

Contribution of African Pentecostals in Finishing the Task

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Abstract

This article looks at the great potential of the African Pentecostal/Charismatic church in missions. Hämäläinen conducts a S.W.A.T analysis of the current church with a look to the future. Missions to the rest of Africa and the world is possible. Obstacles include cultural, economic, and social, but the greatest issue identified is attitude. The article concludes that when African churches see themselves as sending rather than simply as receiving missionary churches the potential will be realized. This article explores the great potential that lies in the African Pentecostal/Charismatic church.

Introduction

Through the last century, the continent of Africa has been a great success story regarding the numerical growth of Christians. Viewing mission prospects for the future, Africa represents great potential. This is particularly true for Pentecostals/Charismatics. Following the categories given by Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, these churches grew 4-6 percent between 1970-2020. In 2020, Pentecostals/Charismatics numbered 874,000 in Northern Africa, 29.8 million in Southern Africa, and 80.7 million in Western Africa.¹ Altogether, these statistics indicate over 111 million members.

Todd M. Johnson divides Pentecostals/Charismatics into three categories. Type 1 are those which are designated as classical Pentecostals. Type 2 are Pentecostals/Charismatics and Type 3 are the Independent Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations and networks.² In 2020, it

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was observed that of the number of Type 1 Pentecostals, five out of ten were found in Africa: Nigeria (16 million), Ghana (5 million), Kenya (4.7 million), Congo DR (4 million) and South Africa (2.8 million).³

The statistics show that Africa has a huge potential for accelerating the fulfilment of the Great Commission. What then are the obstacles that still hinder Africa from making its maximum contribution? This study reflects the observations of some key African mission executives and gives attention to thoughts on this theme from different perspectives.

The finalizing of the mission task requires collaboration within Africa as well as between the continents. This study analyzes how effective the efforts are now and how they should be further developed.

To reach the goal Jesus gave and the task He left to us, His disciples, means crossing borders. The national frontiers are not the only challenge. Cultural, economic, social, and other barriers hinder successful advancement in many attempts. The toughest obstacles are often in attitudes. Paradigm change is needed to move from a ‘receiver’ attitude to that of a ‘giver’ and ‘sender’.

To finalize the task requires strong motivation. It is a spiritual challenge. Only working with biblical foundations can lasting results be achieved by mission-minded people, churches, and organizations. Are the churches, training institutions and mission organizations properly equipped for this?

African Pentecostals and Charismatics can become a major power in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. A positive result requires an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the African churches. This study will attempt to identify some steps to move forward along that path.

Historical Background

From the very beginning of the Christian church, Africa has played a central role. An Ethiopian eunuch brought the gospel to the Horn of Africa (Acts 8). Simon called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13) were representatives of the African continent in the early phase of the church. Three African lawyers; Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, laid the foundations for Christian theology. Young Syrian Christians were shipwrecked off the Horn of Africa and settled in Axum which became one of the centers of Christianity in Africa. Egypt and Nubia had a

significant number of churches, and North Africa was among the notable Christian areas of the world in the first centuries.⁴

Those early developments, however, became paralyzed and so those areas did not become hubs of expansion in further centuries. A new beginning was needed for reaching the entire continent of Africa, and it is not yet complete. A significant push for this took place on the heels of colonialism. The protestant missionary movement was, by nature, an anti-slavery manifestation. Key figures in Great Britain, which was the leading protestant missionary-sending country in the 19th century, were the evangelical Parliamentarian Thomas Fowell Buxton and the missionary explorer David Livingstone. Buxton argued that nominally Christian nations and the West are in debt to Africa.⁵

On the other hand, missionaries were under the pressure of colonialism. According to Andrew Walls, “Colonial rule changed the basis of missionary life. Missionaries ceased to live directly on terms set by Africans.”⁶ Paul G. Hiebert describes the historical process of the paradigm shift as development from the colonial era to the anticolonial era, and from that to the global era. The colonial era engendered arrogance and segregation. The anticolonial era made a necessary corrective. It forced a differentiation between the gospel and culture. In the global era, missions ended up focusing on critical contextualization. It is “an ongoing response that sees the gospel as outside culture. It comes as the message of salvation, not from West to East, but from God to people in all cultures.”⁷

We still see remnants of the old paradigms, but the floor is now generally open for healthy collaboration in missions between the former receivers and former senders. When the gospel and its center, Jesus Christ, is the core issue, the focus is not on our culture or their culture. When He is the focus, we naturally will use ways that lead us to communicate our message in a contextualized manner. We become Jews to the Jew and Greeks to the Greek.

