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interpreting the Christian faith for contemporary  
living.*

GENERAL EDITOR: BRUCE J. NICHOLLS



doctrines and keep communion with other congregations. This group is very complex, and every case in the group should be studied to see what line it follows.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The number of Hebrew Christians in Israel and in other parts of the world is growing, not very fast but steadily, and Hebrew Christianity is a developing movement. This is a challenge, not only to the Hebrew Christians themselves and their leaders, but also to the rest of the Christian Church which is mainly of gentile origin.

Despite the fact that the first Christian Church in Jerusalem and Palestine was a Jewish entity, the predominantly Gentile Church in the third and fourth centuries A.D. rejected almost everything Jewish in the life of the church in its fight against the Ebionite heresy. The result of this intolerance on the part of the "Great Church" was not only that the heretical Hebrew Christianity died away, but also that the other "Churches of the Circumcision" declined and eventually faded away. With the challenge of a growing Hebrew Christianity of today the Christian Church should take notice of what happened in the Early Church and learn from it. To us it is obvious that the mentioned heretical Hebrew Christianity which appears more as a sect of the Synagogue, cannot be accepted by a Christian Church that takes seriously the Christ event and the apostolic traditions of the New Testament. We here stress this point since there are within the Christian Church also gentile Christians who support this trend of heretical Hebrew Christianity. At the same time the Early Church in a negative way teaches us that the Christians of Jewish origin need the support and the understanding of the rest of the Church, so that they can develop their national customs and the biblical traditions kept by their people, and at the same time remain faithful to the Gospel and in a sound relationship to their Christian brethren of gentile stock.

In Jesus Christ the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles was broken down ([Ephes. 2:14](#)) and in Him they have become one. But this does not mean that they should be uniform: in the communion of faith, in the one church of Jews and Gentiles, both parts need the other one. In this fellowship the Christians of Jewish origin can maybe help those of gentile origin to maintain the Old Testament and the Jewish heritage of the Christian Church, and also in the reading of the New Testament the Hebrew Christians can supply the church with dimensions which are not new, but which too often have been forgotten.

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## The African Church and Selfhood

Tokunboh Adeyemo

*Reprinted from Perception, May 1980, with permission*

### INTRODUCTION

The problem of selfhood is not peculiar to Africa; it is a problem that every genuine believer has to face. The moment we become Christian, we automatically become a citizen of two countries. On the one hand, we belong to our own ethnic or national or geographical cultural context; and on the other hand, we are citizens of heaven. The laws of these two countries do not always agree. Your culture may demand something from you, but the laws of God, that are above your culture, may demand something different, so that you are faced with the question of identity—"Who am I? What am I supposed to do in this situation?" When you look into Africa, it is more complicated, because we did not only have our own culture and traditional religion and we did not only have the western culture that came with the Gospel, but Christianity came to us in different brands, like Methodist, Catholic, Lutheran and so forth.

But it is not a recent problem. Actually it dates back to the beginnings of Christianity in the New Testament when there was a question as to whether Gentile believers should be circumcised so as to become Christians. The Jews who believed in Jesus Christ and the finality of His sacrifice continued with the Old Testament sacrificial system. So there was a question of identity there. To help us focus our attention to this crucial problem which everyone of us has to face, let us read [Galatians 2:11-16](#):

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Christ Jesus. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

This passage deals with the problem of selfhood in a nutshell. In your own time, read the whole chapter, even the whole book of Galatians as well as reading [Acts 15](#) as the background to this epistle.

Should these Gentiles be circumcized in order to become Christians? Or should the Jews be Hellenized so as to be Christians? This is the question that churchmen in Africa are asking today. Before we can worship Jesus Christ the Lord, do we have to be European Christians? Does God understand our Yoruba or Swahili language if we address Him in that language? These are some of the questions that selfhood raises.

