

Disciple Making  
Movements  
take hold

# AFRIGO

Encouraging the Church in world mission

Sierra Leone:  
Churches in  
every city!

Volume 1, Issue 2



**MANI 2016: Hearing  
and obeying God in  
times like these**



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**Cover:** MANI Coordinator Dr. Reuben Ezemadu with his wife, Bosede Olaitan Ezemadu. Photo by Suzanne Green.

*\*Recognising that God can and does work through various means, it is not the editors' intent to officially endorse or oppose the use of Disciple Making Movements in ministry contexts.*

## SIM

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### Engaging Africa through Disciple Making Movements

Not a programme, strategy, technique or curriculum, DMM is resulting in strong, obedient churches in Africa and globally.



### We do whatever it takes to start new churches!

Making use of DMM principles, Shodankeh Johnson and team have planted thousands of churches in Sierra Leone and beyond.



### Perspective: MANI 2016

"It is time to give room and space for the direction of the Holy Spirit, distinguishing between God's voice and the voice of man."



### People Groups: The Displaced

Today Africa, along with many other parts of the world, is witnessing global migration on a staggering scale. Hundreds of thousands from other faith traditions have ended up on our doorstep.

# AFRICANS AND GOD'S MISSION

When it comes to God's global mission, Africans are often considered newcomers to the table. It was not too long ago that Africa was described as the "dark continent," not because there was no electricity, but because the life-giving light of the gospel was dim. At great cost, many came so that we could partake in God's great love expressed in Christ and participate in his amazing redemptive work: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

But, wait a minute, are Africans really the newcomers? Acts seems to suggest otherwise. In fact, Africans were at the very forefront of the first spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem and Judea. In Acts 11:19-20, we read:

*"So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."*

Men of Cyprus in the Mediterranean, and Cyrene in Africa (today's Libya) were breaking the gospel out of its Jewish culture and captivity by preaching to Gentiles in Antioch. Until

then, the gospel had been confined to the Jews, but these outsiders, lovers of our Saviour, broke the taboo. Surprise, surprise, "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21).

Amazing work was done through these Mediterranean and African men who chose to take the gospel of Christ beyond barriers. As believers in Antioch were laying hands on the first church-commissioned missionaries (Acts 13), behold, a man from Africa, Lucius of Cyrene, was again present. He and possibly Simon called the Black (perhaps an African, or he may have had a nickname), along with a converted Ethiopian eunuch, were among the representatives of this continent in the opening

chapters of the gospel's journey to the nations.

Now God is calling Africans to make the closing argument for this life-giving gospel. Whatever statistics you view, it is evident that the once dark continent is now a beacon of light. Africa is home to the largest Evangelical Christian population in the whole world. It is for this reason that the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) is sounding the call to all African believers: it is time to take our rightful place in taking the gospel to the nations. For generations Africa has received the blessings of the gospel. Now God is calling us, as He called our pioneers in Acts, to break down a different kind of barrier to the gospel.

Today, many places in

the world are not safe for Westerners but Africans can live there without fear or concern. Many world religions are suspicious of Westerners, but would not think twice about an African. God is inviting us to be a solution to such barriers to the gospel. He is calling us to help make the closing argument as we proclaim Christ, making his disciples among those who currently would otherwise live and die without hearing the gospel. Join us in crossing all barriers to express the love and compassion of Christ among communities where He is least known.

**Rev. Dr. Joshua Bogunjoko**  
**SIM International Director**





# ENGAGING AFRICA THROUGH DISCIPLE MAKING MOVEMENTS



***'DMM is a movement of God. Our sovereign God is passionately pursuing the lost to bring them to himself.'***

-Younoussa Djao  
Africa Director  
CityTeam International

**Among other topics, MANI 2016 emphasised Disciple Making Movements (DMM). Not a programme, strategy, technique or curriculum, DMM is resulting in strong, obedient churches in Africa and globally.**

**Key elements include:**



## WILLINGNESS TO DO THINGS GOD'S WAY

Although there has been tremendous growth in the Church in Africa, there remains much to do. Current approaches to church planting and disciple making often limit the work to specialised people who are highly trained. This takes a lot of time and limits the expansion of the work to a very small percentage of people. DMM encourages an approach that involves everyone: ordinary believers who, with God's help, will do extraordinary things.

