship the One true God of the Jews.

With excitement, we read how early the Good News of Jesus Christ came to the *black-faced* people. Werner, et al concluded:

“Therefore, it seems clear that it was a Meriortic court official who heard the gospel of Jesus from the deacon Philip, and brought back his new-found faith to the Meroitic capital of Napata. This Sudanese man was therefore the first known non-Jewish believer in Jesus Christ – before the Roman centurion came to faith (*Acts* 10), and long before the Gospel reached Europe. So it can be said the message of Jesus was sown in Sudanese soil only a few years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, certainly before the year 40.”²⁶

What a thrill to read that the Gospel went first, by way of *Aithiopia*, along the umbilical cord of the continent to Africa, before it extended to the Gentiles of Europe by a Jew named Paul in the late forties and early fifties.

In addition to the early penetration of the Gospel into Africa, many of the great church fathers called Africa their home. They included Augustine of Hippo (present-day Algeria, 354-430 A.D.), Tertullian of Carthage (present-day Tunisia, c. 160 – 225 A.D.) and Cyprian of Alexandria (Egypt, c. 210-258 A.D.). Three of the early popes in the Latin (Roman Catholic) church were from Africa. They included Victor (183-203 A.D.), Gelasius (492-496 A.D.) and Mechiades or Militiades (311-314 A.D.)²⁷. These Africans were instrumental in shaping the history of the early church.



In the Psalms and the book of Revelation, we are provided with a glimpse of events at the end of the age, and here as well, Africa is represented. At the ingathering of the nations, peoples from around the world will congregate to worship before the throne. And in that glorious gathering, peoples from Africa will be present. Psalm 68:31 records: "Envoys will come from Egypt; Cush will submit herself to God." Similarly we see Africa represented in the "Registry of Nations" found in Psalm 87. This registry records the nations that will worship God at the end of time. In this list are ancient names of African nations.

Glorious things are said of you,
O city of God: *Selah*
"I will record Rahab [Egypt] and Babylon
among those who acknowledge me—
Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush [Sudan]—
and will say, "This one was born in Zion" (Ps. 87:3-4).

These represent the "gentile" nations that will come to Christ, becoming citizens of the City of God.

These are a sampling of the references to Africa in Scripture. Howard University professor Cain Felder writes that there are over 1,500 references to sites associated with the African continent in the Old Testament alone.²⁸ Africa has a rich biblical heritage and continues to play a significant role in the unfolding of church history.

The Blessing of the People

Undoubtedly, the greatest source of wealth in Africa can be found in her people. Each son or daughter of Africa is made *imago Dei*—in the image of God—and together they create one of the richest tapestries of people anywhere in the world.

Man, the Imago Dei

When God made man, he chose Himself as the pattern. In this way, humans are unique in all of creation. We are not made like dogs or monkeys, merely products of evolution, as many secularists tell us. Nor are we simply a "spirit" as many animists would say. No, when God created man, He looked to Himself for the pattern. Man was made in the *imago Dei*, both male and female. Genesis 1:27 reveals this extraordinary truth: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male* and *female* he created them (Gen. 1:27, author's italics added). Note that it is not simply the male who bears the image of God, but the female also.

Man (male and female) was initially placed by God in the Garden of Eden for a purpose. Together, they were to be stewards of the garden and function as God's Vice-Regents. Some have called this the Developmental Mandate. God placed the man and the woman in the garden to develop the earth. Genesis 1:28 states: "God blessed them [Adam and Eve] and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground'" (Gen. 1:28).

There are two elements of this mandate. The first is the social mandate to multiply, or to produce children. The second is the developmental mandate to exercise dominion over creation. Educator and founder of Principia, Dr. Elizabeth Youmans, passionately describes the wonder of each child brought into this world. Each is born with the capacity to "rule" over the earth.

She writes:

Every child has a name
Every child has a purpose
Every child has a story
Every child has a place in HIStory
Each child is unique!²⁹

To equip us to rule, God gave us immense internal capital. This great wealth is inherent in each individual. It includes, among other things: *A mind*: Reason and analytical ability; the ability to “think God’s thoughts after Him” *A heart*: Emotions, imagination, dreaming of new worlds, creativity and art. *Personality*: Each person has a temperament, a one-of-a-kind nature. Each has *dignity* as the *imago Dei*. Man has been given a *tongue* to form words and speak languages. Words are powerful. God used words to create the universe. Man was created by God to be a word maker. Men use words to bless and curse. As God used His spoken Word to create the universe, so man uses his spoken words to create cultures which shape the universe.

In addition to word makers, humans are tool makers. They have the ability to use their reason to creatively craft tools to simplify life and minimize the drudgery of work. Each person possesses a *conscience* to distinguish right and wrong, and a *will* (volition) to act and shape history. Each person has a *soul* to appreciate the non-material world, and the potential for wisdom (the moral application of truth). Each has the potential of *self constraint*, or internal self-control. Our minds are capable of forming *ideas*, which hold the potential to shape the material world. People possess *technical knowledge* (for example, in cooking, farming, carpentry, or sewing) and *skills* (for example, in music, sports, communication, languages, or the arts).

Africans, as with all people everywhere, are born with this vast internal property—and it is the greatest source of wealth in any community or nation. Like any capital, it needs to be stewarded. Many are blinded to these riches, viewing wealth as something external to man in the physical world. If a person is blind to their own God-given human capital, then they will fail to effectively tap it. People must learn to govern their internal property before they will have the skills needed to govern external property (natural resources). Until the people begin to master internal self-government, their nation will see little external development.

Jesus teaches on internal wealth when He challenges His disciples to work for the Kingdom:

While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

“He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it” (Lu.19: 11-13, 15).

Note that capital was given and there was to be an accounting of how the capital was

used. God intends for each of us to use the gifts He has given to advance His Kingdom on earth.

In measuring the wealth of nations, the World Bank recognizes three major forms of capital. They estimate that 59% of the wealth in developed countries comes from human and social capital, 25% comes from natural resources and 16% comes from manufactured capital. "...this means that *in the wealthiest countries, human capital accounts for three-quarters of the producible forms of wealth*" (author's italics added).³⁰

The people of Africa are equal in worth and capability to any of the world's peoples. They are endowed with natural and God given talents to solve problems and create resources. While Africa is rich in natural resources, by far her greatest resource is her people. Social and human capital, combined with her incredible natural resource base means that if Africa can deal with the root of her poverty, she has the potential to lead the world.

A Rich Tapestry of People

God loves diversity. Witness the astonishing diversity of His creation, particularly on the continent of Africa, where there are 3,500 ethnic groups speaking some 2,110 languages (over 30% of the world's total).³¹ This rich tapestry of people is composed of 78% African: Sudanic and Bantu in West Africa, Pygmie in the central rain forests, and Khoi-Khoi in Southern Africa. The remaining 22% are comprised of Arabic peoples, covering nearly all of northern Africa, as well as small pockets of Imazighens (Berbers), Europeans (predominantly in Southern Africa), and Asians (predominantly from India). The interaction of these diverse peoples results in a tremendous richness of culture. Africans are world-renowned for their music, celebrations, colors and art. They are respected for their generosity, perseverance, respect for elders and strong families. These are among the chief sources of wealth in Africa.

The Church

The taproot of the church in Africa goes deep into her history. As we have already seen, this heritage extends back to formation of the Hebrew people in Egypt. Centuries later, Africa served as a place of refuge for the infant Lord Jesus, whose parents fled Herod's bloody genocide. Following Christ's death and resurrection, the Gospel spread quickly to Ethiopia and other northern African nations. Many well-known Church Fathers, including Augustine, were Africans. The Christian faith goes deep into the soil of the African continent.

More recent times have witnessed a dramatic move of the Holy Spirit across the continent. In 1900 there were 8 million Christians in Africa (approximately 10% of the population); today that number is over 350 million, or approximately 48% of the entire African population. Every day some 23,000 people are added to the church by birth or conversion. That's an annual growth rate of nearly 3%, which is slightly higher than that of the Islamic faith on the continent. Philip Jenkins, professor of History and Religious Studies at Penn State University describes the impact of this massive church growth:

We are currently living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide...Over the past century...the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa, Asia and Latin America. Already today, the largest Chris-

tian communities on the planet are to be found in Africa and Latin America...Very soon, the two main centers of Christianity will be [on these two continents].³²

Daily church growth in Africa is distributed as follows: Evangelicals 6,000, Pentecostals 10,000, and "Great Commission" Christians 7,000. Evangelical church growth in Ethiopia today is faster than any country on earth³³. The percentage of Christians to the total population varies country by country. In both Kenya and Uganda, 80% of the population claim to be Christian. In South Africa 73% do, and in Namibia 84% of the population are Christians (the highest percentage on the continent). This is truly remarkable. It is clearly evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit and a testimony to the sacrificial efforts of missionaries and African church leaders. Some have called Africa the "most converted" continent in the world today.

Africa is rapidly becoming a missionary sending force. Today, there are more than 12,000 African missionaries working with over 600 sending agencies. Over a quarter are serving cross-culturally.³⁴ Networks such as The Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) are challenging the African Church to use its own resources to support missions to unreached people groups on the continent. While Africa is becoming a missionary sending continent, it is still receiving missionaries. There are currently over 17,000 foreign missionaries on the continent.³⁵

A Heartbreaking Paradox

Africa has been mightily blessed. Her natural resources make her the wealthiest of the world's seven continents. She possesses a rich heritage as the womb of the Judeo-Christian faith. Her people comprise her greatest wealth. Being *imago Dei*, they possess vast internal capital. Corporately, they represent one of the richest tapestries of cultures seen anywhere in the world. On top of all this, there is the incredible potential that exists through the dramatic recent growth of the church.

Yet despite these countless blessings and riches, Africa remains undeniably the most poverty-stricken and broken continent on the planet. This is the heartbreaking paradox that haunts the psyche of all Africans. When one examines global poverty indices and measurements, it becomes apparent that things are improving everywhere in the world with one glaring exception—Africa. Countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Singapore which until very recently struggled mightily with poverty, are today in transitions to more healthy economic conditions. How can it be that Africa continues to languish? In the next section, we will look at some of these global measurements as we seek to form an answer to this question.

