

AFRIGO

Encouraging the Church in world mission

Volume 5, Issue 4

From Zimbabwe to Mexico

How we did it: Financing missions

Cultural differences: How a team overcame

MULTI-CULTURAL TEAMS:
REFLECTING THE WHOLE CHURCH
TO THE WHOLE WORLD

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AFRIGO is a publication aimed at raising awareness, mobilising, training and inspiring churches and individuals in Africa towards global mission.

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UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

Our world has become very diverse and is becoming more diverse as people move around more easily and quickly than in previous years. Both corporate businesses and Christian organisations seek ways to improve their places of work and ministry in order to thrive and attract people from different cultures.

In recent years, the topic of multiculturalism and multi-cultural teams has become popular and many books and articles have been published. But for Christian missions, working cross-culturally has been part of the game right from the beginning. The story of the early church is all about crossing boundaries.

The book of Acts narrates the movement of the gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, fulfilling Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8. Like ripples caused by a stone dropped into a pool of water, the witness of Jesus' followers extends to new people groups in ever widening geographical areas. The Holy Spirit guides and empowers this movement from beginning to end.

The first signs of the cross-cultural gospel appear on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by the miracle of people from all nations hearing the Good News in their own language. This event indicates that the gospel is not confined to

any single nation or tongue. It can address all people in their own 'heart language', which is a foundational pillar for the church in mission.

The story of Peter and Cornelius paves the way for a mission to Gentiles (Acts 10). We see an actual example of that mission in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26). This is the first multi-cultural church, where Jewish and Gentile Christians worship, and apparently, share meals together — a big issue in their cultural world! How interesting to note that the first multi-cultural church was also the first missionary sending church!

Under the guidance of the Spirit, they sent out Paul and Barnabas on the first 'overseas' mission to Gentiles as well as Jews (Acts 13:1-3). Mission today does not remain the activity of lone Christians but is the calling of the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

A beautiful picture of the people of God in the end times is seen in Revelation 7:9. "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands."

God's people are multi-ethnic, multi racial and multi-cultural. To reach the entire world for Jesus, biblical diversity is required. A diverse team is better equipped

to reach people in diverse contexts; it also models the gospel's relevance for people of every culture.

Duane Elmer, author of many books on cross-cultural ministry, describes obvious benefits to multicultural teams. When God created the world, He pronounced it good. This proclamation allows us to celebrate the diversity of God's creation in cultures (Cross-Cultural Conflict, 1993, 13). Therefore, although there are challenges, the benefits are great.

In this issue, you will read how a multi-cultural team in Tanzania has been able to thrive over the years. Gédéon Mashauri's training article will introduce to us several ways that cultures different from one another. Stephen Nitte of Nigeria, having served on teams in Malawi and Niger, will share wisdom from the Apostle Paul in Acts 17. You will also read how three mission agencies in Ghana are raising funds to send youth on short-term missions trips beyond Ghana. Lastly, you will learn about the Antanala people of Madagascar for focused prayer. Enjoy reading!

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WHAT HELD US TOGETHER: DIVERSE YET UNIFIED

More than ten years ago, God led Africa Inland Mission to mobilise a multicultural team to work among unreached rural people groups in Tanzania. Committed to the Lord and to their common vision, the team launched into ministry. The challenges of working in a rural setting with Muslims were many, but the team soon faced another hurdle: their many different cultural backgrounds. AfriGO interviewed the team about their story. It is both instructive and inspirational.

Cultural Misunderstandings

Opportunities for misunderstanding first came during weekly team meetings before they knew each other well. In some African cultures, married women remain silent when their husbands are present, trusting them to speak for the couple. A married woman from the UK, however, shared her opinion freely. The Western women thought the married African women were quiet and shy but discovered in one-on-one meetings that their sisters were animated and talkative.

