

THE STATE OF THE UNREACHED AND THE GREAT CHALLENGE TO THE GHANAIAN CHURCH

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What the task is ...

- a. Joshua 18:1-6
- b. Joshua 13:1-8
- c. Deuteronomy 1:6-8

The task of World Evangelization is that there are people groups and nations (ethnic groups) that have not been penetrated by the gospel message as yet. Though we have large numbers of people attending church service in some parts of Ghana, there are large numbers who have not yet heard the gospel of Jesus Christ – here in Ghana. For example, in 1989, it was recognized that there were 15,000 towns and villages without the presence of a gospel. By 1993, this number was put

at 14,000 towns and villages with no viable church planted. There is a clear indication that the greatest concentration of unreached people groups are in the Northern sector of the country and they are made up of specific People Groups in Ghana and also scattered people groups from other countries.

- They are Unreached because they do not yet have a reproductive church that will evangelize their population.
- They are Unreached because the word of God is not available to the people in their mother tongue.
- They are Unreached because of the few missionary workers among them.

Who are the unreached and why are they not reached? Revelations 7:9; 5:9 – from every nation, tribe, tongues/language, and people.

Unreached People Group	Pop. in Ghana	Location in Ghana	World Pop.	Main Religion	Evangelicals	Bible
Anufo/Chokossi	111,000	N/E Ghana	223,000	Ethnic Religions	2%	New Testament
Arab	3,000	Scattered	1,092,000	Islam	0.50%	Complete
Banda –Ligbi	24,000	Brong Ahafo	32,000	Islam	0.02%	None
Chakali	15,000	Wa East	15,000	Ethnic Religions	1.50%	None
Chala	4,700	Upper West, near Wa	4,700	Ethnic Religions	1%	None
Foodo	1100	Scattered	44,000	Islam	0.01%	None
Fulani - Massina	13,000	Scattered	1,772,000	Islam	0.04%	New Testament
Gonja	377,000	Northern Ghana	377,000	Islam	0.50%	Complete
Hausa	290,786	Various	35,396,000	Islam	0.00%	Complete

Indo Pakistani	10,000	Various	1,315,000	Hinduism	Few – Less than 2%	Complete
Jula, Dyula	68,045	Ivory Coast Border	2,387,000	Islam (99%)	0.70%	New Testament
Kamara	7,200	Northern	Undetermined	Islam	Undetermined	None
Kantosi	3,600	Sandema District	3,600	Islam	0.20%	None
Kotokoli	163,000	Northern Volta	456,000	Islam	0.10%	Ongoing NT
Mamprusi	385,000	Northern Region	402,000	Ethnic Religions	0.20%	New Testament
Madinka	129,000	Scattered	1,735,000	Islam (85%)	0.50%	Complete
Nanumba	100,367	Northern Region	-	Ethnic Religions	0.10%	Complete
Songhai Koyraboro	9,600	Scattered	2,320,000	Islam (98%)	0.30%	Portions
Wala	103,000	Upper West	103,000	Islam	1.50%	New Testament
Zerma	9,300	Various	4,571,000	Islam	0.10%	Complete

Source: Adapted from Joshua Project. www.joshuaproject.net and Field Study results (2017) - with Ghana Statistical Service figures for the 2010 Census.

As at the time of publishing this paper, the Chinese immigrant numbers in Ghana is said to have hit the highest in Africa. The population of 700,000 immigrants cannot be confirmed from official sources, the Chinese are scattered all over the country, especially, in the main mining communities. Currently, there are no known plans and agendas targeting evangelism and discipleship among them. Wikipedia’s reports on the subject refer to church leaders making pleas for the influx and the huge population of Chinese to be considered.

What should be our response?

We need a critical mass of people who are ready with their skills to reach out to the frontier Lines – go to places which are not yet touched by the gospel effectively, storm the devil’s camp and sow the seeds of the word of life. The need is for people who are PREPARED TO GIVE THE LAMB, THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERING – a resolved group of people who want

to see something extraordinary happen. The critical factor is sending the LIGHT into the dark corner so that the power of darkness will be dispelled. The existing light will continue its work. What we need is to SET A REVOLUTION FOR CONVERSIONS IN MOTION. Evangelism per se is good but revolves around areas already touched by the gospel and needing further penetration.