Africa is Broken

Despite her vast material wealth and human potential, Africa is the most materially impoverished continent on earth. Her people are among the most destitute. A child born to African parents on African soil has a greater likelihood of dying before his or her fifth birthday than a child born elsewhere in the world. African children are less well-nourished, poorer, less literate and have a greater possibility of contracting AIDS than children born elsewhere in the world. This is what Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo calls the “enigma” of Africa.

An enigma is something hard to understand or explain. It is said that Africa is the richest of the seven continents in the world and yet her people are the poorest. Africa is probably the first home of the human race and yet the last to be developed. Africa and Africans have made many nations and peoples great, yet their own vineyards remain unkempt.³⁶

Before Africans can have real hope for the future, they need to seriously face the cold, hard facts of their present reality. We will look at these brutal facts from several perspectives. First we will consider the *material indices*. Second, we'll look at the *non-material indices* or what might be called the Indices of Liberty. These include the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), the Economic Freedom Index (EFI) and the Freedom Index (FI). Third we'll examine the United Nations list of 21 World's Crises.

Material Indices

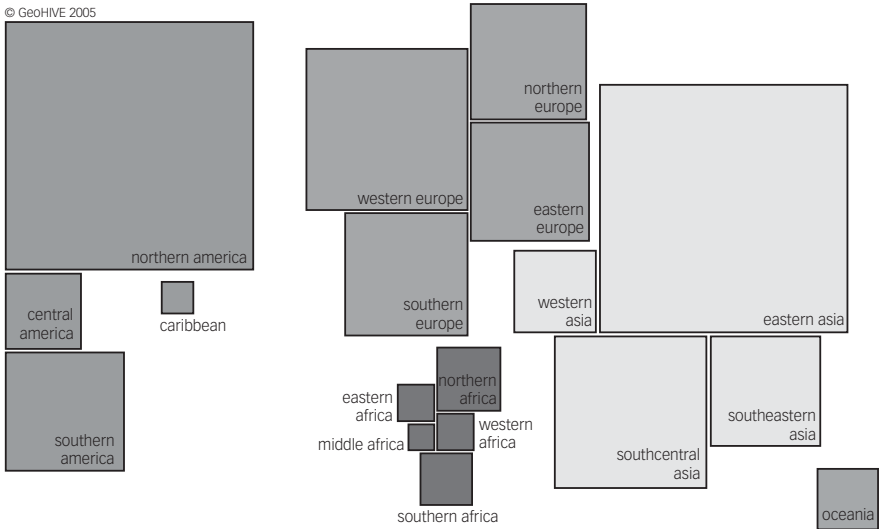
There are two types of material indices. The first uses a *single* indicator to measure the depth of poverty in a country. The second looks at a *composite* of indicators. Taken together, they provide a comprehensive picture of the material health or brokenness of a nation.

Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

This prosperous continent, with 14% of the world's population, produces slightly less than two percent of the world's Gross National Product.³⁷ The bottom 20% of the world's population only produces 0.1% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).³⁸

17 of the 21 poorest countries in the world are in Africa, as established by per capita GDP of less than \$1000 per year.³⁹ In the year 2000, the countries with the lowest per capita GDP were Sierra Leone (U.S. \$126); Democratic Republic of Congo (U.S. \$101), Burundi (U.S. \$101) and Ethiopia (U.S. \$99).⁴⁰

The following illustration gives a very different picture of the continents by depicting their comparative size based on GDP rather than land area. What statement does this make about the continent of Africa?



Note: this graph shows regions with their total Gross Domestic Product (based on PPP). source data from the World Factbook 2002, CIA (Graphic from www.geohive.com)

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)

The IMR measures the number of infants who die per 1,000 live births before their first birthday. Because children are the most vulnerable members of any society, the IMR is a good measure of the overall health of a nation. In Africa, the IMR is one of the few indicators moving in a positive direction. The Africa-wide IMR decreased from 103 to 85 between 1985 and 2000.⁴¹ But compared to the worldwide average of 50.3 deaths per 1,000 live births,⁴² it is still far too high. The “Under Five” mortality rate measures the number of children who die per 1,000 live births before their fifth birthday. The Africa-wide Under Five mortality rate stands at 148. This means that 148 out of every 1,000 children (almost 15%) who survive birth will die before their fifth birthday, typically from disease or malnutrition. This compares with a worldwide under five mortality rate of 81⁴³.

Life Expectancy and Literacy

In Africa, overall life expectancy has declined from 51 years in 1985 to 50 years in 2000.⁴⁴ As for literacy, 29 of the 42 countries with the lowest literacy rates in the world are found in Africa.⁴⁵

HIV Infection Rates

Uganda was the birthplace of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 1999, 71% of the world’s AIDS cases were in Africa, where some 6,000 people were dying each day from the disease.⁴⁶ In 2000 a conservative estimate pegged the number of infected Africans at 24,000,000 with some 12 million children orphaned throughout the continent as a result of both parents dying from HIV/AIDS.⁴⁷ Today, some estimate the number of HIV infected Africans to stand at around 28.5 million.⁴⁸

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)

In recent years, a worldwide movement has been launched aimed at relieving the financial burden of the world's most heavily indebted nations. There are 42 countries eligible for HIPC designation. Thirty of these (81%) are in Africa. By way of comparison, Latin America has four, Asia has three, and the Middle East has one.

Composite Indices

Composite Indices weigh a number of factors in evaluating the relative health of a nation. Therefore, they are thought to be more accurate and comprehensive than the single index indicators just covered.

Human Development Index (HDI)

The HDI attempts to measure "quality of life." It was developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and measures a composite of four criteria: Life expectancy, literacy rates, educational attainment (in years), and adjusted real income. The survey was conducted in 174 countries. Thirty-three of the bottom 40 countries on the HDI are in Africa.⁴⁹

Human Development Index

High Human Development	Low Human Development
1. Norway	163. Cote D'Ivoire
2. Sweden	164. Zambia
3. Australia	165. Malawi
4. Canada	166. Angola
5. Netherlands	167. Chad
6. Belgium	168. Dem. Rep. of Congo
7. Iceland	169. Central African Republic
8. United States	170. Ethiopia
9. Japan	171. Mozambique
10. Ireland	172. Guinea-Bissau
11. Switzerland	173. Burundi
12. United Kingdom	174. Mali
13. Finland	175. Burkina Faso
14. Austria	176. Niger
15. Luxembourg	177. Sierra Leone

Least Developed Countries Index (LDC)

This index, produced by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), examines a composite of annual Gross Domestic Production, quality of life and economic vulnerability⁵⁰. Thirty-four of the 50 "least developed countries" were in Africa.

Map of the World's 50 Least Developed Countries (UNCTAD)



According to UNCTAD, “Half or more of the population in the 50 least developed countries listed ... are estimated to live at or below the absolute poverty line of U.S. \$1 dollar per day.”⁵¹ In a tragic irony, the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the world’s wealthiest nations in terms of its natural resources, has over 90% of her people living below the absolute poverty line.⁵²

The Human Suffering Index (HSI)

The HSI is published by the Population Crises Committee in Washington D.C. It uses ten criteria to identify nations with the greatest human suffering. These include life expectancy, daily caloric intake, access to clean water, infant immunization, secondary school enrollment, per capita GDP, rate of inflation, communications, technology, political freedom, and civil rights. The index tracks 141 countries. Of the thirty nations categorized as experiencing “extreme human suffering,” 24 are in Africa. The other six are all in Asia.⁵³

These various indices clearly illustrate that paradoxically, the wealthiest continent in the world in terms of material resources is also the poorest, most destitute—truly an immense human tragedy.

Non-Material Indices

In addition to the material indices, there are a number of “non-material” indices that contribute to material poverty. The non-material indices might be called the “Indices of Liberty.” They deal with less tangible standards such as corruption, economic and political freedom.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

The CPI is published by German-based Transparency International and attempts to measure the degree of corruption in a nation as experienced by business people, aca-

demics, and risk analyst specialists. The index is a composite of 15 different surveys compiled from nine different institutions. It examined 102 countries and ranked each on a scale of *Highly Clean* (10) to *Highly Corrupt* (0). Fifty-two of the 102 countries surveyed were found to be in the most highly corrupt range of the index. Sixteen of these were African nations.⁵⁴

Corruption Preception Index

Rank	Country	2004	Rank	Country	2004
1.	Finland	9.7	90.	Gambia/Malawi/ Mozambique/etc.	2.8
2.	New Zealand	9.6	97.	Algeria/Lebanon/etc.	2.7
3.	Denmark & Iceland	9.5	102.	Eritea/Uganda/Zambia	2.6
4.	Singapore	9.3	108.	Albania/Libya/etc	2.5
6.	Sweden	9.2	112.	Ecuador & Yemen	2.4
7.	Switzerland	9.1	114.	Congo/Ethiopia/Sierra Leonne/Zimbabwe	2.3
8.	Norway	8.9	122.	Niger/Sudan/etc.	2.2
9.	Australia	8.8	129.	Cameroon/Kenya/etc.	2.1
10.	Netherlands	8.7	133.	Angola/Congo, D.R./ Cote D'Ivoire/etc.	2.0
11.	United Kingdom	8.6	140.	Azerbaijan & Paraguay	1.9
12.	Canada	8.5	142.	Chad & Myanmar	1.7
13.	Austria & Luxemb.	8.4	144.	Nigeria	1.6
14.	Germany	8.2	145.	Bangladesh/Haiti	1.5
15.	Hong Kong	8.0			
16.	Belgium/Ireland/USA	7.5			

It is sad but true, corruption is rampant across Africa. In countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria, the amount of money stolen by corrupt rulers is roughly equivalent to their total national debt.⁵⁵ Among the world's richest men are African heads of state. According to estimates from the United Nations Economic Commission, approximately U.S. \$148 billion dollars is in secret bank accounts of African rulers.⁵⁶ This represents about half of the \$300 billion that Africa as a whole owes its foreign creditors.⁵⁷ In his book *Out of America: A Black Man Confronts Africa*, Washington Post reporter Keith Richburg describes his observations after three years of covering news on the continent.