African teammates wanted to discuss personally areas of conflict on the agenda in order to reach consensus before the meeting. To the Westerners, the meeting was the right place for those discussions, but the Africans saw this as confrontational. Sharing one-on-one their feelings about the meetings,

itself a process of gaining trust and understanding personal backgrounds, identified this source of conflict.

Sometimes, a Western woman might begin to cry from deep emotion or frustration over a subject being discussed, or from feeling overwhelmed by life on the mission field. For the Africans, crying over such things was inappropriate, so they felt bewildered, wondering if anger lay behind the emotion. One African team member told us he learned to apologise for his part, opening the way to discover the reason for the outburst and creating a warmth of understanding in the group.

The team's strongest advice was: "Get to know your teammates." How do you do this? The most obvious way was to spend time together eating, talking and praying. By walking in another's shoes outside the meetings, and seeing from their viewpoint, mutual understanding and cooperation began to grow.

The team was able to mediate their conflicts. "We really resolved everything between ourselves," said Susan, from the UK. "We would usually see one

another outside of a team meeting. There was no real mechanism to do that – we just did it."

The leader is key

The importance of an experienced team leader cannot be overstated. The team in Tanzania benefitted from the leader's prior experience of multi-cultural teams as a member and leader. His organisation had also sent him for leadership training with a multi-cultural component.

His insistence on creating consensus meant hours spent in team meetings discussing ministry direction, but it also meant team members could express their opinions and hear the hearts of others.

In rare instances when they could not agree, even after months of discussion, the leader would decide. "I didn't always agree," said one American, "but I always found out later he had been right."

Each Westerner expressed thankfulness for their African team leader. He provided invaluable insights into local practices and guided them through government interactions. His

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strong leadership and emphasis on unity encouraged everyone to strive diligently to understand each other and keep going. “The sense of loving and being committed to one another and a common call to reach the people really held us together,” said Susan.

Diversity is strength

Typical cross-cultural issues often came up, such as disagreements about management of money and time. In one example, traveling together became a source of conflict. The Westerners grew frustrated when others were not ready to depart even hours after the arranged time, and Africans felt uncomfortable when the team wanted to travel on Sundays. It took some problem-solving (like leaving early in the morning before African members could be waylaid by neighbours) and compromise (like the Westerners avoiding Sunday travel whenever possible) to arrange life to the satisfaction of all.

Religious backgrounds can create tension when deciding on ministry practices. In particular, this church-planting team differed on what the new church should look like. It needed to be

contextualised for local believers, but each team member also brought their opinions. They believe they eventually created the right mix, but what church should entail remains the biggest question they strive to resolve. Eventually the locals themselves will decide.

But culture is not the only difference — even those who share a culture may have major personality differences — another reason to patiently get to know one’s teammates.

Pastor Daniel advises, “Learn things about your teammates, like their food, their beliefs, whether they are from direct or indirect cultures and their style of communication.”

Each teammate brought different skills: some excelled at language learning, others were sought out by locals for advice. As they built on their strengths, they helped the village in various ways.

The team recommends the book “When Helping Hurts.” Reading it

together helped them learn more about each other and plan how the team would respond in practice. Elizabeth from the USA said, “The most important thing is to say, ‘I might be the one who is wrong.’”

Over and over, team members said, “Be flexible. Be willing to compromise.”

We were told how important it is to expect cultural differences and be ready to die to yourself and your agenda.

The team reported that being multi-cultural was a strength, not a drawback. “You don’t have to be from one people

group or race to follow Jesus,” said Susan. The team also modelled Biblical behaviours, especially in Christian parenting and marriage. Locals observed that Tanzanian Pastor Daniel and Steve from the UK treated their wives similarly, though their cultures differed vastly.

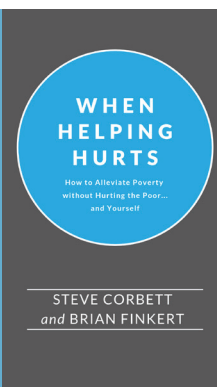
Today, churches are growing among this people because the team answered God’s call and persevered through misunderstandings, not only from the local people, but also from each other. Their sacrifices for the unity of the team are a beautiful fragrance to God and to the local community. “It was worth it,” the team members continuing this work today told us without hesitation.