One of the big questions in the past was how to establish churches that are not viewed as being foreign. This means that churches are not ruled by people who are regarded as foreign. In the beginning, the role of the missionary was more central, but soon the need for self-determination was recognized. The three-self or four-self-principle was introduced. Churches in Africa should not be ruled from London, Berlin, or New York.

The first wave of missionary work went from the African coastline and moved inland at a time when the main transportation took place on the sea. However, many of the far corners were

left untouched. Often the main ethnic groups were reached but thousands of others were left untouched. Still today, around 7,000 of the 17,500 people groups on the earth are unreached. Recent statistics (2022) show that of the 3,706 people groups in Africa, 991 are still unreached.⁸ Another big challenge is the many languages that are without the Bible. Of the 7,388 languages in the world, 1,680 are without access to the Bible in their own language.⁹

One big paradigm shift in the last century was the effort toward a more holistic way of working. All the needs of people, besides the most urgent, that of the connection with God through Jesus Christ, were taken into consideration. However, big, costly social projects have not been within the reach of many Africans which has caused the misunderstanding that mission efforts are only possible where plenty of money flows. That has hindered poorer churches from starting missionary work. Mission is, however, not dependent on money. It needs people. And there are many in Africa.

Creative ways of doing missions have increased. Global professionals now may have access to many places where a missionary visa is denied. Healthy businesses can be of a benefit to the development of society. Ethical Christian business can heal and transform homes, villages, and cities.

Strengths of African Pentecostals

African people generally have a strong belief in the supernatural. That is why the Pentecostal message of a miracle-working God is easy for them to accept. A danger to be aware of is the quick detour towards an unbalanced focus on demonology. It is noteworthy, however, that in this context of the supernatural, the gospel has won huge acceptance.

Community orientation is a second factor which is helping the growth of the church. Belonging to family and extended family paves the way for strong identity within the church. This feature sometimes does develop into a hinderance. Missional orientation means broadening one's view outside of your comfort zone; your own community of believers. If Peter was in need of encouragement to dare to cross the border between Jewish and Gentile cultures, it is also needed by believers today in regard to cross-cultural contexts.

Thirdly, Africans have a holistic world view. Spiritual, physical, psychological, social, and environmental elements all belong together. The Africans realize this and do not separate them, but instead, they face these factors and look for solutions.

Other central features in the African culture are the sense of hospitality, good relationships, sanctity of life, respect for elders and authority, morality, language, proverbs, and time.¹⁰ These attitudes exist in harmony with biblical values and may be a strong factor which has aided the success of missionary work in Africa. The cultural distance between biblical views, beliefs and attitudes and the traditional culture is, in some non-African cultures, much greater.

The Challenges World Missions Presents to African Pentecostal Churches

The growth rate of Pentecostals in Africa from 1900 to 2020 is 7.99 percent. That is significant growth compared, for example, to the population growth (1.51percent).¹¹ We will see later that the growth in world missions by Africans has not advanced equally.

What then are the weaknesses to be overcome in the African Pentecostal context? To find answers to this, the author surveyed a few key African Pentecostal leaders. They were the vice chair of the missions commission of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA): Rev. Uche Ama (UA), from Nigeria; Dr. Timothy Balbone (TB), the mission director of the Assemblies of God in Burkina Faso; Rev. Esme Bowers (EB), the chairperson of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa; and Professor, Apostle, Dr. Opoku Onyinah (OO), the co-chair of the Africa Pentecostal Mission (APM), from Ghana. The following questions were asked:

1. Africa has great potential for sending missionaries and influencing the whole world in this way. According to your understanding, what are the main reasons hindering or slowing the increase in the number of cross-cultural missionaries? Indicate 1-3 factors.