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Challenges Facing Missions in Africa today

Africa is currently the HUB OF MODERN CHRISTIANITY – the numbers are huge and breaking on the seams. A critical need in the African Church is her readiness to be a FORMIDABLE SENDING CHURCH. Though the human resources seem to be available, the Church is not ready with FINANCIAL RESOURCES to release its labor force. Most of our resources are locked up in building projects and expansionary efforts. The most prosperous churches have ambitious building programs instead of a missionary

agenda. The prayer meetings are focused on the needs of members rather than on the needs of the UNREACHED AND LEAST REACHED. **Financial pledges are rarely redeemed if people ever promise to support a particular missionary.** The challenge then is that **the missionary family suffers and does the work at their own risk** with little or no support from the general church. Research shows that the African Church sends its missionaries with ‘THE LORD BE WITH YOU’ (James 2:14-16). On a scale of 6, missionary support rates 4 (WEA – Missions Commissions 2003). We don’t have statistics or research into mission-funding as the West does through organizations like the Empty Tomb (Empty Tomb 2006).

Generally speaking, **Africa is not yet out of the economic quagmire and there are several countries and geographical areas in most countries where poverty is a sink-hole for resources** that could have been channeled to missionary activity in the region. In the name of economic hardship, therefore, most Christians are not ready to contribute to support missions outside their home area. Mission fields have become quite perpetual and are continuing to ask for financial help. A large percentage of funds used in missionary work in Africa is still sourced and derived from the West – or sent from African Churches situated in the West.

Another key challenge facing Africa is **the upsurge of mercenary and religious acrimony against the Christian cause.** As the world wakes up to Africa’s power of growth in Christianity, it is also true that Africa has become the target of many major world religions who are also asking for their portion of the human pie. It is not hard to find Al Shabab, Boko Haram, and the likes targeting Christian belts in some key countries on the continent.

It is also true that **Africa’s manpower is still on the move to the spiritually dry West (especially Europe) and without a strategic plan to engage Africans in the diaspora,** we may be losing young Christians and unsettled Christians in the graveyard of ancient Christianity. However, if we strategize well, the torch of African Christianity can light

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up the West and influence it – not just creating a sub-culture in the West.

Another factor worthy of consideration is **the renaissance of African Traditional Religion** in the name of African scholarship. An example is the Africanity religion in Ghana and the cultic systems resurrecting among African politicians for the wielding of power - for both economic and protective reasons.

A heinous factor is **the African Church’s rush for the prosperity gospel.** There is absolutely nothing wrong with money as the Bible says that ‘money answers all things.’ But should money answer the need for shoes without helping save eternal souls? Where is the balance required by scripture? The bane is that as we preach the ‘prosperity gospel without a commensurate emphasis on GIVING FOR GODLY PURPOSES, Christians make money to enlarge their territories and become ‘SHOWERS’ of blessings and not GIVERS OF LIFE. The Abrahamic Covenant is a Top Line as well as a Bottom Line Blessing. We are blessed to be a blessing.

The African Church is strong in the chapels and not effective, and up to the CHALLENGE OF TRUTH AND POWER in the open. Many people are not disciplined enough and are not prayed up enough. **The majority of the Church is still quite dependent on clerical leadership and is not fully released.** “My pastor says” is still reigning.

An added challenge of the African Church is a huge nominalism – people whose names are on church registers but are not committed to the faith, neither are they nurtured to impact their world. Nominalism makes the Church lame and unable to partake in the relay race (batons are not passed on to the

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next generation in the right way). The most recent GEC survey still shows that nominalism is still a disease we need to tackle if we are to become truly MISSIONARY IN OUR OUTLOOK. The report indicates that 29.5% of the Upper East Christians don’t attend Church whilst, the numbers for Upper West and Northern Regions are 31.75 and 12.8% respectively.

Added to other religions and no religion, the total percentage of the population not attending Church is as follows:

- 1. Upper East: 97.8%
- 2. Upper West: 87.5%
- 3. Northern: 91.8%

The Ghanaian Church talks a lot but does not have a CONSENSUS NATIONAL AGENDA to finish the unfinished task.