The team reported that being multi-cultural was a strength, not a drawback.

WHEN HELPING HURTS

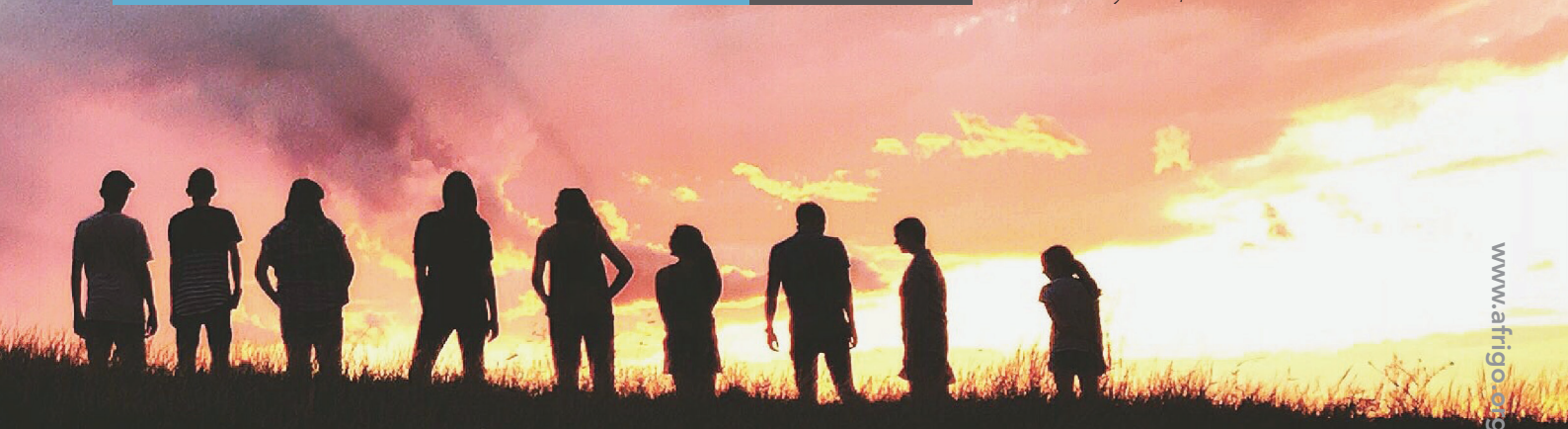
When Helping Hurts promotes the idea that we are each uniquely needy, but there is dignity in everyone. The God in the gospel is reconciling all things to Himself. Full of practical examples and strategies, this book is a must-read for any multi-cultural team working among the poor. It will stimulate discussion about how to best respond to need, keeping in mind the complexities of poverty and the influences of culture.

 www.amzn.to/2IhSFw2



Pray for this multi-cultural team as they continue to share the gospel with this Muslim people group.

Submitted by the AfriGO editorial team.



HOW TO THRIVE IN YOUR MULTI-CULTURAL TEAM

BY GÉDÉON MASHAURI

My wife said to the Tanzanian shopkeeper, “*Nipatie Sukari na Sabuni*,” which means “Give me sugar and soap.” He replied by teaching her a lesson, saying “In Tanzania, you don’t command people even if you are buying something. Rather, you should greet an older person saying, ‘*Shikamoo*’ (a greeting of respect to an elder). Then you say, ‘*Naomba unipatie Sukari na Sabuni*?’ meaning, “Can you please give me sugar and soap?” My wife, who is from the DRC, was thankful he explained this. It made us pause and learn the culture and worldview of Tanzanians.

Simple mistakes are easily rectified. More difficult are the relationships between colleagues serving on multicultural teams. Tensions can quickly rise without understanding why or knowing what to do about it.