According to UA, “most Africa Pentecostal Church leaders do not have the missional understanding that it is their responsibility to reach the whole world with the gospel. Many do not even believe that it is their responsibility to go beyond the communities.” UA thinks that the same thing which hindered the early church to go and to leave Jerusalem until they were forced to do so is also delaying the spread of the gospel from African churches. UA also sees that many expect the existing churches in a country of focus to come together and if needed “invite us and pay the costs.” He feels that there are “few or non-existent regional, inter-ministerial or interdenominational collaborative strategies among us.”

UA is longing to find a credible global platform to promote partnership, networking, and sustainability, and more global plans. He points out the differences between the Northern Hemisphere and Africa and the Southern Hemisphere concerning the ideological orientation of

the role of the church. For the former it is more a tradition, but for the latter, it is their life, culture, and livelihood.

TB sees the reasons for weak response from Africa for world missions in this way: The main reason is a lack of vision. “If you don’t see with the eyes of your heart, you won’t see with your natural eyes.” The need is to provide teaching and training in missions.

A second obstacle according to TB is the culture of poverty. “Many African leaders develop a poverty mind-set.” They feel the cost of missions to be too heavy for them to carry. “That conclusion is a simple lie from the devil. They have a lot to give, yet they still see themselves as not able to start.”

TB finds one more reason is a lack of practical mission strategy. “They want to gather many things before they start... The best strategy is to begin with even one couple somewhere.”

EB sees a positive starting point in Africa now. Therefore, “The rise of African indigenous mission movements has provided a platform for Africans to be mobilized and sent especially to the unreached people groups in Africa.” Many leaders in these actions come from Pentecostal churches and are also part of MANI (the Movement for African National Initiatives). EB wants to emphasize the large potential in partnerships for missions. New senders are opening avenues where old paradigms are no longer functioning. Africa has become a center of Christianity, and “the mobilization of the Independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches for missions is well on its way.”

EB stresses the ownership of African churches in mission activities. Both human and financial resources need to be held in the hands of Africans.

For OO the understanding of the concept of mission is paramount. “Many churches do not see the need of sending people out. Contemporary Pentecostals are influenced by the mega-church idea where churches are built within their vicinities. They see the need to go out when some of their members leave for other countries and request them to come and establish branches for them. In this case, their services become like chaplaincy services.” Financial challenges greatly affect the churches regarding engaging in missions. “Even if the churches are strong financially, changing money into local currencies... makes it quite difficult.”

OO finds training as a big challenge. “Lack of training and enough preparation may deter some churches from sending missionaries out.”

2. Very few Pentecostal churches in Africa have a missionary sending program or structure. What are the practical steps (name 1-3 actions) needed to change the situation? What is lacking?

UA points to the lack of a credible global platform to promote partnership, networking, and sustainability. He would like to see more global plans. Some attempts at global actions in the broader context of missions have started well but have not moved forward. He also identifies poor preparation for persecution which is an increasing phenomenon in many countries. He considers the support of the family as crucial for missionaries. Going “solo” brings many challenges. The Northern Hemisphere has developed systems and infrastructure for supporting missionaries, but the situation in the Southern Hemisphere and Africa is different. He finds that the “Africa Pentecostal leaders are generally more inward-looking than outward-looking in their missional goals.”

As practical steps forward, UA suggests a regular information sharing global platform, support for the mobilizing and training of indigenous pastors and leaders, and sustained promotion and strengthening of collaboration among Pentecostal leaders. The action of the World Missions Commission (WMC) of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) in enabling the establishment of the African Pentecostal Mission (APM) is an encouraging model for him.

TB identifies the mind-set problems in need of transformation. Some changes are urgently needed. “Missions are a luxury in ministry, and they cannot afford it yet.” His observation, however, is that they are never ready to go. There are weak points in the support program such as a lack of good financial reporting and accountability. Trust is easily lost if people who give do not get transparent reports about how the money is used.

EB thinks that “The historical Pentecostal denominations have lost their vigor.” “Many young people having a calling are joining whatever vehicle is available to take them to the place they sense God is calling them to.” Antiquated structures are discouraging innovative youth, and their creativity is lost.