## **THE CRISIS OF SELFHOOD**

At the inaugural meeting of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) held in Kampala, Uganda in 1963, the Assembly voiced what was considered as the greatest weakness of the church in post-colonial Africa. They said:

The lamentable truth is that after centuries of Christianity in Africa, the Church, on the whole, cannot be said to have attained true selfhood. The tragedy of our situation is that in spite of more than 300 years of contact with our continent, in spite of our boast of so many

churches and approximately sixty million Christians on the continent, Christianity is still a foreign religion to us.<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, Professor Bolaji Idowu wrote a booklet entitled *Towards an Indigenous Church*. In it, he discussed the thesis of selfhood and its various implications. He wondered whether what we have in Africa is in fact Christianity or only transplantations from what he described as a European cult, the various ramifications of which are designated Methodists, Anglicans, Baptists, and so forth. In no uncertain terms, he declared:

The Church in Nigeria is on trial: she is being called upon to justify her existence in the country; to answer in precise terms the question as to whether her purpose in Nigeria is not to serve as an effective tool of imperialism.<sup>2</sup>

But those who have known Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord know that Christianity is not the preserve or the monopoly of the West at all. Christianity is God's answer to the dilemma of mankind. So we have to wrestle with this question of how we can be African Christians and still be Africans in our land.

Moving away from the 1960s into the 1970s, the cry for selfhood did not subside. On the contrary, it gained momentum. In 1970, it was Professor Mbiti, who strongly called for the localization of the church in Africa. He charged that Christianity must be Africanized just as Europe and America have westernized it and the Orthodox churches easternized it. "Localization", he says, "means translating the universality of the Christian faith into a language understood by the peoples of a given region."<sup>3</sup>

Realizing that the concept of selfhood cannot be realized without due consideration of the rôle of foreign missionary organizations and churches in Africa, Rev. John Gatu of East Africa, suggested moratorium. He describes it as a strategy to halt or limit the flow of money and personnel from overseas churches to African churches for a period of at least five years. He first made the appeal before an American church audience in 1971, and repeated it in 1973 at Bangkok at a conference "Salvation Today" sponsored by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of World Council of Churches (WCC). His contention is that through this strategy, Africans will be able to assume more responsibility in their own church affairs, and be allowed to find their own identity.<sup>4</sup>

Moratorium received the approval of the AACC, who, at their Third General Assembly in Lusaka in 1974, recommended it as an option to the churches in their search for selfhood and self-reliance. The purpose advanced is three-fold:

1. To help reduce the dependency of African churches on foreign mission churches and boards;

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<sup>1</sup> *Drumbeats from Kampala*, Report of the First Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), 1963, p.32.

<sup>2</sup> Bolaji E. Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.1.

<sup>3</sup> John S. Mbiti, "Christianity and Traditional Religions in Africa", *International Review of Mission*, October 1970.

<sup>4</sup> For the various addresses given on moratorium and related subjects by John Gatu, check: "Missionary, go home" in *IDOC International Dossier*, No. 9, 1974; and "The Urgency of the Evangelistic Task" in *The New Face of Evangelism*, René C. Padilla (ed.), first printed in 1976.

2. To enable African churches to become self-reliant; and
3. To enable African churches to develop authentic structures, orders and programmes based on African values and priorities.<sup>5</sup>

That same year, at the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, Gatu reiterated his call for a moratorium. He stressed that a lasting relationship between the African churches and western missionaries will be questionable as long as the missionaries regard Africans as ecclesiastical children.

Although some evangelical brethren present at Lausanne rejected a blanket moratorium on spiritual and practical grounds, they did not refute the reasonableness of the proposition. Neither will they oppose the concept of selfhood.<sup>6</sup>

In 1976, InterVarsity Press in America published Plus Wakatama's *Independence for the Third World Church* subtitled as *An African's Perspective on Missionary Work*. In this work, the author identified himself with the advocates of what he labels as "selective moratorium". This group demands that only the people with particular social and cultural and spiritual qualifications should go overseas as missionaries to meet specific needs, especially in the area of training nationals at a higher level.<sup>7</sup>

While the emphasis and approach may vary, the general consensus of the African church leaders on identity crisis over the past two decades cannot be denied. But the question of selfhood is deeper than just a moratorium.

## THE LANGUAGE OF SELFHOOD

What exactly do we mean by selfhood? Can it really be attained? What are the implications and values? To these and similar questions I shall address myself in this paper.