Differences among Africans

Though African cultures have much in common, it is good to understand that there are cultures within cultures, influenced by tribe and ethnic group, social status, religious backgrounds and colonial heritage. Some ethnic groups in Africa view others as fully human, less human or not human at all; this is the root of tribal killing. To live together, we must realise we are all human, facing the same problem of sin, no matter who we think we are or where we come from. Our real identity is defined by God, our Creator.

Differences from further afield

The differences between Africans and non-Africans can be wide indeed, which we are well aware of. Westerners differ from Africans, but they also differ from one another, making it difficult to ascertain how to respond in various situations. But it is our responsibility to try to understand and work with our teammates from other continents.

A book called ‘The Culture Map’ describes ways that cultures differ and gives insights as to what questions to ask when working cross-culturally

(see page News, page 8). The book lists various ‘scales’ of cultural differences. I’ve chosen a few to share.

Who is in charge: Low vs. high power distance

High power distance (HPD) cultures have pronounced inequality in power, whereas low power distance cultures distribute power more equally. People in HPD societies accept that without question. Their societies tend to be hierarchical and value tradition to keep things the same, ranking people into strict societal roles. The greater good of the group is valued above interests of the individual.

In many African cultures, which are HPD, people are afraid to disagree with their superiors even if they notice something wrong. The superior often makes decisions without the subordinate’s participation. I was privileged to work with a boss from

a low power distance culture who encouraged me to disagree when I was not comfortable with his decisions. I learned many lessons about servant leadership from this humble servant of God. His advice has helped free me to express my opinion. The motive should be that in God’s Kingdom, we don’t compete; we complement one another, as we all work with the purpose of building up the body of Christ.

We see examples of both low and high distance leadership in Scripture, and it’s important to keep in mind that a younger person, like Moses, can be called into authority over an older person, like Aaron and Miriam. Humility is key (Num. 12).

**Our real identity
is defined
by God, our
Creator.**

How to build trust: Cognitive trust vs. affective trust

Cognitive trust comes from confidence in a person’s skillset, accomplishments and reliability, knowing they can





perform a task they are trusted with. On the other hand, affective trust involves friends, relatives and colleagues with whom you have a personal bond.

For example, someone building cognitive trust will want to get to work right away, to respect your time. By contrast, someone building affective trust may want to have a long lunch during which work is not discussed, but rather time is taken to build relationship. A cognitive trust

person may see this as wasting time, and that the other is not serious about work. Meanwhile, the one building affective trust will think that a short lunch means their relationship is not valued and they are being used just to get a job done.

Direct or indirect – How to give feedback or disagree

Every culture has different ways of disagreeing. A person from a direct

culture might say, “I totally disagree with your decision.” One from an indirect culture would hesitate to say anything, but their subtle body language may express disagreement. These differences can be hurtful if they are not recognised and adapted.

It is good to study your colleague and even talk with them about your different styles. Once you know where they are coming from, you can either discuss your differences or simply try to adapt.

Gédéon Mashauri is currently serving with Bush Telegraph Missions in Kenya. He served on two cross-cultural teams in Tanzania and Kenya under Africa Inland Mission. He and his wife, Rachel, are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They have been married for 12 years and have four daughters. Email gideonmashas@gmail.com.

CASE STUDIES

The following are real situations I have encountered. I note that there are cultural variations even within one country, including those from urban vs. rural contexts and from different backgrounds.

Case Study #1: Which culture is ruder?

I lived with Nigerians and Kenyans during my studies in Kenya. Nigerians complained that Kenyans do not greet each other, a simple sign of the African *ubuntu* (I am because we are). But a Kenyan friend explained that because robbery is so common, Nairobians don't trust strangers, and therefore are slow to greet.

Meanwhile, Kenyans labelled Nigerians as confrontative, expressing their ideas without fear and eagerly taking leadership positions, seemingly to control others. Their behaviour may be expressions of cultural differences in how trust is built or in direct vs. indirect communication. I thought it would be wise for the Nigerians to hear of this stereotype and to slow down and consider how to speak to their Kenyan brothers.