The advice of OO is to teach the churches about the importance of putting structures in place for mission. The churches need encouragement to do this. The Bible Colleges and theological institutions can promote this development by assigning mission structures for consideration to the future and present leadership.

3. What are the main areas of teaching and training needed for missionaries being sent out and for the senders in the home church? Indicate some urgent subjects.

The following subjects were identified.

Missional Opportunities of the African churches

Statistics show that Africa has great potential for growth in world missions. In 2010, Africa was one of the top continents in its percentage of evangelical Christians. The situation has not radically changed since then.

North America 26.8%

Australia 17.8%

Pacific 17.8%

Africa 17.2%

Latin America 16.7%

Asia 3.5%

Europe 2.5% ¹²

The percentage of Christians, however, is not a fully trustworthy indicator of the mission impact of the church or denomination. A large church can lack mission-mindedness. The most effective mission impact requires collaboration. Mission societies and organizations have been the tools of achieving long-lasting results. In view of that, Africa is still in the embryo phase. Some countries and denominations are already active, but the potential for growth is not yet fully utilized.

Africa has taken steps in forming mission collaboration. The Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) is catalyzing the body of Christ in Africa to work in strategic partnership to disciple the nations and to send Africans in mission around the world. Its starting impulse came from the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement. In 2001 leaders from 36 African countries gathered at the Africa Millennial Consultation in Jerusalem. They affirmed God's powerful work across the continent and committed themselves to accelerating the advance of the Gospel through networking and collaboration. This gathering gave birth to a continental network called the Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI).¹³

African Assemblies of God churches have formed the African Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA). It is the largest Pentecostal collaboration organization in Africa today. In the

middle of the 2010s, the author, chairman of the World Missions Commission of the Pentecostal World Fellowship at that time, started a discussion with the World Assemblies of God Missions Commission chairman, Brad Walz, about the need of a collaborative Pentecostal organization for Africa. The idea was presented to African Pentecostal leaders and welcomed as a necessary action. As a result, the first Africa Pentecostal Mission Consultation was organized in Nairobi in 2016. Various Pentecostal denominations and missions were invited. The next step of this kind of collaboration was taken in 2018 in Addis Ababa. Around 300 key leaders gathered in the capital of Ethiopia. They felt a need to establish a collaborative organization naming it the Africa Pentecostal Mission Fellowship (APMF). The author was elected chairman and the Board, Executive Committee and Advisory Committee were formed.

The coronavirus epidemic prohibited the organization of consultations so the Kampala Consultation which was already in the planning process had to be cancelled. The process of developing the APMF however was not stopped. Virtual meetings took place in the years following. To obtain legal status, the APMF was registered in Kenya. In the registration process, the name was shortened to APM. At this time of writing, it has been decided that the next consultation will take place in Nairobi, April 11-14, 2023.

APM has created a strategy for the future. Its Executive Committee approved this proposed strategy on September 3, 2021.¹⁴ This strategy will be presented in Chapter 6.

Concerning other Pentecostal networks in Africa, the UKIAMKA (ECAPA) must be mentioned. It is the organization uniting the Pentecostals with a background from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden). UKIAMKA is the Swahili name for the organization. The English name is East and Central Africa Pentecostal Association (ECAPA). The chairman is Rev. David Batenzi from Tanzania, the former chairman of the Free Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania. World missions is part of ECAPA's activities.

The African Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA) published its latest statistics in 2022, reflecting the situation in 2021.¹⁵ The total number of transcultural missionaries sent from African countries was 922. They were working in 32 countries. The largest number of missionaries were sent from Ghana (285), Nigeria (125), Ivory Coast (119). Ethiopia (62), Benin (41), and Burkina Faso (38). Seven denominations from a total of 39 had not sent any missionaries (about 18%). There seems to be a trend for growth in numbers of sent workers in African AG churches. A significant factor behind the growing numbers are the intercessors.

Jesus asked us to pray for workers in the harvest. The intercessors numbered 20,648 which averaged 529 per denomination.