## PRAYER AND FASTING

DMM is rooted in prayer. Every part of church planting needs to be bathed in prayer. Otherwise it is like trying to fly without wings. Pray, pray and keep on praying.

By praying, disciple makers are aligning themselves with God and concentrating on God's will. Prayer and fasting takes us to the "frontline": we go into the camp of the Enemy because we long to see people released. As we pray and fast, we will hear from God.

## PERSON OF PEACE

A Person of Peace is someone who is open to the gospel and is asking spiritual questions, a "worthy person," according to Matthew 10:11. They will use their relationships to introduce disciple makers to members of their family and community. God has prepared this person, who is usually someone with influence, in advance through his Holy Spirit.

The Person of Peace can be male or female, young or old. If you are not successful in finding a Person of Peace, you must move on.

## ACCESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Ministry gives us a good reason to be in a community where we have no established relationships. If you have a job that will bless others, this can be a valuable way to connect. Everybody should have a platform for reaching others. An unreached villager may say, "Why have you come here?" And you can reply, "I am a teacher and I have heard that you need a school."

"Tentmaking" has long been recognised as an effective way to reach others for Jesus. "It gives every believer the opportunity to be an ambassador for the Lord," says Aila Tasse, East Africa Coordinator of CityTeam International.

This kind of ministry is also a way to extend the love of Jesus and to meet their needs. When you have gained access to a community, you can begin to look for a Person of Peace.

## DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

"When it comes to the Bible, the Church is used to having experts to teach and preach and tell people what to believe," says Younoussa Djao. "But in Discovery Bible Study (DBS) we don't teach or preach – we facilitate the process of discovery. People discover God's truths for themselves and then they obey. There is a place for teaching and preaching, but these must come after discovery."

DBS makes use of a series of simple, inclusive questions. People who take part in it form strong biblically and culturally relevant churches in their communities.

# WE DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO START NEW CHURCHES!

**SHODANKEH  
JOHNSON**



***The son of a Methodist father and a mother from a Muslim background who became a Christian, SHODANKEH JOHNSON serves with New Harvest Global Ministries in Sierra Leone. Making use of the principles of Disciple Making Movements (DMM), he and his team have planted thousands of churches in Sierra Leone and beyond.***

When going into a village, town or city to share the good news of Christ and plant a new church, it is important to first look for a “person of peace.” This is someone who is open to the gospel. We normally try to engage them using the story method of Bible teaching. They may be going through some particular issue at that time – for example, there may be a problem with their family. So we focus on one particular element of the story first, something that’s especially relevant and helpful to them at that time.

This creates a bridge, and a relationship is built. Once the relationship is established, there is trust. And once there is trust, we can begin to tell God’s story, starting with creation. As a result, we’ve been able to start churches – a lot of churches – in every city in Sierra Leone and beyond.

Our team includes people from various professional backgrounds. And all of them are trained church planters. Often when we enter a village that is resistant to the gospel, we sit with the elders and help them to determine and prioritise the community’s needs. Together we help them find a way of meeting the most pressing ones.

For example, they may need a school. We have started more than 47 schools, which especially benefit girls. And we

have also established trade schools for young adults. Everywhere that we have established a school, we have also planted a church.

Our agriculturalists give people seeds to plant and teach them a better way to reap a harvest. In the process, they tell their stories and start a new church. As well as seeing spiritual transformation, we also witness socio-economic transformation as we help people to become more productive and happier citizens. We also have a microfinance scheme, and we advocate for the victims of injustice.

We take a very wholistic approach to church planting and we do whatever it takes. Once, during a medical training I did in the US, I met a dentist who became passionate about wanting to help us. So I asked him if he would come to Sierra Leone and train some of my team to clean, fill and extract teeth. “You must be joking!” he said. “It has taken me seven years of training to become a dentist.”

Eventually he spent 10 days teaching the team theory and did 10 days of practical training. To his surprise, our church planters distinguished themselves! So now we can also meet dental needs as we continue to serve God in establishing his Church and making disciples.