The Big Men will still be there, arrogant, extravagant, enjoying the benefits of foreign aid. They'll still have their marble palaces carved out of the jungle and their bank accounts in Switzerland, their villas in the south of France, and their apartments on the Avenue Foch in Paris. They'll have their fleets of Mercedes limousines and their private jets. They'll build basilicas with their own likeness in the murals with the apostles, and they'll open universities that bear their name but where students can't afford books and will have no jobs if they ever get out. They'll equip their armies with shiny boots and their security forces with the latest weapons, but the hospitals will run short of needles and bandages....⁵⁸

Richburg concludes: "Corruption is the cancer eating at the heart of the African state."⁵⁹

Index of Economic Freedom

This index was compiled by The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal. It used ten key economic indicators and surveyed 154 countries. Of the 16 countries with the highest economic freedom rating, none were from Africa. Of the 71 countries that were rated "mostly un-free," 30 were from Africa.⁶⁰

Freedom Index

Unlike the Index of Economic Freedom which tracks freedom of enterprise, the Freedom Index examines political rights and civil liberties in 191 countries. The results of the survey indicate that 88 countries, including 11 African countries, are "free." Fifty-five countries, including 21 from Africa are "partially free." And 40 countries, including 20 from Africa, are "not free."⁶¹

These three non-material indices reveal a relative lack of economic and political freedom and high degree of corruption across the African continent. All are important in explaining the high incidence of poverty and human misery in Africa.

World's 21 Forgotten Crises

21 World Crises were identified by current United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, as affecting some 45 million people. Tragically, 17 of the 21 crises are in Africa.⁶² Since 1960 over 245 million people in Africa have been affected by famine.⁶³ Africa has been called the "traumatized continent."

Country or region	Crisis
Angola	Post-war poverty, refugees
Burundi	Civil war
Central African Republic	Post-war poverty, political instability
Chechnya	War
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	War
Eritrea	Food shortage, drought
Great Lakes region (Africa)	Conflict, refugees, AIDS
Guinea	Refugees, poverty
Liberia	Post-war poverty
North Korea	Famine
Sierra Leone	Post-war poverty
Somalia	Failed state
Southern Africa	AIDS, poverty
Sudan	Civil war
Tajikistan	Post-war poverty
Tanzania	Refugees
Uganda	Refugees, drought, conflict
West Bank and Gaza	Conflict, economic devastation
West Africa	Conflict, refugees
Zimbabwe	Economic devastation

Some thirty different wars have been fought in Africa since 1970. Most have involved power struggles within countries rather than between nations. Examples include Sudan, where over two million people have been killed from a 17 year long civil war. In 25 years of civil war in Angola, approximately 500,000 have been killed.⁶⁴ In three months of genocide in Rwanda, 1,000,000 people were killed (approximately 1/9th of the country's population) and another two to three million fled into exile. At the end of 2003, there were approximately four million refugees on the continent.⁶⁵ Since political independence came to the nations of the continent, there have been 56 "successful" military coups.⁶⁶

All of these indices and measurements, when taken together, paint a dire picture of the condition of Africa today. Her brokenness is pervasive, deep and profound. That Africa is so abundantly blessed with resources, yet paradoxically remains the poorest, most broken continent on earth, demands a response. Such responses are not hard to come by. Many explanations have been put forward and continue to be put forward. Yet many of these explanations don't bear up under the weight of careful scrutiny. Next, we'll examine and critique the current "conventional wisdom" in explaining Africa's brokenness before putting forward a more plausible answer to the question of Africa's poverty—one that leads to real hope for a better future.

The Excuses

All too often, African leaders have failed to squarely face the sobering facts of Africa's desperate brokenness. This is reflective of a broader failure of leadership. Instead of addressing the myriad crises facing the continent, many African leaders prefer to assume the role of victim. Blame for Africa's problems are attributed to forces outside the continent, and thus outside the scope of African control or responsibility. Certainly, there are many global factors that play a role in Africa's tragic present condition. This reality, too, must be directly confronted. Yet the problem with focusing exclusively on external causes is that Africans themselves are disempowered from solving their own problems. The solutions are always "out there" in the halls of the United Nations or in the capitals and power centers of Western nations. This, too, is a terrible tragedy. Instead of solutions, too many African leaders offer *excuses*. Let's look at some of the main excuses that together form the "conventional wisdom" regarding Africa's impoverishment.

Colonialism

Many African leaders say the problems in Africa are a direct result of colonialism. During the colonial era, there was a saying of Africa: "All the roads lead to the coast." The colonial powers robbed the continent of her wealth, transporting Africa's precious resources from the interior to the coasts, then onto ships bound for Europe. Undeniably, colonialism did play a tragic role in shaping Africa's modern history, including the raping of resources, slavery, and the creation of artificial national boundaries. But to focus exclusively on colonialism as the cause of Africa's present misery is to be enslaved by the past.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, just because a nation was colonized in the past doesn't mean it will be poor in the present. Many of the world's richest countries were former colonies. Examples include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and Hong Kong. In addition, some of the world's most impoverished nations were *never* colonized—Afghanistan and Thailand to name but two. Many rapidly developing Asian nations achieved independence from their former European colonizers at the same time as many African nations. These include Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam. Today, Singapore is one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam are all in various stages of developing dynamic economies. The African-American Economist Walter Williams writes:

Before independence, every African country was self-sufficient in food production; today most depend on imports and others stand at the brink of famine. At the time of independence, the average growth rate among African countries was three percent. By 1980, it had fallen to one percent and by 1990, a negative 2.8 percent.⁶⁷

At the time of their independence, both Ghana and Uganda had higher gross national products than South Korea. South Korea, at that time, was deeply impoverished. Her main export was human hair for wigs. What a difference 40 years makes. Today, South Korea has one of the fastest growing economies in the world while Ghana and Uganda continue to languish. Clearly, colonial experience doesn't necessarily contribute to ongoing poverty as the examples here indicate.

The Cold War

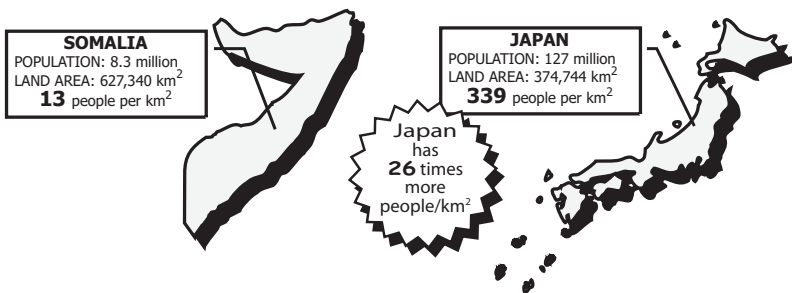
Many African leaders blame the cold war for Africa's current problems. Yes, it was unjust for the United States and the Soviet Union to treat African countries as pawns. Yes, African heads of state often gave in to pressure from the two global superpowers at the time. But the biggest cold war "battle grounds" were in Asia, not Africa. Consider the Korean War or the Vietnam War. These nations were nearly destroyed through cold war conflict, and yet today, both are on the road to recovery. Korea is one of the most developed nations in the world, and Vietnam, while still considered a developing country, is making substantial economic progress in its recently established free enterprise zones.

Lack of Natural Resources

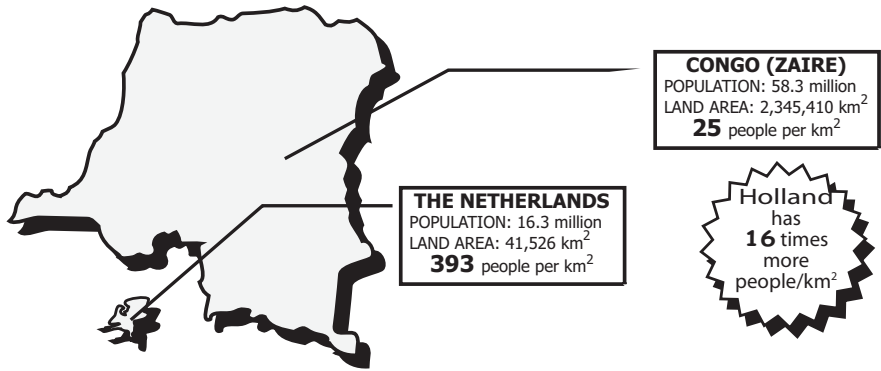
Even after years of colonialism, Africa remains the richest continent on the globe in terms of its natural resources. As we have already stressed, "natural resources" are actually products of human creativity. Crude oil, for example, was little more than black sludge before human ingenuity found productive and economically lucrative uses for it. Another example is common sand. By itself, it has almost no value. But combine it with human ingenuity and it is transformed into valuable commodities such as glass and silicon computer chips. Hence, human ingenuity and creativity are keys that unlock economic prosperity. Resources do not come from the ground but from the innovation of the human mind.

To illustrate, let's look at two nations that are viewed as scarce in natural resources. One is wealthy and the other impoverished. What made the difference?

Somalia and Japan are both countries that lack natural resources relative to other nations in the world. Japan has one additional handicap. It has 26 times the population density of Somalia. If there were a direct correlation between natural resources, population density and economic prosperity, you would expect Japan to be desperately poor. But Japan has maximized her use of her most important resource—the Japanese people. Today, she is one of the wealthiest nations on earth.



Now let's compare two countries that are relatively rich in natural resources—the Democratic Republic of Congo (perhaps the richest country in the world in terms of natural resources) and Holland. Consider also that the Congo has 18 times less the population density of Holland. If there were a direct correlation between natural resources and economic prosperity, you would expect Congo to be more prosperous than Holland, yet that is far from the case.



Africa is not poor because of lack of resources—she is poor *in spite* of possessing the greatest base of natural resources in the world.