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, "selfhood" is defined as "personality, separate and conscious existence". It is an "autonomous existence", realizing that each man, each individual is created in the image of God for a definite purpose. Selfhood means that you do not want to be like anyone else, however nice they may be, but that you want to be yourself, that you want to be you; and when we apply this to the Church, it means the same thing. Selfhood means that the Church in Africa wants to be an African Church in an African context. That does not mean that I go back to the old religion and take animism and mix it in a little bit of Christianity and come up with something that is less Christian. I want to be truly biblical, but authentically African, so that when they see me they know that I am a brother in Christ and that I am from Africa.

It also implies a concept and the concept is deep. One of our African thinkers by the name of Augustine of Hippo, when talking of the Africans' faith, once said: "We live beyond

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<sup>5</sup> Reprinted in *AACC Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 5, May 1979, p.8.

<sup>6</sup> The late Byang Kato, who was the first African General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM) was reported as saying: "Gradual transfer to African leadership is our objective". (See P. Wakatama's book entered next, p.30.)

<sup>7</sup> Pius Wakatama, *Independence of the Third World Church* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1976). In this work, the author identifies four different groups on the moratorium debate. He considers the strategy to be desirable and necessary but, because of the nature of the Great Commission, he disagrees with "across the board" stoppage of personnel and funds.

the limits of our bodies”<sup>8</sup> To the average western mind one is just an individual, but to the African mind we are because the community is. As long as the community is, then you are. When the community ceases to exist, you are finished. So selfhood for us is “being-in-relation”, it is an “existence-within-a-community”.

Michael Kayoya, a young priest who died tragically in Burundi in 1972, graphically portrays this theme of existence-in-community in his poetry *My Father’s Footprints*. He saw self as a quest, as a conquest of self and all that is contrary to humanness. To this francophone African, to become a Christian means becoming a fully African man in an African context. He goes on to say that since God has assumed humanity in Christ, Jesus Christ has become the standard for us.<sup>9</sup> To become a Christian, then, means to become truly man or human. This is very important and I am going to show you the importance of that as we go into the dynamics of selfhood.

From the aforesaid, one can see why the African church leaders consider the traditional missionary concept of church indigenization as inadequate. The “three selves” theory of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson places emphasis on the ministries of the church, whereas the African concept of selfhood focuses on the people, the church. With this fundamental conceptual difference one can better see the cause of communication breakdown between the missionaries and the nationals.

## THE DYNAMICS OF SELFHOOD

Can the community think of Jesus Christ as belonging to them rather than as a foreign Christ? Can the community worship Jesus Christ in a pattern that is understandable to its own people? It used to be said that to have a drum in an African church was demonic and some people even wanted us to use the violin which cannot wake up a sleeping demon. In some churches, they have gone to the extent of having a pipe organ in an African church.

Selfhood means that we ask ourselves if it is really wrong biblically—it means that we ask ourselves whether it is unchristian to clap our hands and jingle a little bit in an African church, whether you can participate with such freedom in worship and shout “alleluia” if that is the cultural expression. This is selfhood. It has three important dynamics: cultural orientation, freedom from structural domination and the pre-eminence of Christ as Lord of His Church.

1. *Cultural Orientation*. What is culture? Culture is anything but a heap of unrelated elements that make a people think. It is the lifestyle of any people, of any ethnic group. Unfortunately, when Christianity came to Africa, it did not come to us naked, rather it came in the garb of the people who brought it. And in those days, the way you could identify a Christian was by the narrow tie he wore, the Victorian lifestyle and all kinds of food which you had to eat with a fork in one hand and a knife in the other. What is wrong with eating food with your fingers? God made them! These are the cultural elements which you have to grapple with.

Let us take a look at a typical African man. Before he drinks his beer, for example, he will pour a little bit to the ground as a sort of libation to his ancestral spirits. Some people have identified that as worshipping ancestors, but that is truly not the case. When I look at the

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted by John V. Taylor in *The Primal Vision* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p.44.

<sup>9</sup> Michel Kayoya, *My Father’s Footprints*, trans. Aylward Shorter and Marie-Agnes Baldwin (Nairobi, 1974).

West, although one does not pour out a little bit of one's drink to the ground, one holds one's glass high to make a toast. This is a question of cultural orientation.

Similarly, an African home is not just a dwelling, it is also a temple, wherein he worships. His religiosity affects all areas of life—social, economic and political—and people look at life and experience it through this religiosity.