In the top 20 listing of AG missions departments worldwide which sent out the most missionaries in 2021, Africa had three countries (Ghana, Nigeria, and Ivory Coast) named among them. Africa has much potential for growth because of its large population representing Pentecostal/Charismatic and evangelical Christians. As to the number of churches needed to send out one missionary, Africa has no country represented in the top missionary-sending countries. The top countries were Netherlands (0.65), Singapore (1.12), Finland (1.49), Denmark (1.94), Sweden (3.25).

The fastest growing missions departments in the last nine years were in the Netherlands, Ivory Coast, El Salvador, Germany, Argentina, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ethiopia, Peru and Romania. Among these ten were two African countries, Ivory Coast and Ethiopia. It is noteworthy that half of these ten countries are from Latin America.

The financial capacity of a country is, of course, a factor which relates to the potential for growth. The WAGF survey 2022 unveils that the average giving globally for world missions is 3.76 USD/person/month. The same document states that this sum indicates a “vision gap” rather than an “income gap.”

Concerning its future goals, WAGF churches have committed to the goals of MM33 (2033). MM33 is a mission and evangelization campaign aiming to give a genuine possibility for everyone on earth a chance to hear about Jesus and accept him as Savior. This includes a vision to have 1 million AG churches by that date. The Missions Commission of the WAGF also encourages an increase in the number of missionaries so that every ten churches would send one more missionary. That would increase the number of AG missionaries to around 40,000. (Presently the number is close to 9000).

Although we still lack the statistics of all Pentecostals in Africa, we can see from the AG statistics that Africa has a capacity to become a central player in world missions in the near future. It has good spiritual starting points, and much manpower for the mobilizing and sending of missionaries. If it succeeds also in partnering and forming strong Pentecostal and even broader collaboration, it can grow into a spiritual superpower in world missions.

Threats in the African Context

Doctrinal Threats

The core issue in fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is the message of salvation. Therefore, all attacks against the biblical doctrine of salvation are threats against the mission given to the church from the triune God. Tokunboh Adeyemo, the former General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar has pointed out four dangers in relationship to this. Number one is Pluralism. He refers to Dr. Kibicko at the University of Nairobi who asserts that there is fully salvatory revelation in any religion. He also claims that African worship has been experienced much longer compared to Christian worship which dates back only 2000 years.

Kibicko seems to forget that the roots of Christianity are far older than 2000 years. Worship is one of the central themes of the Old Testament. Adeyemo sees the weakness of the Pluralistic arguments because it begins from the point of anthropology and sociology rather than theology. It errs also by confusing the means of revelation with the means of salvation.¹⁶

Another threat to the church concerning its fulfilment of the Great Commission is Universalism. It was introduced early on through some church Fathers like Clement from Alexandria, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianus. Gregory of Nyssa, along with Origen, shares the view that Satan himself will be saved some day.¹⁷ That doctrine nullifies the need for evangelism and missions.

There is also a doctrine which states that people will get a second chance of salvation after their death. The concept of purgatory from the Roman Catholic church is one version of that understanding. The Bible, however, clearly states that after death will follow the judgement (Heb. 9:27).

Syncretistic soteriology asserts that there are many ways to reach divine reality, and that Christ's atoning sacrifice needs to be supplemented. According to Adeyemo, other types of syncretism are found in all kinds of legalism, Gnosticism, and false mysticism.¹⁸

Humanism has attracted people in different ways. The basic argument is that a person is inherently good. The Bible teaches us that from a salvific point of view, there is no good in anyone (Rom.7:18). On the way to making social changes toward a better society, at least some versions of liberation theology accept violence. This leads to the neglect of the vertical

dimension (relationship to God) at the price of the horizontal dimension (relationship to fellow humans and society). Salvation is, however, inseparably linked to the Kingdom of God.¹⁹ If not, it becomes only one more version for secular politics. Missions should include both vertical and horizontal dimensions to serve people holistically.