Inadequate Foreign Aid

Some argue that Africa suffers for lack of adequate foreign assistance. In fact, Africa has attracted more foreign aid per capita than any other region in the world.⁶⁸ This may appear to be a good thing, but appearances can be deceptive. The laudable intention of foreign aid workers has been to reduce poverty and contribute to development. But, with limited exceptions, their development efforts have had the opposite effect. In many cases, foreign aid has actually *contributed* to poverty and underdevelopment. The money and resources flowing into Africa from the West have had the unintended consequence of feeding dependency and reinforcing fatalistic attitudes already present in the Animistic and Islamic worldviews of many Africans.

Between 1980 and 1988, sub-Saharan Africa received U.S. 83 billion dollars in foreign aid. And yet during the same period of time, living standards and GDP actually *declined* in the same region.⁶⁹ The World Bank's *African Development Indicators 2003*⁷⁰ shows the development assistance given to the continent during the years between 1992 and 2001 in millions of U.S. dollars:

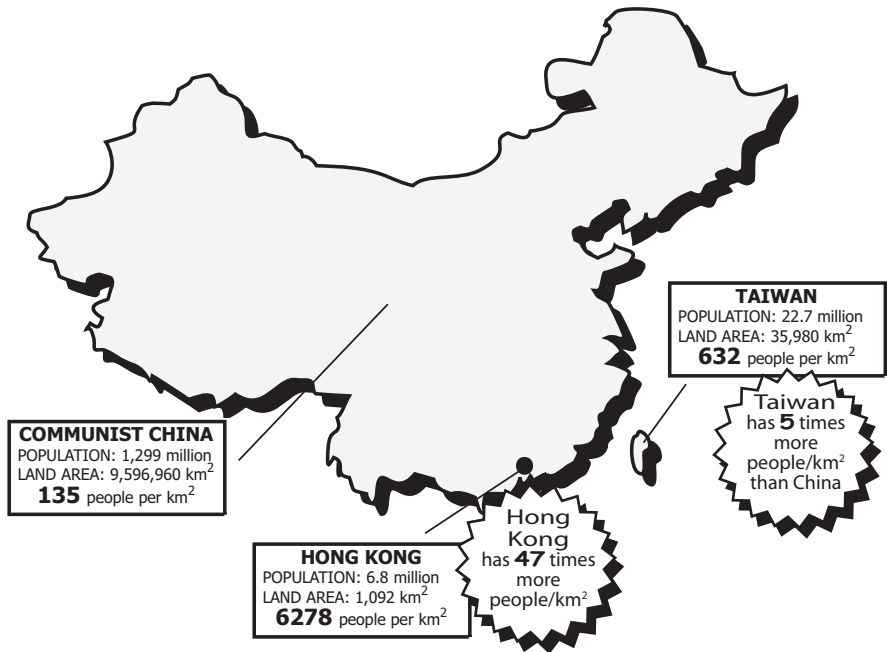
Year	North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Continental Total
1992	5,127	17,902	23,029
1993	3,653	16,869	20,522
1994	3,592	18,018	21,610
1995	2,502	15,508	18,310
1996	2,846	13,977	16,823
1997	2,649	13,770	16,418
1998	2,837	13,564	16,401
1999	2,491	12,394	14,886
2000	2,168	13,397	15,585
2001	2,393	14,206	16,598

If foreign aid and assistance were essential to ending poverty, then Africa would be among the most developed continents on earth. Because this is not the case, it ought to cause one to question underlying assumptions about the root causes of poverty. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be happening. The steady stream of foreign aid continues to flow into Africa unabated.

Overpopulation

“Overpopulation” is among the most popular responses given by Western elites when asked about the causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Africa. They argue that there are too many people—at least on certain parts of the continent—for the resource base to support a minimal standard of living. Yet as we have stated many times, Africa is incredibly rich in terms of her natural resources—and when compared to other more prosperous regions, is relatively sparsely populated. Recall the graphic at the beginning of this book that shows an overlay of the African continent with other nations (p. 10). This illustrates how geographically large Africa is compared to other, smaller and often more densely populated and resource-poor nations.

The myth of overpopulation as a primary contributor to poverty is illustrated by looking at the “three Chinas.” Taiwan has 5 times the population density of “overcrowded” China. The city of Hong Kong has 45 times the population density of the People’s Republic of China.



In which of the “three Chinas” would most people rather live? Most would probably choose the more crowded Taiwan or Hong Kong over the more spacious mainland. Why? Because the standard of living is so much higher, despite its intense population density, and nearly complete lack of a natural resource base.

Tribalism

Tribalism in Africa *is* a major problem and a significant cause of poverty. There is another side to this coin however. The rich cultural and ethnic diversity of Africa is one of her greatest assets. Ethnic diversity is not the problem. Rather, the attitudes of tribal superiority are at the root of this problem.

Racial tensions can be substantially resolved. Multi-racial Switzerland once was wracked with ethnic divisions. Yet today, the Germans, French, Italians and Romanish Swiss live together harmoniously and provide a model of what a stable, peaceful multi-ethnic nation can look like. There is no reason why the same model can't work in the multi-ethnic nations of Africa.

Corruption

Corruption, like tribalism is one of the major problems facing Africa. Some have argued that the root of corruption can be traced to Animistic beliefs where capricious tribal deities can be bribed into acting beneficently. If this is true, then for corruption to be dealt with at its root, the worship of such Animistic deities needs to be replaced by worship and service to the one True God who cannot be bribed (Deu. 10:17). Christian conversion must be accompanied by discipleship of the mind. The strongholds of false, Animistic beliefs must be rooted out and replaced by the truth of the biblical worldview.

Africa is certainly not alone in its struggle against corruption. Many nations face this challenge, but usually not to the same degree as in Africa. Also, not all corruption is equal. Richburg makes a distinction between “productive corruption” and “malignant corruption.” He writes of different experiences of corruption in Nigeria and Indonesia:

In Indonesia, the president's daughter might get the contract to build the toll roads...but the roads do get built and they do facilitate traffic flow. In Africa, the roads never get built. [This is] the difference between “productive corruption” and “malignant corruption.”⁷¹

There is an historic correlation between countries that are the most just and those that enjoy the highest levels of economic development. The converse is equally true—the greater the corruption, the greater the poverty. Malignant corruption is a cancer in the economic life of a nation.

Poverty

Most people around the world see Africa as poor—including most Africans. Certainly, Africa struggles with poverty, but it is far from poor. We often fail to learn from history. Prior to the 16th century European Reformation, virtually the entire world was “poor” including all of Europe. Andrew Bernstein, adjunct professor of philosophy at Pace University, writes:

Most people forget that pre-industrial Europe was vastly poorer than contemporary Africa and had a much lower life expectancy. Even a relatively well-off country like France is estimated to have suffered seven general famines in the 15th century, thirteen in the 16th, eleven in the 17th and sixteen in the 18th. And disease was rampant. Given the

utter lack of sanitation, the bubonic plague, typhus and other diseases recurred incessantly into the 18th century, killing tens, sometimes hundreds of thousands at a time.

The effect on life expectancy was predictable. In parts of France, in the middle of the 17th century, only 58% reached their 15th birthday, and life expectancy was 20. In Ireland, life expectancy in 1800 was a mere 19 years. In early 18th century London, more than 74 percent of the children died before reaching the age of five.

Then a dramatic change occurred through Europe. The population in England doubled between 1750 and 1820, with childhood mortality dropping to 31.8 percent by 1830. Something happened that enabled people to stay alive.⁷²

The catalyst for this dramatic transformation in Europe was the Reformation and the new work ethic that it spawned. If it can happen in Europe, then history would seem to teach that such transformation can happen in Africa as well.

Leadership

Many people state that the problems of the continent can be traced to poor leadership, be it local, tribal, church or national. Too often the leadership style is top down and may be described as, tyrannical/dictatorial. Corruption and bribery are a normal way of life, and too often leaders model these vices for the nation. Nepotism - putting family and tribal members into positions of authority and influence, even when they are not qualified, is the common way of governance and business. All of these mitigate against the process of national development and the language of freedom and justice. So yes, this is a cause of poverty.

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that the leadership of a nation is born from the people. The leaders are a reflection of the beliefs, values and behavior of the larger society. Leaders are a reflection of the culture, they act out the meta-story of the nation. Until a critical mass of the individual members of the society is transformed, the leadership of the society will not be transformed. The heart of the leader springs from the heart of the people. Someone has said that "everyone wants to change the world (or the nation), but no one wants to change the human heart. "

This change can only be initiated by individuals coming to the cross of Christ, for their salvation. This is the only place that the human heart can be transformed. But alas, it is not enough to have one's heart transformed. God wants to change the mind as well. There have been many professed Christians who have risen to high positions of leadership. As a prime example, for many years, President Moi of Kenya, a professed Christian, lead one of the most corrupt governments in the world. There was a dichotomy between his profession of faith in Christ and the belief, values and behavior that were demonstrated as he presided over a dictatorial, corrupt and nepotistic administration.

The behavior of bribery found in many African leaders, inside and outside of the church, is a reflection of a culture of corruption. Culture is always derived from "cult" - worship. A culture of corruption is founded on the worship of deities that can be appeased. So before a society can be transformed, they need to worship a God that cannot be bribed (Deut. 10:17).

Getting to the Root of the Problem

What is the root of poverty in Africa? The way you define a problem is critical because it determines how you go about solving that problem. Those who see Africa as “poor” are blind to her vast riches and abundant blessings. Those who see the problem primarily as lack of material resources seek to transfer resources from the West to solve the problem. But neither outside money nor technical know-how will solve the problems of the continent. Recent history more than proves this to be true. To those who locate the root of Africa’s problems in such things as incompetent leadership, corrupt politics, infrastructural inadequacies, widespread illiteracy, or unjust economic systems, our response is this: These are indeed serious problems, but you have not gone deep enough in your assessments. What you are describing are *symptoms*, not root causes.

The root of the problem is not material, nor is it primarily located outside the continent. The root of the problem is *inside* the minds of the people of the continent.

The Root Problem

With all the blessings of the continent, and with all the outside aid that has poured in, why is Africa materially underdeveloped? The answer to this question has very little to do with material resources.