Case Study #2: Is time important?

While on a multicultural team with Westerners, I learned that although someone is your teammate, you don't just show up to visit them. You should book an appointment and specify how long you will visit, in order to show respect for the use of their time, which is (to them) an irreplaceable asset. Africans do not ask visitors, “How long will you stay?” That implies you did not want them to visit in the first place.

Case Study #3: Confronting vs. saving face

My African team leader shared something one-on-one with his teammate. Later, the leader spoke differently in the team meeting from what he shared, and the Western teammate confronted him in front of the group. In Africa, you don't confront the leader either privately or in a group.

I learned that Westerners want people to speak their mind and are not intimidated by other opinions. African missionaries are not used to confrontation, but Westerners tend to value when a viewpoint is shared plainly. This can be true between African cultures too. You may be dropping hints of how you feel, but others will never figure it out! You'll be left behind in the decision making, and your opinion, which could be critical to the strategy, will never be heard.

In conclusion, the best way to work in a multi-cultural team is first to see others as humans. James 3:9 says, “With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God.” Be intentional to ask cultural questions and try to adjust to show love for one another. Talking is key to understanding. You may find your ministry teammates very willing, even eager, to discuss cultural differences and ways to work with one another. Some behaviours can be labelled as negative ethnicity or tribalism, but truthfully, we all suffer from the same root problem of sin. Communication on multicultural teams should be guided with the realisation that our different cultural backgrounds affect how we interpret each other.

GO! NEWS OF AFRICA'S MOBILISING CHURCH

Five Pillars of Peace Pursuit

We are human, and we experience conflict with one another. God wants us to be peacemakers. Visit www.bit.ly/3qCsnG9 for guidance on how to resolve conflict biblically. The author describes five 'pillars.' The first two tell why we ought to make peace. The second two describe how to make peace. And the fifth pillar promises the good fruit that will come from this effort.

This website includes an interactive tool which will guide you through steps to make peace with one another: www.bit.ly/2LqYCYR.

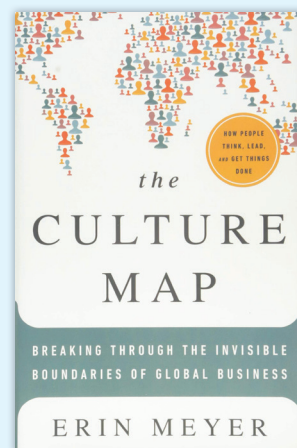


The Culture Map

This groundbreaking book is a guide to understanding and navigating cultural differences and managing in multi-national contexts today. Increasingly, people from starkly different backgrounds are expected to work harmoniously together. This book provides a model for decoding how cultural differences impact work and ministry. The author combines analysis with practical advice, including how to build trust, give feedback, make decisions, disagree productively, collaborate and otherwise get things done.


Order the e-book and see more resources:

 www.erinmeyer.com/books/the-culture-map/



Biblical Forgiveness


Many people have differing ideas about what forgiveness is and how it comes about. This website provides a biblical perspective on what forgiveness is and is not, and how to forgive the way God forgave us.

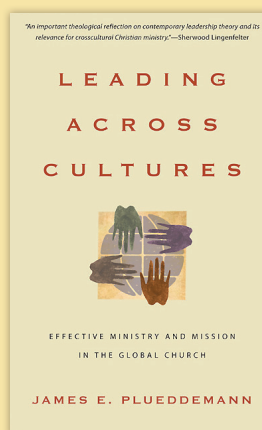
 www.rw360.org/biblical-forgiveness/

Leading Across Cultures

The future of the global church depends on effective multi-cultural leadership. With missionaries going from anywhere to everywhere, this creates challenges, as different cultures have different assumptions about leadership values and styles.