The Church has a task to perform: the Church has to study the culture of its own people and make the Bible speak to that culture. Where the culture and the Bible are in conflict, the culture must give way, because the Bible is the Word of God and is above culture. We know from experience that selfhood means that in some cases, the Bible transforms the culture, and in other cases the Bible modifies the culture. But it would be very unjust to condemn any culture as being totally demonic and this is something that we ought to bear in mind as we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

2. *Freedom from Structural Domination*. It is a law of nature that, when a child is born, it has to depend upon its parents for some time. But then comes the adolescent stage when the child must define himself in terms of his own needs. He has to look into his own social, economic and political structure and be able to relate to that.

When Christianity came to Africa, the structure by and large was patterned after the mother or the sending country. This was good for a time, because it was needed. But there has to come a time when the church must identify with the present-day realities and to continue to hold on to a foreign structure will only lead to the death of the church. The fact that one administrative system or church policy or evangelistic programme works in Europe or America is no guarantee that it will succeed in Africa. Cases abound where projects that flourished under the missionaries' administration collapsed when the nationals took over either because funds were not sufficient to run them or the nationals were not skilled in that area or there was no interest or all of these combined.

Today the advocates of selfhood are saying that the Church in Africa must examine its needs, determine its own priorities, evaluate its own resources and devise suitable practical programmes. In other words, we cannot fight the battle in strange armour. African church leaders are asking how they can really minister to the needs of their own people. So we are saying that in order to have its own identity, the Church must address itself to the cultural needs of the people and it must be free from foreign domination.

3. *The Lordship of Christ*. It is argued that the Church in Africa should no longer be an institution acknowledging a human overlord elsewhere outside Africa; nor should it continue to be a marionette with its strings in the hands of some foreign dominators. Instead the Church in Africa should be a Church which acknowledges and proclaims the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a language that is understandable to its own people. The Church in Africa strongly advocates the Reformation theme *sola Scriptura*, the Bible and the Bible alone. They say that the day is gone when the authority to obey is in the Vatican, or in Canterbury or elsewhere in Europe or of some "providence" who dispenses dollars from America. Jesus Christ has to be the Lord of the Church and Jesus Christ alone.

## THE EXPRESSIONS OF SELFHOOD

How does selfhood express itself? As I have said, Christianity came to Africa to a people who have been described as "incurably religious" in all things. There was no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular to the African mind. When the African man goes about his business, there is that religious thought in his mind, he is always conscious that his

forefathers are watching and he knows that he belongs to the particular community which has gone before. The expression of selfhood must take that into account.

One of our African scholars said this about the Christianity which we inherited:

Mission Christianity has come to mean for many Africans simply a set of rules to be observed, promises to be expected in the next world, rhythmless hymns to be sung, rituals to be followed and a few other outward things. It is a Christianity which is locked up six days a week, meeting only for two hours on Sundays and perhaps once during the week. It is a Christianity which is active in a church building. The rest of the week is empty. Africans who traditionally do not know religious vacuum, feel that they don't get enough religion from this type of Christianity, since it does not fill up their whole life.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, many of the developing African churches are very expressive. We call them the independent churches partly because they do not acknowledge foreign domination, their leaders live among the people, their worship is conducted in the native language, there is that community atmosphere which is enjoyed, the expression of concern for each other (body life) and so they feel it is a place to really feel at home. Their theology may not be academically (and in some cases biblically) sound, but their preachers give a message relevant to the social and material problems of the members because of their close affinity. Regardless of whatever qualms (and there are many of them) one may have against the independent and charismatic churches, it goes without saying that they are closer to selfhood than the historic mission churches.<sup>11</sup>

African church leaders are then saying that the church in Africa must be a place to feel at home. But it should be remembered that it is an existence in a community; in other words, the African Church cannot isolate itself from the rest of Christendom. We cannot exclaim that we do not belong to others, because we do. We are the Church of Jesus Christ in Africa because there is the Church of Jesus Christ elsewhere.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF SELFHOOD

The first practical outcome of selfhood is a sort of creative tension. I call it creative tension because it is exciting! On the one hand you may come from a culture which advocates violence, on the other hand Jesus Christ claims to be, and I believe is, the Prince of Peace. Now, as a Christian, where do I go? Shall I use a gun and shoot or shall I pursue peace with every man? Without this nobody is going to see God, as the Bible says. So there is that tension. How can the Church in Africa be truly the Church of Jesus Christ without watering down the Gospel? In other words, when I look at the Church, how can I say that really there is something different about this particular community? Can I really identify this community with Jesus Christ the Lord? At the same time, can I identify it as an African community of worshippers? There is that tension because you have to avoid what is called syncretism. What this means is that the African church workers have to study both the culture and the Word of God.