Ideas Have Consequences

Could the fruit of underdevelopment in the material realm have a metaphysical rather than a physical root? The answer is yes. The problem is *ideas!* The Bible reveals a fundamental principle, "For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pr. 23:7 KJV). This principle applies to individuals as well as entire cultures. The key to cultural transformation lies in the transformation of the mindset or worldview of a people. The late Evangelist and Apologist, Francis Schaeffer said: "I believe people are as they think. The choices we make...will mold irrevocably the direction of our culture ... and the lives of our children!"⁷³ Similarly, Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo, the Executive Director for the Center for Biblical Transformation in Nairobi, Kenya writes, "Faith is processed in the mind and acted out in the visible...world after the mind has approved of it."⁷⁴ There is a relationship between the spiritual and physical realms and culture. The spiritual realm impacts the physical realm at the level of culture. Or to put it differently, we build societies like the god(s) that we worship.

Two agricultural analogies show the relationship between ideas and the real-life, culture-shaping consequences that flow from them. The first analogy of sowing and then reaping is found in the book of Galatians. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Gal. 6:7). The seed (ideas, beliefs) that you sow will determine the fruit (real-world consequences) that you reap. The second analogy is found in the book of Matthew where Jesus said:

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them (Mt. 7:15-20).



The Roots Produce the Fruit

Just as the quality of the soil and roots of a tree determine the quality of the fruit produced, so it is with our ideas. If our beliefs are shaped by the revealed Truth in Scripture and acted upon, then the fruit of our lives will show the evidence in healthy, joyous and free existence.

What is a Worldview?

When we speak of worldview, we are speaking of the total set of beliefs or assumptions that comprise the mindset of an individual and determine how they view reality. Within a particular group

of people (a society) the dominant ideas that are held by the majority of people from the culture. Our worldviews not only determine how we see the world, but more importantly, they determine the kind of societies and nations we build. Another word for worldview is “meta-narrative.” A meta-narrative is a story or narrative that explains all of life. Worldviews act like the computer software that runs the hardware of our lives.

The Bible puts forward the only worldview that agrees with reality as it truly exists. The biblical worldview is God’s view of the world, and because God is the creator and sustainer of creation, His view is the one that ultimately matters. Africa is comprised of many nations, each with its own distinct culture, each shaped by the dominant worldview held by her people. Returning to the computer analogy, Africa has exceptionally bountiful “hardware.” The problem is that she is not running the correct operating system—the one that the computer maker designed her to operate on. That is the root problem.

African Worldviews

African worldviews are associated with fatalism, which is rooted in Islamic beliefs in the north, and with spiritism and ancestor-worship throughout the rest of the continent. These twin pillars of fatalism and spiritism form a worldview category known as *Animism*. Like all false worldviews, Animism is a distortion of the truth. And as with all such distortions, when it becomes the dominant belief-system of a group of people and is acted upon, the real-life consequences are both tragic and destructive. How can you explain the genocide in Rwanda, or the descent into chaos of clan warfare in Somalia? How can you account for the ethnic cleansing in Sudan? How do you explain the brutal dismemberment of innocents in warfare, or the repeated raping of women and the rampant promiscuity that fans the flames of the HIV AIDS pandemic? These are not merely moral problems. They are metaphysical problems. They are the natural consequences, in large part, of a distorted view of reality—a worldview that leads to injustice, poverty and a breakdown of social order.

We can begin to understand the destructive power of the predominant Animistic worldview that underpins African cultures through a deeper examination of the Corruption Index (see p. 28). Those countries that are most heavily influenced by traditional Animistic beliefs are among the most corrupt cultures in the world. On the other hand, those countries that have been most heavily impacted by a biblical worldview enjoy the least corruption.

The Human Development Index (p. 26) reveals a similar pattern. With the notable exception of Japan, those countries that have been most heavily influenced by a Judeo-Christian worldview are the “most livable” countries in the world. Those countries that have been most influenced by African traditional religions are classified as some of the “least livable” countries.

“Least Livable” Countries, 2004			
1.	Sierra Leone	16.	Tanzania
2.	Niger	17.	Benin
3.	Burkina Faso	18.	Guinea
4.	Mali	19.	Rwanda
5.	Burundi	20.	East Timor
6.	Guinea-Bissau	21.	Senegal
7.	Mozambique	22.	Eritrea
8.	Ethiopia	23.	Gambia
9.	Central African Republic	24.	Djibouti
10.	Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	25.	Haiti
11.	Chad	26.	Mauritania
12.	Angola	27.	Nigeria
13.	Malawi	28.	Madagascar
14.	Zambia	29.	Yemen
15.	Côte D’Ivoire	30.	Kenya

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To further illumine the Animistic worldview, we will contrast a list of fundamental beliefs that are common to a traditional African mindset with those of the Judeo-Christian, or biblical worldview.

African Traditional Mindset	Biblical Worldview (Mindset)
Women are inferior to men.	Women are made in the image of God and have equal worth with men. While the roles of men and women differ, their value before God is the same.
Work is a curse.	Work is part of our dignity.
Tribalism: my tribe is superior to your tribe.	Community: each race/tribe is equal in value but wonderfully unique, and the uniquenesses are to be celebrated.
Fatalism: We are poor and there is nothing we can do about it. History is something that happens to us. This leads to a “dependency” mentality that is outward looking, waiting for someone or something else “from the outside” to solve our problems.	Freedom: We were made to create history. God created humans with freedom and personal responsibility.
Time: focus on the past; backward-looking.	Time: celebrate the past, enjoy the present, plan for the future; forward-looking.
Corruption: The gods are capricious and can be “bribed” through various acts or sacrifices.	Justice: The living God is unchanging in His character, which is both just and good. He takes no bribes.
The life of an individual is not significant.	Individual human life is significant.
“Zero-sum:” Limited Good; resources are fixed and limited. If my neighbor prospers, it must be the result of him doing something wrong to me, such as stealing.	Positive Sum: Wealth is created.
Capriciousness of the universe. The universe is chaotic and unpredictable.	The universe is governed by natural laws; it is orderly.

The list above is not meant to be exhaustive, nor are these assumptions equally held by all African cultures. Yet until such unspoken and often unexamined assumptions are addressed, Africa will continue to suffer. What Africa needs above all else is neither money nor outside resources—or even new technologies and technical know-how. What is desperately needed is for the root problem to be addressed. The Animistic assumptions listed above need to be replaced by a worldview that comports with reality

as God has made it—a worldview where truth, beauty and justice penetrate the very fabric of society. When this happens, Africa will be transformed.

The Failure of Christian Missions to Transform African Culture

Let's turn our attention now to the impact of the missionaries on the continent over the past two centuries. As we have already pointed out, a virtual army of Western missionaries tirelessly spread the Gospel throughout the continent in recent history. Their efforts have resulted in countless conversions and the establishment of thousands of new churches. With this being the case, why hasn't a Judeo-Christian worldview begun to take root on the continent as we might expect?

Animism, as with all false worldviews, is a distortion of the truth. On the previous page, we looked at a list of how certain Animistic assumptions contrast with Judeo-Christian Theism. However, one place where these two worldviews agree is in their view of the universe as a seamless whole. Both Animism and Judeo-Christian theism represent comprehensive, integrated worldviews. Dr. Mugambi of the University of Nairobi has written, "In the African heritage, the world is viewed as an integrated phenomenon, from which human kind is inseparable, whether physically or intellectually."⁷⁶ Similarly, Professor William Dyrness of Fuller Theological Seminary states of many African worldviews, "The material and spiritual worlds are ultimately part of a single reality, and the line between the one and the other is difficult to draw."⁷⁷

When 19th and 20th century western missionaries came to Africa, many unintentionally brought with them a dualistic worldview which strictly divided the spiritual realm from the physical realm.⁷⁸ The spiritual realm was considered to be high and holy, while the physical realm was low and worldly. Instead of building on the holistic worldviews already present in Africa, many missionaries introduced a dichotomized worldview that was not inherited from the Bible, but originated in ancient Greek philosophy. According to Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo:

"For decades...evangelism and missionary activities [were] directed at getting people saved (that is, spiritually), but losing their minds. Consequently, we have...over 50% Christian population on the average, but [it has] little or no impact on society. In fact, it sounds like an irony that within our own rank and file, such practices as witchcraft, traditional religions, orgies, tribalism and the like are regarded as normal..."⁷⁹

African Theologian, Dr. Van der Poll summarizes this dilemma when he writes:

Because the Gospel was not brought to the people as a new totally encompassing life view, which would take the place of an equally comprehensive traditional life view, the deepest core of the African culture remains untouched....

The convert in Africa did not see the Gospel as sufficient for his whole life and especially for the deepest issues of life. For that reason, we find the phenomenon across Africa today that Christians in time of existential needs and crises (such as danger, illness and death) fall back on their traditional beliefs and life views.⁸⁰

The sad fact is that many western missionaries to Africa focused on a narrow Gospel where numbers of new converts and churches planted were held as the exclusive measures of success. Lost in the process was a commitment to discipleship of Christians in the whole council of God's Word, including the biblical worldview. At the macro level, the vision for cultural transformation in line with the advance of God's Kingdom was lost. As a result, many Christians in Africa are not consistently practicing what they say they believe. Rather, they are living their lives based on their largely subconscious Animistic metaphysic and the value system that logically flows from it. Tragically, many, if not most professed Christians in Africa have never had their "minds renewed" as the Apostle Paul exhorts in Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 10:5. Dr. Adeyemo bluntly states, "Africa has been evangelized but the African mind has not been captured for Christ."⁸¹

In addition to "born again" hearts, Christians need born again minds. At the dedication of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Charles Malik, at one time the President of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, stated:

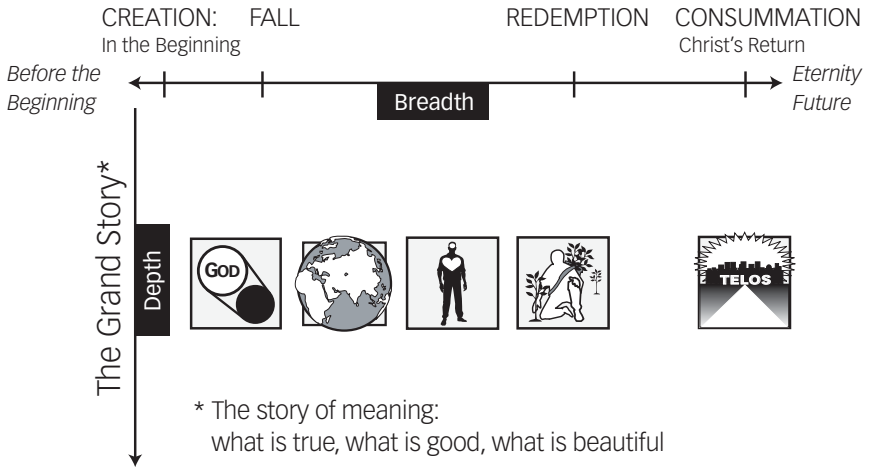
The problem is not only to win souls but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world you will soon discover you have not won the world. Indeed, it may turn out that you have actually lost the world."⁸²

To "win minds" as Mr. Malik suggests, Christians in Africa (and indeed everywhere) need to grasp a broader understanding of the Bible. The Bible is far more than a book of religion. It is more than a message of salvation—as central as that is. The Bible is the source of a comprehensive world and life view. The traditional belief systems of Africa must be replaced with an equally comprehensive biblical worldview. The biblical worldview is the "Transforming Story"—the meta-narrative that provides the only mental infrastructure capable of truly transforming individual lives and entire cultures. Only the biblical worldview is capable of providing the foundation for living lives of freedom, justice and compassion. Only the biblical meta-narrative provides the foundation for building healthy nations.

There is both breadth and depth to the biblical worldview. The *breadth* is revealed historically. The Bible reveals a God working in time to redeem creation from the effects of the Fall. This redemptive history can be subdivided into four phases: (1) The Creation, (2) the Fall, (3) God's work of redemption in history and (4) the final consummation. The *depth* of the biblical worldview entails the biblical view of God's existence, nature and character, as well as the biblical views of human nature and of creation.

Flow of HISTORY

The Redemption Narrative



The rule of law, personal liberty, economic freedom, internal self- government, civic (community) responsibility, respect for human rights are virtues derived from a biblical worldview. These virtues lead to increased social harmony, economic sufficiency, legal justice and national development. The root of the problem in Africa is an inadequate worldview. Thanks to God, through His Word, His Spirit and the living example of His Son, He has provided us with a worldview adequate for the development of our nations. There is hope for Africa. But it is not found in the West, it is found in the Word of God. It is not found in outside resources, it is found in a Biblical mindset!⁸³

Great and Precious Promises

Near the end of his life, the Apostle Peter penned these magnificent words:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness. *Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises*, so that through them, you may participate in the divine nature...” (2 Pe. 3-4, author’s italics added).

God’s nature and his promises form the bedrock for our development as Christians. This is true not only for us individually, but it is true for entire nations as well. God promised Abraham, the forefather of the nation of Israel and of the Church, that through him, *all nations* on earth would be blessed. Could this great and precious promise hold true for the nations of Africa? Because God is a truthful, promise-keeping God, we can answer this question with a resounding yes! In the next section, we will explore God’s promise to Abraham in detail, for it is here that we will begin to discover real hope for Africa.

Against All Hope – The Promise of God

Genesis 12:2-3 records God's remarkable promise to Abram (later Abraham). A promise made early in the first book of the Bible, but one that will take the entire course of human history to be fulfilled.

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

*"I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;*

*I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*

*I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;*

*and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you"* (Gen 12:2-3, author's italics added).

Let's take a closer look at this promise. Notice that the phrase "I will" is repeated six times. God says to Abram (1) *I will* bless you. (2) *I will* make you into a great nation. (3) *I will* make your name great. (4) *I will* bless those who bless you. (5) *I will* curse those who curse you. (6) *I will* bless all nations through you. Look carefully at this last "I will" promise. What is the focus? Nations! Nations are very much on the heart of God and are the focus of His redemptive mission. How many nations does He intend to bless? *All* nations—including *your* nation. God loves the nations. From Genesis to Revelation, over 2,000 times, the Scriptures refer to the nations. These references encompass all the nations, tribes and people groups in the world, including those on the great continent of Africa. While the circumstances of Africa today may seem hopeless, in the face of God's promise, nothing is hopeless. Against all hope, there is hope for Africa.

Against All Hope

In the fourth chapter of the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul refers to God's promise to Abraham several times. He describes the hopelessness of Abraham's situation when God made His astounding promise. The hopelessness derived from the fact that his wife Sarai (later Sarah) "was barren" (Gen. 11:30). Sarai not only did not have children, she *could not* have children. She was infertile, sterile. Not only was she barren, she was 75 years old. Even if she could have children, she was well past her child bearing years. The situation could not possibly be more hopeless. And yet, amazingly, when God made his promise, "Abraham," according to the Apostle Paul, "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Rm 4:3). The text continues:

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver

through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, *being fully persuaded* that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness" (Rm. 4:18-22, author's italics added).

Abraham's situation, humanly speaking, was hopeless. Yet he believed. He was fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He has promised. Because Abraham believed, against all hope, his faith was counted as righteousness.

Abraham's Hopeless Situation

So the promise was made, and Abram believed in God. But many years went by and nothing happened. No children were born. Abraham's faith began to weaken. Doubt crept in. Abraham began searching for man-centered ways for God's promise to be fulfilled. He suggested to the Lord that His servant, Eliezer, would be the heir of the promise. But God rejected this humanistic solution and reaffirmed his promise, telling him in no uncertain terms that an heir would come from his own body.

Then the word of the LORD came to [Abraham]: "[Eliezer] will not be your heir, *but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.*" He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and *count the stars*—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Abram believed the LORD, and *he credited it to him as righteousness.* (Gen 15:4-6, author's italics added).

Now, at age 85, ten years after the promise was given, Abraham *still* had no son. Once again his faith wavered and he casted about for another man-centered solution. This time, Sarah came up with a plan. Abraham's offspring could come by her maidservant Hagar. Abraham agreed and later, Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:1-4).

Fourteen years later, almost a quarter century after the promise was given, nothing had happened. Now Abraham was 99 years old and "as good as dead" (Rom. 4:18) and Sarah, now in her nineties, still had a lifeless womb. They could not be in a more hopeless situation. But God spoke once again and reminded Abraham of his promise:

God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him" (Gen. 17:15-19).

A year later—25 years after God first made the promise—it was fulfilled. Cynicism was turned to joy and faith was turned to sight. Sarah was transformed from a woman with a barren womb into a nursing mother. Isaac was born, and through Him, God rose up the nation of Israel—and from Israel, the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ was born. God’s promise to bless all nations through Abraham continues to be fulfilled to this very day.

Abraham, in Hope, Believed

Hopelessness is the place where hope is born. “Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be’” (Rom 4:18). In a hopeless situation, Abraham had hope—hope, not in his circumstances or his own ability, but in the One who made the promise. The One who created Sarah had the ability to bring life into her dead womb. As God reminded Abraham during their years of doubting, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Gen. 18:14) Paul tells us of Abraham “he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God” (Rm. 4:20). Despite the seeming unreasonableness of the promise, Abraham focused on the larger reality—the person, nature and trustworthiness of God. In spite of the hopelessness, he was “fully persuaded that God could and would do as he had promised” (Rm. 4:21). He glorified God for what God could and *would* do. Against all hope, Abraham believed that God would, as He had promised, give him a son.

Be Greatly Encouraged, Oh Sons and Daughters of Africa!

Similarly, the sons and daughters of Africa are in the midst of a seemingly hopeless situation. But hope exists. There is a great lesson to be learned from the story of Abraham and Sarah. Hope springs not from human effort, but from Almighty God. It was He who promised that, through Abraham, *all peoples on earth will be blessed*. Just as He kept his word to Abraham, He will be true to his promise to bless all nations—including the nations of Africa.

It is also critical to realize that this promised blessing will not come to Africa through the United Nations, or through foreign aid. It will come through the Church! God promised to bless all nations through Abraham’s offspring. As Paul makes very clear, Abraham’s offspring are not primarily those of common blood ancestry. His offspring are those who share the same faith in God that he possessed. In Genesis 15:6 we read these remarkable words, “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” Writing to Gentile Christians in the newly-formed Church many generations later, Paul explains the full picture of what these ancient words reveal:

The words “it was credited to him” were written not for [Abraham] alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. (Rm. 4:23, 24)

And

As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” [Abraham] is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17).

God is true to His word. He will bless the nations of Africa as He promised, and He will do so through the offspring of Abraham—that is, through those who share the same unshakable faith in God that Abraham had.

Here is the question: Is the Church in Africa fully persuaded that God has the power to do all that he has promised? Does the Church in Africa truly believe that God is able to bless all the nations of Africa? If the sons and daughters of Africa are not yet fully persuaded, they need to read more of the testimony of God, and Hebrews 6:13-18 would be a great place to start.

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged (Heb. 6:13-18).

The writer of Hebrews reveals that God made a promise to Abraham, and in addition He swore an oath (verse 17). Why did God take an oath in addition to making a promise when His word is already trustworthy? Verse 16 reveals the reason. He wanted to make the *unchanging nature* of his purpose *clear* to the heirs of the promise. He will absolutely do what He promised—and He promised that *all* nations would be blessed through the heirs of the promise, the Church. Furthermore, He did it so that we might be *greatly encouraged* (verse 18). God wants the nations of Africa to be greatly encouraged. Transformation is coming as a result of the complete trustworthiness of this promise.

Africa! Oh Africa. You are not cursed. You are blessed. You are blessed above every continent on earth. You are blessed with natural resources, blessed with an incredible heritage of the Gospel, and blessed with beautiful and imaginative people made in the image of God. More than all of this, you have been blessed with a promise—God's promise to Abraham that through the Church, all nations will be blessed. But will the fullness of the blessing come in this generation? If not in this generation, it will come when a new generation is *fully persuaded*.

The Transformation is Coming!