# MANI 2016: HEARING AND OBEYING GOD IN TIMES LIKE THESE

**REUBEN  
EZEMADU**

*More than 560 delegates from over 50 countries gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 7-11 March for the third consultation of the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI). We met in the African Union Centre, where heads of African states and their representatives regularly deal with issues affecting our continent. Significantly, Ethiopia represents Africa's early and unbroken connection with the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Acts 8:27-39).*

MANI's purpose is to affirm, motivate, mobilise and network Christian leaders (churches) by inspiring them with the vision of reaching the unreached and least evangelised in Africa, and the wider world, through advocacy and support for National Initiatives, the communication of up-to-date research, reports and models; and consultations and prayer efforts focusing on the unfinished task. At MANI 2016, with the theme "Hearing and Obeying God in Times Like These," we placed ourselves alongside the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to his Church in Africa regarding our mission in the world.

We considered "God's movements" as opposed to "Man's plan," recognising that God causes or allows situations in order to bring about a movement. The story of Joseph illustrates this (Genesis

37:27-28; 39:1; 45:5-8). In all such movements God calls for our attention. He invites us to see what He sees, hear what He hears and then take part in his rescue mission. What will our response be? Will we be content to settle for a "monument," or will we embrace God's movements and obey?

One clear example of a current movement of God is Disciple Making Movements. DMM in Africa and other parts of the world are challenging traditional methods of church planting. We rejoice to see disciple makers who go on to make other disciple makers. We delight to witness the establishment of strong, obedient churches throughout the continent.

Of course, the key is acknowledging that the Holy Spirit must be the "Director of Missions" as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission. It is time to give room and space for the direction of the Holy Spirit, distinguishing between God's voice and the voice of man.

Together we considered the challenges faced by the persecuted Church. We agreed that we are called to reach out in love to all people who do not yet know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. We looked at the benefits and challenges of globalisation, and we remain committed to bringing the gospel in the idiom, heart language and cultural context of every community.

We acknowledged the effect of migration in today's world: bringing the

unsaved to our doorstep and also giving the African diaspora opportunities to share the gospel in their new homes. We want to commit ourselves to being an effective missions force for the Lord wherever we live.

Other emphases of MANI 2016 included recognising emerging leaders, the need to increase our evangelistic efforts in North Africa, the Middle East and Europe; and acknowledging that effective mission requires the involvement of both men and women.

Our consultation was characterised by an emphasis on prayerful openness to hearing from God. He has called us to greater devotion to himself, assuring us that He will use the Church in Africa as His instrument to reach Africa and the rest of the world, knowing that the advance of His kingdom does not come by power or might, but by his Spirit (Zechariah 4:6).

May the Church in Africa not rest until the whole world is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

*Dr. Reuben Ezemadu is the Continental Coordinator for the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI). He is the founding (and currently International) Director of the Christian Missionary Foundation Inc. in Nigeria and serves on SIM's West Africa Office Board.*



# GO! NEWS OF AFRICA'S MOBILISING CHURCH



## Nigeriens celebrate completion of Tamajaq New Testament

After 30 years of hard work, the New Testament in Tamajaq is complete. The complex translation process required the collaboration of many people. A work of this magnitude necessitates a large team, significant prayer and steady finances.

"It was a large task, but in each moment of weakness we entrusted ourselves once again into God's hands," said a member of the translation team. "The Word of God is life for us. How can people understand his word if it is not in their heart language? It is a miracle that testifies to the greatness of Christ, who loves every language and desires to be praised in each one."

On 2 January Christians gathered at an Assemblies of God church to joyfully celebrate the new translation. A number of Nigerien language groups were represented, and took turns praying over the new translation. "The whole world benefits every time the Word of God is translated into a new language," said a local believer as he stood to read from the new translation. "It is through God's word that we learn how to have a relationship with Him. We rejoice because we have his word in our hands, and today it is in our language."

The Tamajaq who live in Niger belong to a larger group of nomadic, Berber-speaking Tamajaq who dwell in an area stretching from the western Sahara to western Sudan. They are divided into several main political groups or tribal units. Most follow a passive form of Islam, infused with folk beliefs and magic.

"It is a great day for the Nigerien Church," said one Tamajaq Christian. "We congratulate the translation team, but this is not the end. Now we must read the word! Every believer, no matter their job, can use this word to bring our nation to Christ. God will use it to reach others through us."