To avoid such mistakes, meaningful and effective hermeneutics is needed. Rene Padilla suggests four-dimensional hermeneutics: 1) communal, 2) pneumatic, 3) contextual and 4) missiological. The first point focuses on deriving interpretation from the community of believers, the second point is illumination by the Holy Spirit, the third point is taking meaning from the cultural context, and the fourth point is the implementation of the Great Commission.²⁰

Cultural Threats

The Rwandan genocide in 1994 shocked the world. How was it possible for a nation with such a strong Christian population²¹ to erupt into such human tragedy? Up to 800,000 deaths were reported.

Paul G. Hiebert explains the different levels of culture, dividing it into three categories. The surface level deals with cultural products, patterns of behavior, and signs and rituals. The deeper level includes the belief systems. The deepest level is the home of worldview themes.²²

Concerning the Rwanda genocide, the problem was tribal. Hutus and Tutsis had had long-enduring tensions. What kind of worldview lies behind this tension? The other tribe is viewed as just not human. That is why Hutus called Tutsis cockroaches. The same kind of dehumanization took place with Nazi propaganda. The Jews were subhuman. Therefore, the Aryan people, like the Germans, were on a higher level.

Cultural superiority does not only incite violent conflicts like massacres and wars, but insidiously infiltrates human relationships even in churches. We see this between the Jews and the Samaritans in the Bible. This caused Paul to write: “Here there is no Greek, or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and in all” (Col.3:11).²³

Africa has great potential for missionary sending, but one of the most important preparations is equipping the missionary to face cross-cultural challenges. This means preparedness to understand differing worldviews and belief systems. Often, new believers are

still connected to traditional behavior and ways of thinking. They should be rooted in the word of God to discern what aspects of their culture are acceptable and what needs to be abandoned.

Strategic Pitfalls

The key elements in mission strategy are the questions of why, who, where, how and with whom? Why? This leads us to the foundation of missionary work. We should go because it is God's will. He invites people to join His work. Missions is 'Missio Dei', God's mission, which started when God sent His son as a missionary to the world. Jesus said: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). The first pitfall is to send missionaries out without a clear understanding of the biblical basis of missionary work.

Who is called? The whole church; every believer. All are needed. In prayer, or in going, or in giving money, or in offering practical help to missions endeavors in different forms.

Where? For Paul it was a pivotal matter to work where the name of Jesus was not yet known. There still are 7000 unreached people groups and 2000 language groups without the Scriptures.

How? We are called to make Jesus known. There is no other name offering salvation. Jesus did not send his disciples without first training them. Neglecting training results in wasted time, money, and human resources.

With whom? Paul always worked with others in a team. To facilitate this, we have mission organizations, mission teams, mission leaders and those serving in other various roles working together. People with a Barnabas attitude are valuable. Barnabas introduced Paul to the church when people were still afraid of him. He brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch. A 'Barnabas' paves the way for others. Such people are urgently needed in missions.²⁴

The pitfall for Africans or anyone is to go alone without a proper sending structure. The church is the basic agent for sending, just like the Antioch church was for Paul.

Collaboration is needed, not only in sending, but also in finding partners. In order to work effectively, Paul always formed teams. He worked with Priscilla and Aquila, a partnership which helped establish the church in Corinth. Too often missionaries have started working on their own although there were churches or believers already in existence.

Two Pentecostal umbrella organizations, the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) and the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) have missions as the central focus of their

structures. PWF has had the World Missions Commission (WMC) since 2005 (led by the author, 2005-2022, by Max Barroso from 2022). WAGF formed its Missions Commission in 2010. It was preceded by the Acts 1:8 Committee which was started in 1999, having its first consultation in 2001. Both initiatives have been chaired by Rev. Brad Walz from the USA, the former mission director in Latin America.

Different continents also have their Pentecostal mission organizations. The Pentecostal European Mission (PEM) was started in 1991, the Pentecostal Asia Mission (PAM) in 1994, and as mentioned before, the Africa Pentecostal Mission (APM) in 2018. In North America, the Pentecostal mission directors have established a joint forum.