Anthropologist Margaret Mead was very astute when she commented, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that has ever happened.”⁸⁴ Transformation comes as one individual, one church, and one community is fully persuaded. And the transformation is beginning! Here are stories that reveal the first fruits of those who have been persuaded.

Kampala Pentecostal Church

Kampala Pentecostal Church in Uganda is an example of where church ministry in the community is bringing about transformation. Today, the church has more than 12,000 members and 900 cell groups.

In 2000, church membership was half what it is now. At that time, the church’s leaders attended a Disciple Nations Alliance (DNA) Vision Conference. These conferences cast a vision for biblical worldview and wholistic ministry. At each conference the concept of “seed projects” was taught. Seed projects are small wholistic ministry efforts that demonstrate God’s love in the community. These small efforts are accomplished with local resources, bathed in prayer, and led by the Holy Spirit. Seed projects often lead to larger, ongoing projects.

The Holy Spirit planted a desire in the leaders of Kampala Pentecostal Church to reach their city by demonstrating the love of God. The senior pastor, Gary Skinner, equipped and challenged his people to carry out seed projects. He asked every cell group to do at least two seed projects a year. He taught the cell leaders and members to look at their communities, identify the needs, and take ownership of the problems.

“The problems are not the *communities’* problems—they’re *our* problems!” Pastor Skinner says. “They’re not the government’s problems. The government can’t fix the problems because—although it may have a little bit of money—it has no love. Money does not solve problems. Love does! And if the government does it, God does not get the glory. But when the church does it with love, God gets the glory.

“Our cell members find a problem, take ownership of it, and lovingly engage in the community. Whatever the community’s problems are, those are the problems for which we do seed projects. We fix and clean wells so that the water is good again. We replaced a roof on a house for poor people—where the roof was leaking so badly, the people were wet and cold and sick. We provide food for orphans. We are looking after 1,200 orphans. Half of them live in homes we have built.”

One of the things every cell group of Kampala Pentecostal Church was asked to do was take ownership of a family that has AIDS, a major problem in Uganda. They go to the homes, hug the sick, and sit by their beds. Nearly every one of the AIDS patients comes to faith in Christ. When a patient is too sick to leave home, the church cell group meets in their home. They try to get medicine for them. When the patient dies, instead of the drunken orgy that commonly follows death, the group holds a worship service with the family. Many family members have come to faith in Christ because they have experienced Christ’s love.

Imagine the impact that at least 1,800 outreaches a year from 900 cell groups are making on the city of Kampala. The communities within the city of Kampala are taking notice. Even the Ugandan government has recognized what is happening.

Recently, it named Kampala Pentecostal Church one of the country's ten most influential organizations in combating AIDS.

That kind of testimony ought to be true of every church in Africa. If local communities do not see their churches as being strategically important to the health of the community, something is wrong. God intends His church to be precisely that important.

When churches reach out to their communities wholistically, meeting spiritual as well as physical, social and emotional needs, their evangelistic efforts are typically much more effective. This is certainly true of Kampala Pentecostal Church. The community respects and trusts the church. When the church conducts special events and invites the community, the people come. In 2003, the church produced the drama "Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames," presenting it four times a day for eight straight days. A capacity crowd of 2,000 attended each production. An altar call was given at the end of each presentation, and over 8,000 people came forward to indicate they wanted to become disciples of Jesus.

A School in Kagishu

"Kagishu" is a Swahili word that in English means "the knife." It is a slum community in Nairobi, Kenya—aptly named because it was dangerous to enter after dark. In 1998, a church of 20 people in this poor community sent a young man named Meshack to a Vision Conference in Nairobi. On his return, Meshack told his pastor that the church was not worshipping God in the way He desires, as taught in Isaiah 58. The people of the church were not demonstrating God's compassion toward those in need. He challenged the pastor to implement wholistic ministry in the community.

The pastor wondered how the church could meet the needs of others when its own members were so poor. After talking and praying, the church leaders made a plan to teach community children whose parents could not afford the costs of school. There were no trained teachers in their fellowship. Nevertheless, the pastor, his wife, and Meshack decided to teach—without pay. They took a survey to determine community interest and then opened a school in the small 10-foot by 10-foot room where the church met for worship.

Thirty children came the day the school opened. Within a year, it had grown to 313 students with a staff of six. In that time, church membership doubled, mostly because of the church's concern for the community. Today, the school has grown to approximately 450 children, with 20 paid staff members. The church has over 200 members, with four new congregations in other slums. Three additional primary schools and a secondary school have been started, and businesses have come to the area because they see opportunity there. Observable transformation is beginning to occur spiritually, educationally, and economically.

Joe Cotton

One Kenyan pastor, after attending a Vision Conference, realized that many people in his rural community live in poverty in a region that once supported the growing of cotton. He resigned his job in the city, organized a group of widows (many of whom had lost their husbands to AIDS) and began planting cotton. Four years later, those women supply cotton seed to the government and Pastor Joe sits on a national advisory board for the expansion of cotton production in Kenya. His church established a school for

over 300 students, a chicken raising project, a community well and a cornmeal grinding project—all because Pastor Joe gained a fresh vision for the God-given resources in his community and the strategic role of the local church in community transformation. *(This story is told by Dennis Tongoi, Samaritan Strategy Africa representative from Kenya.)*

A Civil Servant from Benin

A Christian sister who is a senior civil servant in the government of Benin attended a Vision Conference in Cotonou. During the conference she learned that God wanted her to glorify and honor Him in *all* areas of life—not just her spiritual life. This began to have a dramatic impact on her work ethic. She became more diligent and punctual. These changes were challenging. She met with opposition from her colleagues and subordinates who were convicted about their own lax work habits. However, her diligence was observed by her superiors, and within three months, she was promoted to the position of Deputy Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Today, she holds a cabinet position in national government—the first woman to hold such a position. She is so grateful to God, and to the Samaritan Strategy ministry, which according to her, teaches practical Christian principles that are key to nation-building and development. *(This story is told by Chris Ampadu, Samaritan Strategy Africa representative from Ghana.)*

A Mental Hospital in Ghana

New Fadama Church of Pentecost in Accra, Ghana caught a vision for its role in community transformation and decided to put feet to the vision by adopting the male ward of the principal mental hospital in Accra. The church spent over U.S. \$15,000 for new furnishings, paint, television sets, and other things for the patients as an expression of God's love and concern for these forgotten ones. *(This story is told by Chris Ampadu, Samaritan Strategy Africa representative from Ghana.)*

Micro enterprise in Ethiopia

In the late 1990's a Vision Conference was conducted at the 2,000 member Swedish Lutheran congregation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At the end of the conference, the 250 attendees committed to putting into practice what they learned, despite the fact that Ethiopia is one of the poorest nations on earth, and many of these church members struggled personally with poverty in their own families. As a result of the conference teachings on biblical worldview and wholistic ministry, the attendees began to share the little they had among the poor members in their congregation. This small seed project grew into a church-run micro-finance (revolving fund) assistance program. Today, over 60 poverty-stricken people from the church and the community have received funds, enabling them to support themselves and their families.

One loan recipient, Tadele, was over 50 years old and handicapped. Prior to receiving the loan, he provided for his daily needs by begging. Today, he is running a small business and earns his own income. In addition, he is contributing out of the minimum profit he gets to support the loan fund, enabling others to receive the same opportunity to earn a living. When asked how his life has changed, Tadele replies, "No more despair. No more worry where to turn to get money. I have my dignity back and am working by myself now." *(This story is told by Demelesh Lemma, Samaritan Strategy Africa Associate in Ethiopia.)*

Refugees Returning from Tanzania

After attending a Vision Conference in Rwanda in 1998, a pastor challenged the members of his church to assist returning refugees who had fled Rwanda as a result of the 1994 genocide. The church members welcomed these returnees, helped to rebuild their homes, brought them food and water, and helped their children return to school. The former refugees were astounded by the sacrificial love and generosity of the church members. Many in the church had friends or family who were murdered in the genocide—and the likelihood that the returning refugees included perpetrators of genocide was great. Still, these devoted Christians reminded the returnees that reconciliation comes by hearing the Word of God and demonstrating His love by loving those who have even killed our relatives. *(This story is told by Simon Nizaramakena, Samaritan Strategy Africa representative from Rwanda).*

Caring for “The Least of These”

Linda Pretorius from Otjiwarongo, Namibia shared the following story following her attendance at a Vision Conference in Windhoek in 2003:

I was greatly blessed and challenged by the conference. It confirmed the importance of Matthew 25:31-46, a passage that has been in my heart for many years. At the time of the Vision Conference I received a monthly income both from my farm and from a daytime occupation. As a result of what I learned, I resigned from my eight-to-five job to spend more time reaching out into the community in which I live.

My first seed project was providing shelter for a nine-year old girl named Vetupingena Kangombe. When I first met her, she was in poor health, living in dreadful housing conditions, couldn't read or write, and was totally neglected by family and friends. I decided to take her into my home care for her. Today, Vetupingena is eleven years old and doing very well as she moves towards God's intentions for her life. She now can read and write, do math, and is attending primary school. Vetupingena is still staying in my home. I'm busy discipling her. Sometimes I face a lot of challenges, but in the power of the Holy Spirit I carry on, knowing that from the seed that I sowed I will see a harvest.

Because of the influence of the Vision Conference, I'm involved in other community projects as well. I'm reaching out to street children and other neglected children. I participated in starting a feeding program with the owner of a local supermarket. He is now feeding 100 children on a regular basis. I'm serving on the committee of a local government initiative called the “Orphan and Vulnerable Children Program” (OVCP). On Mondays I minister to people on the rubbish dump outside of town. I also started a Bible Study group with four ladies in the Township. To God be all the glory! *(This story is told by Hein VanWyk, Samaritan Strategy Africa representative from Southern Africa).*

Windhoek Samaritan Ministry

The principles underlying the Samaritan Strategy are changing the Church in Namibia. Just as yeast works through dough, these ideas are influencing people and communities.