## One-day sale supports missionaries

SIM's East Africa Office has mobilised people around Addis Ababa for an annual one-day market that's making a big difference to African missionaries' financial support! There is no bargaining and there are no professional merchants. But photos of missionaries are available, as well as information about the purpose of the market. Committed volunteers help the customers, reminding them why they are getting great prices.

The organisers encourage Christians to contribute gently used things to help East African international missionaries with unexpected or one-time expenses. Missionaries and others donate their time to prepare, price, display and sell these items. Some of their children contribute by donating their toys.

Last year's sale raised more than US \$3,000 to help two African missionaries in Asia with their housing need. Another fundraiser supported an African couple working among a semi-nomadic group.

## Liberia: radio programmes inspire vision for mission

With his background in news reporting, ELWA (Eternal Love Winning Africa) radio broadcaster Steve Debleh always has his ear to the ground. As he personally monitors the experiences of Christians and the Church around the world, he wants to make Liberian Christians more aware of what is happening to fellow believers far and near.

Three times a week he produces a 15-minute programme called "News of the Church World" for ELWA Radio. He does some local footwork to cover Liberian church programmes and news, then fills additional time with stories of Christians from Mali to Pakistan, especially those who are being persecuted.

Pastors tell Debleh they use his stories as sermon illustrations and for prayer, to inform their congregations of the sacrifice that some believers are making for their faith. Debleh says that he wants Liberians to be aware that they might need to "develop an elephant skin, when these things come closer." He notes that Liberia has a large Christian population, with pressure from all sides to make Muslim converts. Hearing stories of how God is working in hidden places inspires courage and vision for mission among Liberian believers.

*Photo by Warwick Walker*



# WHY WE GO



## People Groups: The Displaced

### Ask God To

- Forgive us for being slow to respond to the needs of the displaced.
- Give us understanding and wisdom as we consider the plight of refugees and reach out to them!
- Send out gospel-hearted professionals to care for refugees and provide opportunities for them to hear the truth of Christ in a language they can understand.
- Touch the hearts of the persecutors and those responsible for unrest, that they may have a life-changing encounter with the Lord, much like Saul on the road to Damascus!

Today the African continent, along with many other parts of the world, is witnessing global migration on a staggering scale. Driven by economic distress, political and social upheaval, war or natural disaster people are taking to the road. Hundreds of thousands from other faith traditions – especially Islam and Buddhism – have ended up on our doorstep.

Uprooted peoples have many names: migrants, refugees, exiles, fugitives, displaced persons, trafficking victims and asylum seekers. They share a common vulnerability and have experienced trauma. Fleeing persecution, atrocity and hardship, they embark on treacherous journeys by foot, by cart, by raft and by bus. Some die along the way. Many families are torn apart.

Entire villages flee Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria and Al Shabaab in Kenya. Meanwhile since the Syrian Civil War began in March 2011, more than half of the country's 22 million people have been forced to leave their homes.

Urban centres swell with economic migrants. Survivors of the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal and Afghanistan must either rebuild or relocate.

As Christians, we are called to minister to the oppressed for their physical needs (James 1:27) and to pray for their eternal salvation. Together let's use these horrific situations for good. God is providing his Church with a window of opportunity for the truth of the gospel to be shared and adopted by many.

In the midst of the statistics, let us remember one story: In the dead of night a young man and his wife rise from their beds, swiftly pack a few belongings and wake their young son. They flee into the darkness, leaving behind possessions, livelihood, friends, neighbours and home. A very long journey lies ahead to a safe haven they have never seen before, a place where the language, food, culture and religion will be utterly foreign. Soon after their departure, a political tyrant unleashes a massacre in their community.

This story is happening today; it is also Jesus' story. At birth he was the child of homeless, migrant parents forced to leave their town at the decree of foreign occupiers. Soon afterwards he was the child of fugitives. From his birth in an animal shelter to his early childhood in exile, Jesus' life echoes the reality of millions of children and their families today.

Our churches have been slow to respond to the amazing opportunities presented by today's mass migration of peoples. May we now commit ourselves to exploring and developing effective ways of reaching out to those who have been uprooted.

*He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. Deuteronomy 10:18-19*

*Photo by Simon Awan*