Missiologist James Plueddemann presents a roadmap for cross-cultural leadership. He integrates research on cultural dynamics with theology and leadership theory, modelling how leaders can be more global-centric in their approach. Whether you are church planting in Sierra Leone, directing medical missions in Malawi, or pastoring a multi-ethnic church in Kampala, this book will help you discover how to better lead across cultures.

 www.amzn.to/39UpJph



Mani Continental Consultation 2021

The Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) is still planning to hold their once every five years event. It will take place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from March 8-12, 2021.

 www.maniafrica.com/mani-events/



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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MULTI-CULTURAL TEAMS

BY STEPHEN NITTE LA'ABES

God's Word is very clear that all people are created equal and every person can be a child of God, receiving the full inheritance of heaven. The Bible teaches us how to love and serve everyone, no matter their age, ethnicity, gender or nationality.

Multi-cultural teams in Christian missions are not rare; either you live in a multi-cultural environment, belong to a multi-cultural team or attend a multi-cultural congregation. Such teams can have constant stress and misunderstanding, or they can be healthy and flourish because of their awareness and ability to accept, understand and respect people from other cultures.

Many Christian scholars and missiologists have written about multi-cultural teams. However, my perspective arises from personal experience working on multi-cultural teams in Malawi, Nigeria and Niger.

Whenever I introduce myself as a Nigerian to people I don't know, their response is: "Oh, you Nigerians, internet scammers and fraudsters." Whether or not these scammers really are Nigerian, nobody cares, because people already believe that single story about Nigerians. I have met a few people who respond positively, without tagging me as poor or checking if their wallet is missing. There is a danger in believing a single story about a people, as Chimamanda Adichie puts it in her book, 'The Danger of a Single Story.'

This way of viewing people can break trust and affect relationships and effectiveness in a team. We must change our theology of people, unlearning the myths and re-learning the concepts of celebrating, accepting and respecting people regardless of where they are from. Until then, cross-cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding will remain a concern in a multi-cultural team.

Let's look at Apostle Paul in Acts 17:16-34.

Athens was known for its great diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion, so Paul found himself in a genuine melting pot, with the Gospel to deliver to a diverse audience. Verse 17 describes how 'he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshippers, and in the marketplace daily.' When invited to share his views at the Areopagus, he focused on an altar he had seen "To the Unknown God."

Paul models how to live in a multi-cultural environment. He engages people, both in the synagogue and in the marketplace every day, listening to them and sharing about himself. He also looks for something in their own context, the altar to an unknown God, to make a bridge between them. This creates common ground - a sense of mutuality between them. It was

not possible to ignore their differences, yet he accepted the challenge of the diversity of Athens' ethnic cultures and devoted his energy to bring the Athenians under one identity of church.

Keeping this biblical design for a church as the benchmark, successful multi-cultural teams are strengthened by their own diverse membership. The theological, ecclesiological and missiological implications of their daily life can be a powerful witness to the communities they serve.

Peter Rowan, the UK National Director for OMF, warns of the dangers of teams of people from the same cultural backgrounds:

"If we allow teams to be made up simply of our kind of people, we'll end up preaching our kind of gospel and planting our kind of churches. And whilst that might be very comfortable it may not be very biblical. There are three good reasons for multicultural mission teams."

Peter goes on to share the reasons:

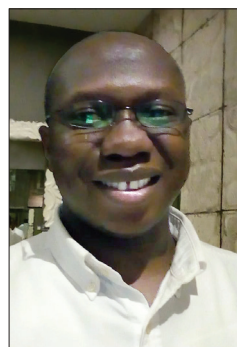
1) Multi-cultural teams bear witness that the Gospel breaks down barriers and is offered to every person from every tribe, tongue and nation; 2) Multi-cultural teams are a place for growth in discipleship, with input from brothers and sisters from very different backgrounds and 3) Multi-cultural teams model the kind of diverse churches we hope to plant.

For these reasons and more, multi-cultural missionary teams, when they are working together well, are the ultimate model for the family of God and the ultimate context for the discipleship.