What Pioneer Missionaries had and what they achieved

It is important to note that PIONEER MISSIONARIES to Africa did not have the privileges we have today such as speed in mobility, relative safety, health facilities, and the power of communication which enable us to reduce stress levels and keep in touch with family and friends even in the heart of missionary fields. I communicate with most of the missionaries in Ghana, Togo, and

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Cote d’Ivoire under my supervision apart from missionary friends I have across the world. I live in Ghana and attend School in the US, accessing resources on search engines in the UK and elsewhere.

A typical example: God called Pioneer Missionaries from Europe into the then Gold Coast when Africa was referred to as

the ‘dark continent’ because the light of the gospel had not yet penetrated idolatry and wickedness. Today there are dark communities around us and beyond. In 1847, four (4) young men were commissioned and sent by the Bremen Mission in Germany. They traveled by sea for 49 days (17th May to 5th May 1847) and arrived at Cape Coast with no official welcome but were later received by the Methodist missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman. Whist two traveled on to Gabon and were resisted by the French government, one died after an illness and the other returned to Cape Coast where he met the news of another of the four colleagues who had also died. The surviving 2, Lorenz Wolf and Graf sought advice and were made aware that the Peki people needed help and so they walked for 5 days from

Accra to Peki but shortly after, Graf also died. Hence in 6 months, three of the four missionaries died and Lorenz Wolf the only survivor did not understand the Ewe language, didn’t have a house, and had to use an interpreter who wasn’t good in English and was not a believer. Two more young missionaries – Quinius and Groth were sent with insufficient funds, the challenge of sickness, diet problems, etc. Lorenz Wolf later became very sick after the fiancée arrived in Peki – he was rushed home to Germany but died just on arrival.

However, these pioneers tackled important aspects of our culture and economy – education, agriculture, linguistics, and human resource development. The seeds sown yesterday are the fruits we see today. If we stop sowing seeds today, there are no fruits for the future. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Global Evangelical Church are direct spiritual descendants of such turbulent beginnings.

Light in the Tunnel: What do we have today as positive fruit of the Missionary Labours? (Dorkunor, 2011)

- Leadership in the Church and Society has been developed over the years
- A young and zealous (youthful) missionary force is available
- A buoyant private Christian University system and its upsurge is in view
- Resource rich-ness – support for proper exploration, exploitation, and management.
- What is MISSING is the MOBILIZATION AND MOTIVATION dimension from the various African countries. IFES, CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST, SCRIPTURE UNION, NAVIGATORS, and many denominational campus/student movements are prevalent on the continent. Most of these are already being led and directed by Africans with verifiable results and integrity.
- Mentoring and Young Leaders Movements are springing up continuously – Lausanne, WEA, MANI ELN, GPA, and OC collaborations are also now being promoted.
- Nigeria’s vision 50/15, MANI, etc. is stimulating the faith of many Africans regarding venturing into the deep sea of missions for God. This mimics how North Africa led the theological development of Christianity (though it lost the opportunity to mobilize the then Church for greater missions and lost the battle in its backyard).

The Great Challenge To The Ghanaian Church

Joshua 18 is a great warning chapter for the Church. Un-occupied territories would become a snare and torn in our flesh. Let us look around us and see what the roots of conflict and warfare are in the African regions – Boko Haram of Nigeria, the Devastation of the Central African Republic, and the military resurgences in Somalia. You can fill in the gaps for yourself. If we leave an unreached territory and care less about it, we will wake up one day to pay a higher price of lost lives, militarization, and forced religious wars. Spiritual apathy breeds thorns and thistles in the backyard of the Church. There are many forgotten groups of people and clusters of people not being reached with the normal church and we need to locate and minister to them effectively. The Church/Individual must wake up to the challenge of the unfinished business.

God's Expectation: Revelations 7:9

“God had an only Son and He made Him a missionary” – David Livingstone

“If God wills the evangelization of the world and you refuse to support missions, then you are OPPOSED to God” Oswald J. Smith

EVERY BELIEVERS' ROLE: GO, PRAY, GIVE, AND SEND.

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