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<sup>10</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1970), p.305.

<sup>11</sup> It is believed that the independent churches and charismatic renewal movements are numerically growing faster than the main historic mission churches. It is estimated that an average of five new congregations are launched daily across the continent.



Now what is the implication of this for foreign missions? Does this mean the end of foreign missions, that we do not need foreign missions in Africa? No, it does not mean that. What it means is this: it means that the day of pioneer missionaries in Africa is ended for foreigners. In many African countries today, the government will not even let you in, if you say you are coming just to preach the Gospel. They will tell you that there are already Christians in the country and that it is up to them to preach the Gospel. But there is something else: it means that you have to come as what we call specialized missionaries. There is still a need for missionary doctors, technicians, communicators, educators in these various specialized areas. All the African countries are developing countries and the governments will never turn anybody down who will assist in this development.

Another implication is that unlike the past when foreigners came as directors and managers, selfhood demands their coming as guests and partners. They are strangers and aliens to our world as we are to theirs. This requires their dependency on us for at least information, direction and contact. But they are not ordinary guests: they are ambassadors of Christ as we are, engaged in the common task of taking Christ to the nations and discipling them. Which means that we are partners! Ontologically, partnership implies equality, autonomy, agreement and free sharing of resources. Which means we can learn from their insights about the Word of God, their heritage and tradition, and benefit from their spiritual endowments. We, therefore, depend on them! The picture is like that of the relationship between the different members of the body. They are all *important*; they are all *essential*; they are all *necessary*; and they are all *interdependent*. Missionaries all over the world, whatever their race or denomination, should work *with* the nationals and not *for* them.

Selfhood and begging are incompatible. Begging does not help the individual solve his problem of poverty or realize his potential. Begging actually destroys self. If I have to go about begging every time I have a need, then my self is totally destroyed. I am speaking to myself as well as to the Church in Africa. We are faced with the task of teaching our own people how to give to the ministry of Jesus Christ. The moment we continue to go abroad begging, we destroy and cripple self.

## THE VALUES OF SELFHOOD

The first important value of selfhood is this: it gives the people the opportunity to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their own people in the language they can understand. People like to become Christians without crossing unnecessary barriers; these barriers could be linguistic, racial, cultural or social.

The incident at Pentecost ([Acts 2:5–12](#)), when thousands of people from about fifteen different nations heard the Gospel being declared in their own language can be cited as a biblical precedent. On that day of Pentecost, the people said “Oh! Are these men drunk? How come every one of us can hear his own language what is spoken by these people?” What happened? We are told that about 3,000 accepted Jesus Christ on that occasion as their own Lord and Saviour, because they heard God speak to them in their own language. “In our own tongues” is an important phrase that affirms self.

Until recently, African Christians used to think that missionaries are only white people and that to talk of a missionary is to talk of a white Christian man or woman who has come from abroad. But recently the situation has begun to change. The African churches are now discovering that missionary work is not colour barrier-bound. It is not only meant for white people. Today, many of the African churches are sending out missionaries; for example, my own church, ECWA, the Evangelical Churches of West Africa, has a missionary society,

currently supporting 240 Nigerian missionary families working in Sudan, Chad, Niger, Benin and Ghana. They are totally supported by the local churches in Nigeria.

The same thing applies to evangelism or evangelization. In August 1978, over 1,000 evangelical leaders in Nigeria met and decided to launch “Operation Good News”, which is an effort to reach 80 million Nigerians with the good news of Salvation in Christ by the end of 1980.<sup>12</sup> Evangelism and Mission no longer carry colour tags. When churches reach out they grow and when growth occurs, self is affirmed.