We all have been given equality of calling, having the same opportunity to say 'yes' to the Great Commission. Yet we do not all experience equity. We may have equal opportunities, but certainly, we may not have the same social networks and resources to operate at the same level.

But when we live justly and practice equity, then we can leave co-dependency behind and practice inter-dependency on our teams. This attitude will further authenticate the message we believe and proclaim

Successful multi-cultural teams are strengthened by their own diverse membership.



Stephen is a missionary from Nigeria serving at Galmi Hospital in Niger. Previously, he served with Partners of Hope in Malawi, southern Africa. His qualifications in medical laboratory science have equipped him for his vocation, but his calling into missions has taken him across borders. Read more of his story in AfriGO Vol 4 Issue 3 on www.afrigo.org. Contact him at stephen.nitte@sim.org.

CALLED: FARAI AND RUNAKO

AS TOLD BY MERCY KAMBURA

I ignored my initial Macedonian call to be a missionary in Mexico. My wife and I had set our eyes on Asia when the email came to join a multi-cultural team as a church planter; it took weeks and a not-so-gentle nudge from an elder for me to reply. When I did, I wrote one sentence: "I hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter."

I heard God's call to ministry among the poor during a time of prayer in June 1992. After resigning from my job, I attended Harare Theological College, then the Theological College of Zimbabwe, where I graduated with a Bachelor's in Theology. In 1999, I joined the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS Zimbabwe).

In 2001, I married Runako, my love. She, too, was focused on missions among the poor.

When the invitation arrived from a missionary who was pioneering work in Mexico City, it didn't sound like what I prayed for. He was multi-cultural himself, a missionary kid born in Côte d'Ivoire to an African father and Swiss mother. He was building a team of people from Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, New Zealand, USA and India. Following a series of confirmations, we packed our bags and left for Mexico.

Mexico was a plunge into the deep end of the cultural shock pool, filled with ice blocks of attitudes from both teammates and local people. That shattered our morale and shifted our attitude.

Many assumed Africans are poor, adaptable to any condition, and strong. Others assumed we did not need certain things as they did. We soon discovered our budget requirements were about one-third the amount for a white single woman. This occurred



because our Western counterparts had more opportunities for fundraising than we had. (The organisation has since corrected that anomaly.) We had

for six years. In our team meetings, our colleagues seemed to find it difficult to accept our contributions and even held separate meetings without us.

Working with foreigners taught us to be cautious, tolerant and more loving. As I listened to things I didn't like, as I struggled with the ways other cultures were imposed on us, I learned to be open-minded and accepting. It helped to speak up and clarify that no one was 'less than' in the mission field. We also had to be clear that speaking up didn't mean we were better – we were simply different, yet equal, before God.

Understanding and embracing our own identity and becoming confident in the value of our culture took time and was extremely helpful. Each member of a multi-cultural team must understand their identity, first as a Christian, then as one who comes from a specific culture that God ordained for them.

**Names changed.*

Understanding and embracing our own identity and becoming confident in the value of our culture took time and was extremely helpful.

to remind others we were not economic refugees; rather, we had voluntarily answered a real call from God.

Once, we relocated to Nicaragua and were assigned a leader who didn't know the language, yet we were fluent in Spanish and had been in ministry

THREE MISSIONS IN GHANA GET CREATIVE ABOUT FUNDING MISSIONS

BY VICTOR BAJAH

Fundraising is the unsung hero of the missions movement. While it can be overlooked or even perceived as an embarrassment, missions is not possible without it. Fundraising is a herculean task, not just because some come from countries with weaker economies, but because the concept is unfamiliar. Those who do it may face the misconception that they are irresponsible or beggars.

Nevertheless, three missions in Ghana are paving the way around this financial roadblock by getting creative with raising and managing funds. These organisations, Footworks International, Teens Aloud and Excellent Youth Outreach (EYO), all focus on discipling young people and sending short-term teams to locations in and beyond Ghana.