Persecution and Discrimination

When Jesus taught about the end times in Matthew 24, He mentioned persecution. Interestingly, it is connected to the promise that the gospel should be preached to all nations (literally to all ethnic groups). So, victory and persecution go hand in hand; are parallel. Pastor Uche Ama (UA) mentioned, in his response to the questions above, that African churches have not been prepared for persecution. It requires training and information sharing in the churches. Advocacy must also be provided. The Pentecostal Commission on Religious Liberty (PCRL) is developing such tools for Pentecostal churches. PCRL is a joint organization between PWF and WAGF, representing about 100 million believers.

Building Strategy and Structure for African Pentecostals in World Missions

APM is the largest Pentecostal mission organization in Africa. During the Covid pandemic it created a strategy. APM Strategy 2033 and its Goals are the following:

Mission (Main task)

Motivate and mobilize the African Pentecostal denominations and local churches for fulfillment of the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ.

Vision (Description of future status)

African Pentecostal churches fully involved in reaching people unaware of the salvation Jesus has provided for them including both eternal and earthly needs.

Values (Directing decision making)

- Collaboration –As Pentecostals, unity and working together is the divine model to be followed and will include other Christians as much as possible.
- Sense of urgency – people are eternally lost without knowing Jesus as their personal Savior.
- Holistic approach – recognizing the needs of the whole person and community.

Principles (Signposts for policy)

- Leadership of the Holy Spirit – in finding those to be sent, in motivating the senders, and to focus on the right targets with suitable methods.
- Attitude of giving – not depending on affluence but using what we have.
- Focusing on the younger generation – they are the future leaders.
- Life-long learning attitude.

Success factors (What promotes success?)

- Prayer – necessary for breakthroughs, identifying workers, and finances.
- Well-functioning, work-fostering mission structure.

APM Goals 2033:

- Every Pentecostal denomination (PD) has a functioning mission department
- Every PD and local church have an effective fundraising system
- Every PD has a mission training program(s) for senders and goers
- Every PD is involved in reaching UPGs
- Every Pentecostal local church has sent out at least one missionary

- Every Pentecostal local church has one Sunday monthly dedicated to world missions

The strategy and goals will be tested in the next years. They can become concrete steps forward or, without proper implementation, will remain empty promises.

APM is in the process of becoming registered in Kenya. It already has an office and a part-time office manager functioning there.

Conclusion

The African Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have great potential for becoming decisive players in the final lap of world missions. Statistics show tremendous growth in the last hundred years. The Pentecostal message has an excellent sounding board in the African context. There are, however, some obstacles to overcome. Some of them are cultural, some historical, some financial, some dealing with attitudes. On the other hand, many cultural features promote rather than hinder the process, like the African worldview with its strong supernatural emphasis.

The existing Pentecostal networking organizations have the capacity to provide the structure needed for collaboration and fulfilment of the Great Commission. In this globalized world, working together is not an option, it is a must. From the theological point of view, working together is the desire of Jesus Christ. The world will believe if believers live and work in unity.

The survey made among some key mission leaders shows that the challenges in world missions for finishing the task have been identified. As these challenges are addressed and the weaknesses are overcome, the goal of going into all the world and making disciples will be achieved.

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⁵ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁷ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 54-64.

⁸ <https://joshuaproject.net/continents>

⁹ <https://www.wycliffe.net/resources/statistics/>

¹⁰ https://www.google.com/search?q=african+culture&rlz=1C1ONGR_fiF11006FI1006&oq=african+culture&aqs=chrome. Visited 27 October 2022.

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¹² Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010), 29, 43, 57, 73, 83, 85.

¹³ <https://maniafrica.com/mani-an-overview/>

¹⁴ The minutes of the APM Executive Committee meeting on 3 September 2021.

¹⁵ Missions Sending and Vision, 2022 WAGF Report, prepared by WAGF Missions Commission, Coordinated by Brad

Walz, the WAGF Missions Commission Chairman. The report is based on survey of 108 missions efforts in 102 countries, conducted between April and July 2022.

¹⁶ Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Salvation in African Tradition* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 94-95.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

²¹ 80% Christians, 20.2% Evangelicals in 1995, Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Carlisle: OM Publishing, 1995), 472.

²² Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

²³ All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version

²⁴ Arto Hämäläinen and Ulf Strohbehn, *To the Ends of the Earth: Building National Missionary Sending Structure* (Baguio City: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 2020), 33-38.