One significant development was the establishment of the *Windhoek Samaritan Ministry*, which is facilitating the wholistic community involvement of 104 organizations in and around the city of Windhoek. Facilitation includes mobilization of local churches, training and equipping, assessment and research, partnership development and coor-

dination of the "Week of Bounty".

Each year, as part of the process of mobilizing the Namibian Church for wholistic involvement in the community, the *Windhoek Samaritan Ministry* organizes a "Week of Bounty," in which congregations, individuals, businesses and organizations give individually and corporately to the poor and needy in the community. The donation of goods, ranging from food to furniture and toys, are being coordinated by the *Windhoek Samaritan Ministry* and stored at a central warehouse until they are to be sowed and distributed as seeds to the benefit and support of organizations and churches involved in the community. *(This story is told by Hein VanWyk, Samaritan Strategy Africa representative from Southern Africa).*

"These that have turned the whole world upside down are come hither also."

(Acts 17:6 KJV)

Endnotes

- ¹ The name "Africa" is of Celtic origin and means "pleasing or pleasant." Source <http://baby-names.adoption.com/search/Africa.html>.
- ² Formulated by Dr. Jun Vencer of DAWN Ministries
- ³ Operation World 2001
- ⁴ <http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/S/Sahara.html> from The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia Copyright © 2003, Columbia University Press.
- ⁵ www.calcademy.com
- ⁶ Statistics as of January 2005 from http://www.geohive.com/global/geo.php?xml=world&xsl=pop_region
- ⁷ Onyeani, Chika; *G8 Nations Fail Africa Again*; African Sun Times; June 17, 2004
- ⁸ Williams, Walter; *Africa's Tragedy*; www.gmu.edu/departments/economics/7/1/04
- ⁹ Ibid, Williams
- ¹⁰ See comparative statistics at: <http://mbgnet.mobot.org/fresh/rivers/long.htm>
- ¹¹ From page 7 of the ENCARTA 93 Encyclopedia, as quoted in Adeyemo, Dr. Tokunboh; *Africa's Enigma*; (below) pg. 2
- ¹² Adeyemo, Dr. Tokunboh; *Africa's Enigma*; a paper presented as a contribution to Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa, edited by Deryke Belshaw and Robert Calderisi, Regnum Books & World Bank Publications, 2002; pp. 4-7
- ¹³ ibid, Williams
- ¹⁴ ibid, Adeyemo; *Enigma*
- ¹⁵ Delawala, Imtiyaz; *What is Coltan?: the Link Between your Cell Phone and Congo*; ABC News: Nightline; January 21, 2002
- ¹⁶ ibid, Adeyemo; *Enigma*
- ¹⁷ ibid Williams
- ¹⁸ The Corporate Council on Africa; *Africa 2003*; pg?
- ¹⁹ ibid Africa 2003
- ²⁰ ibid, Adeyemo; *Enigma*; pg. 2
- ²¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.
- ²² *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.
- ²³ Werner, Roland, William Anderson, Andrew Wheeler; *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church Across 2000 Years*; Paulines Publications of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya; 2000; pg.23
- ²⁴ ibid Werner et. Al.; pg 23.
- ²⁵ Ibid Werner, et al; pg. 24
- ²⁶ ibid Werner, et al; pg. 25
- ²⁷ "African Popes: Black Catholics" article from website: <http://www.nbccongress.org/black-catholics/african-popes.asp>
- ²⁸ Felder, Dr. Cain Hope, *Blacks in the Bible and Biblical Lands*; pg. 3 (2/19/02) Internet
- ²⁹ Youmans, Dr. Elizabeth; Principia Corp. PowerPoint presentation. www.principiacorp.org
- ³⁰ Crittenden, Ann; *The Price of Motherhood*; Henry Holt and Company, New York; 2001; pg. 71
- ³¹ Operation World 2001
- ³² Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom, The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-2,12.
- ³³ Ezemadu, Reuben; Role of the African Church, Plenary: Affirming the Role of the Majority Church in World Missions, CM2000 29 December, 2000. <http://www.ad2000.org/celebrate/ezemadu.htm>

- ³⁴ OW 2001
- ³⁵ OW 2001
- ³⁶ Adeyemo, Dr. Tokunboh; *Africa's Enigma*;
- ³⁷ OW 2001
- ³⁸ *ibid* Roos; section 3.2
- ³⁹ *Poorest Countries in the World*; www.aneiki.com 6/30/04
- ⁴⁰ *ibid* Roos section 3.2
- ⁴¹ *ibid*, ADI 2003; pg. 314
- ⁴² 2004 figures from the United States CIA World Fact Book, online at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/xx.html>
- ⁴³ from Millennium Human Development Indicators online at http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicator/indic_287.html
- ⁴⁴ *ibid*, ADI 2003; pg. 314
- ⁴⁵ SIL International; Lingual Links Library (CD-RAM), 1999
- ⁴⁶ OW 2001
- ⁴⁷ OW 2001
- ⁴⁸ ODA , pg 315
- ⁴⁹ OW 2001
- ⁵⁰ Graphic from <http://www.unctad.org>, the World's 50 Least Developed Countries At A Glance, as posted on 5/19/05, Table and figures from The Least Developed Countries Report 2004 – Linking International Trade with Poverty Reduction (ISBN 92-1-112581-2).
- ⁵¹ Information Please® Database, © 2005 Pearson Education, Inc.; *World's 50 Poorest Countries, 2004*; <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908763.html>; 6/30/04
- ⁵² *Africa Home to World's Poorest Countries: U.N Report*; www.english1peopledaily.com; 7/1/04;
- ⁵³ www.GlobalIdeasBank.org; 7/1/04
- ⁵⁴ www.transparency.org; 6/30/04
- ⁵⁵ OW 2001
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid* AFRICA 2003
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid* AFRICA 2003
- ⁵⁸ Richburg, Keith B. *Out of America: A Black Man Confronts Africa*; Harvest Book, New Your; 1998; pg. 165-166.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid*; pg 173
- ⁶⁰ www.heritage.org; 7/1/04
- ⁶¹ www.freedomhouse.org; 7/1/04
- ⁶² *The UN List of World's 21 Forgotten Crises*; www.infoplease.com; 7/1/04
- ⁶³ *Ibid*, AFRICA 2003
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid*, AFRICA 2003
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid*, AFRICA 2003
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*, Adeyemo; *Enigma*; pg. 3
- ⁶⁷ *ibid*, Williams
- ⁶⁸ Roos, L. ;Economic Development in Africa; Unpublished Masters Thesis; University of Pretoria, RSA; 2004 paragraph 3.4.8
- ⁶⁹ The above statistics came from Helle Dale of the Heritage Foundation, in an commentary *Marshaling Aid for Africa*; The Washington Times National Weekly Edition, July8-14, 2002; pg 33
- ⁷⁰ *African Development Indicators 2003*; The World Bank; Washington, D.C., pg. 285
- ⁷¹ *ibid*, Richburg; pg 175
- ⁷² Bernstein, Andrew; *Capitalism Is the Cure for Africa's Problems*; www.capmag.com; 7/1/04
- ⁷³ Quoted in brochure Center for Biblical Transformation; page "0"

⁷⁴ Back jacket cover of Center for Biblical Transformation brochure

⁷⁵ Source: Human Development Report, 2004, United Nations. Web: hdr.undp.org or <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0778562.html>.

⁷⁶ quoted in a lecture by Dick Day: *The Truth for Youth*; Forum 2004, Pattaya, Thailand, October 2004

⁷⁷ Ibid day; pg. 2

⁷⁸ Why these missionaries were impacted with this dualistic distortion of the biblical worldview is a larger question that would distract from our main point in this paper. If you would like to learn more on this topic, I recommend the "Wholistic Ministry" unit of the online Disciple Nations Alliance course, and particularly the sub-section entitled "The Divided Mind and Divided Life." This can be found at

<http://disciple-nations.org/course/wholistic/course.php?a=4-1>

⁷⁹ Ibid Day, pg. 2

⁸⁰ Ibid Day, pg. 2-3

⁸¹ Ibid Day; pg 2

⁸² Ibid Day, pg. 2

⁸³ To explore the impact of worldview on cultural transformation in greater depth, I recommend the following: *Discipling Nations: the Power of Truth to Transform Culture* by Darrow Miller with Stan Guthrie (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1998), and *The Worldview of the Kingdom of God* by Scott Allen, Darrow Miller and Bob Moffitt, published by Food for the Hungry International, 2004.

⁸⁴ Ibid, Day

The Samaritan Strategy Africa

These stories are the result of the work of The Samaritan Strategy Africa, one of many ministries that God is using to awaken the continent. The steering committee for the Samaritan Strategy Africa is known as *The Africa Working Group*. This team is comprised of a growing number of individuals from across the continent.

The Samaritan Strategy Africa is part of a global movement known as the Disciple Nations Alliance (DNA) whose vision is to see every church in the world *envisioned* and *equipped* to function as intentional ambassadors of God's purpose, which is bringing the rule and reign of Christ into every area of life and every corner of society. DNA partners challenge the Church to return to a correct view of its mission, inspire a new vision for local ministry, and empower and equip believers to minister wholistically in their world, as Christ would.

These purposes are accomplished through a "school of thought" that involves the development and distribution of educational resources, conferences, training and networking. They are furthermore achieved through the local church, God's primary agency for accomplishing His purpose of transforming individuals, communities, regions and nations.

A Call for Reformation

In recent years, a fresh wind of the Spirit is blowing through the Church worldwide. There is a renewed interest in rediscovering the same scriptural principles and biblical worldview which led to the European Reformation four centuries ago—a reformation that changed the theological, political and economic spheres of society irrevocably. Those same principles are as important today as they were then. It is time for Christians in all nations to rise up and bring biblical truth into all spheres of society. For too many years the authority of Christ was limited to the four walls of the church building. But the church is not a building—it is a people. The Church gathers on Sunday to worship and to be equipped for service. Monday through Saturday she scatters into the market place and Public Square—into every sphere of society—to incarnate Christ and serve as ambassadors of His Kingdom. All over the world Christians are awakening to their responsibility to serve the poor and broken, and to influence whole nations for Christ to the glory of God.

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