How funds are raised

Most funds are raised from local churches. Student travellers are also required to raise some support from family, friends, schoolmates, lecturers, etc. EYO holds fundraising drives to solicit funds from individuals, businesses, churches, campuses and former members who have joined the working class in society. Teens Aloud relies on their alumni to donate also.

Donors are also encouraged to provide items such as groceries, stationery and Christian literature in place of funds. This helps to cover feeding expenses during pre-missions training (at least four days residential) and on the field (usually three weeks).



In addition, Footworks runs small businesses to raise money, including animal and crop farming and importing computer accessories to sell.

Keeping costs down

These organisations largely operate as platforms for short-termers (STers) to have an opportunity to serve on the field. Some are sent in teams of two to five people per country. It is easier for families to host small teams, which avoids the cost of accommodation in a guesthouse or hotel.

Missionaries also travel by road to reduce costs. One organisation reports that airfares can cost significantly less when they travel by road and fly out from a neighbouring country. Missionaries must raise funds for flights, but the organisation pays for expenses on the ground.




A minimum of six months is used to raise funds for each trip. Key to

preparation is prayer and trust in God's provision. At times families and churches in the field are willing to host the teams and cater their food, accommodation and transportation. One organisation explained that they had been beneficiaries of countless acts of generosity from many believers in other countries.

Most of these missionaries only go for short-term trips, but EYO and Footworks also send long-term workers who serve up to two years. Teens Aloud have managed to sustain a small number of long-term missionaries in about seven countries.

These three missions clearly demonstrate that it is financially possible to send significant numbers of STers. They are often young, and their exposure to missions can confirm God's calling in their lives, while their enthusiasm gives a boost to ministries in the field.

Although these funding models work well for STers, supporting a family long-term is more expensive and poses more challenges. However, these groups are blazing the trail for the glory of God, using the little they have to achieve results for the gospel among nations.

 www.footworksiinternational.com
 www.eyoministry.com
 www.instagram.com/teens_aloud_foundation/





PEOPLE GROUPS:

ANTANALA OF MADAGASCAR

The Antanala people live in and near the forests of southeastern Madagascar. They are divided into two subgroups: the Tanala Menabe in the mountainous north and the Tanala Ikongo in the more accessible south.

Tanala Menabe villages are isolated on mountain tops and hidden in the dense forest. During the French occupation, the Tanala Ikongo continued in independent kingdoms, but the Tanala Menabe were dominated by another local tribe.

Between 600 and 1300 AD, peoples from Borneo colonised this island, which is 1600 kilometers long. East Africans arrived later. Madagascar's population of 26 million includes more than 20 people groups and is less than 25 per cent Christian. The Antanala hold deeply to traditional religious

practices, based on animism and ancestor worship. They believe spirits are all around us in nature and that people must please them. Animists usually live with fear that a spirit will be unhappy with them.

Practices such as '*famadihana*' or 'turning the bones' continue. This occurs every few years when a family exhumes the remains of their ancestors, wraps them in fine silk, sprays them with wine or perfume, and brings them out for a festival. This is a way to both revere and appease their ancestors.

Few Antanala are Christians and even fewer are evangelicals. The churches among them tend to focus on attendance rather than discipleship. There has been some church planting among them in the past two years.

At a Glance

- The Antanala are skilled woodsmen, food gatherers and hunters. They trade beeswax, honey and other forest products. They also grow rice, yams and coffee.
- The Antanala often live in large compounds consisting of a father and his sons or a group of brothers.
- Homes are often built on stilts. Their traditional dance (*dombolo*) has become widely recognised.
- There are 41 Bible stories available in the Antanala dialect.

Pray

- Encourage and protect the one Malagasy evangelist working among more than one million Antanala. He is seeing fruit but is also experiencing spiritual warfare.
- Move forward the translation work and the JESUS Film despite closed borders.
- Train up leaders to fearlessly proclaim the power of Jesus over spirits.
- For missionaries to return despite COVID-19.



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