Next to growth is stability. A church that has attained selfhood is a stable church. Webster Dictionary describes stability as the strength to stand in a time of crisis. It is being firm in times of persecution and the Church in Africa is grappling with this particular need today.

One cannot resist telling the story of the Church in Ethiopia in the late 1930s and early 1940s. When the Italians invaded the country in 1935, all missionaries departed, leaving national believers behind. When the Italians were driven out by the British and Ethiopians in 1941, the missionaries returned to find several thousands of believers. The same thing could be said today. Since Emperor Halle Selassie’s empire collapsed and the new power is proletarian and pro-Moscow, many missionaries were asked to go again, but God remained behind with the people so that local believers are carrying on the work of the Gospel. Stability: it is part of selfhood.

There remain many more values of selfhood, but mention shall be made of only one more: self-reliance.<sup>13</sup> If a denomination said that it has sufficient well-trained national leaders for its local congregations, schools and various other establishments, and demands that their foreign missionaries go home, or if it asked its foreign benefactors overseas to discontinue sending funds or any other type of assistance because it is able to run its affairs, that does not mean the end of mission or foreign missionary enterprise. Instead, it is a fresh opportunity not only to move on, but to co-operate and work together in reaching some of the two billion people who are still to be reached in various areas of the world.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Let the Earth Hear His Voice” was the 1974 Lausanne banner for the International Congress on World Evangelization. In 1975, the Nigerian delegates who attended Lausanne organized a National Congress on Evangelization wherein the report and vision of Lausanne was shared. In August 1978, a second Congress was held at the University of Ire. It was during this congress that “Operation Good News” was launched. At one of the business sessions, Panya Baba, the Secretary of the Evangelical Missionary Society of ECWA gave a report of his denomination’s missionary programme. See also AFROSCOPE No. 16 (December 1978) for more details on the Operation Good News campaign.

<sup>13</sup> When Rev. John Gatu, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), suggested a moratorium on overseas support in the early 1970s, he wasn’t only talking about it. His church committed itself to a self-reliance programme, the details of which are reported on page 11 as an Appendix to this paper. The report was published in the AACC Newsletter, Vol. 5, No. 5, May 1979, p.9.

<sup>14</sup> In 1945, it was estimated that there were 40 million professing Christians in Africa. By 1963, the number had risen to 60 million. Today, the estimated number is over 100 million, making the ratio 1 out of every 3 persons on the continent. But one fact often overlooked is that there are about 175 million professing Muslims in Africa.

Having said all this, the conclusion to this paper remains open. One thing is certain, however, the Spirit is like the wind and He moves whichever way He chooses.

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## Urban Explosion and Missions Strategy

Timothy Monsma

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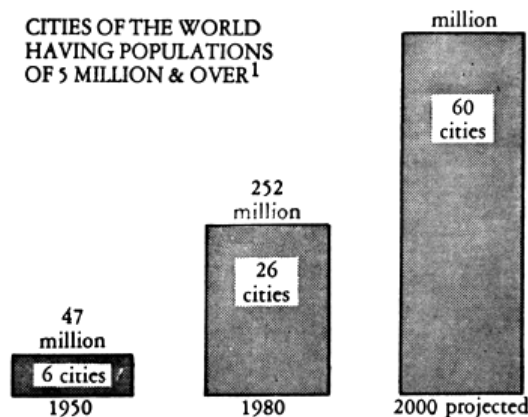
*Culture shock leading to both apathy and violence is escalating in the cities of the world, especially in the less affluent nations. Staggering population growth together with the widening gap between rich and middle class people living in high rise apartments and poor people living in slums challenge the urban Church to new dimensions of mission. Today it is the cities that put Christianity on trial. This article calls the Church to new priorities in missionary strategy.*

(Editor)

### WORLDWIDE URBANIZATION

#### An Overview

Recent United Nations statistics on worldwide urbanization numb the imagination. The following chart gives some picture of what is happening: Of the 60 giant cities (5,000,000 or more population) projected for the year 2000, 45 (or 75%) will be in less developed countries. Many of these countries are fertile areas for mission work today. Opportunity beckons.



The growth of smaller cities is also important, in Latin America three of every four persons will be living in a city by the year 2000. In Africa, cities of all sizes are growing