

AFRICA TO THE REST



Sam Ngugi is the co-founder of Mission Campaign Network (MCN) and GEN12, mission agencies based in Kenya and Rwanda, and he is also co-author alongside Yaw Perbi of the book "Africa to the Rest: From Mission Field to Mission Force (Again)". He's currently doing research on "the state of discipleship and cross-cultural missions in Afro-diaspora churches in the UK" with Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

GOD HAS ALWAYS WORKED IN AFRICA

We are living at the dawn of an emerging African mission movement. Biblical faith is perhaps the most powerful force engaging the minds and hearts of Africans today, reorganising and transforming people's lives and communities in tangible ways. In our book "Africa to the Rest", Perbi and I try to make it abundantly clear that, contrary to the popular tales, God's hand has always been upon the peoples and continent of Africa. In the formative years of Christianity, Africa was a "theological force", with early church fathers from Africa playing a critical role in grounding global Christianity in sound biblical doctrines that have carried the global Church to date! Once again, the Great I AM is on the move in Africa.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN AFRICA

In the Lausanne Movement's "State of the Great Commission" report, the most common word associated with Christianity

in Africa is "growth": from the numerical growth of Christianity and churches to mission agencies, missionaries, international students, diasporas, resources, Bible schools, etc. All projections convey optimism and hope. Take Bible translation, for example: between 2010 and 2024, SIL Global's expatriate workforce in Africa decreased by 20% while the African workforce increased by 70%! In addition, the leadership of all the four major translation agencies - SIL Global, United Bible Societies, Wycliffe Global Alliance, and the Word for the World - are from continental Africa.

ENCOURAGING THE MISSION MOVEMENT

Enthusiasm about the emerging mission movement out of Africa is off the charts. But how can the growth and youthfulness of African Christianity translate to a real, fruitful and transformative mission movement in our generation and beyond? I propose at least two things:



1. MATCH MISSION THEOLOGY WITH MISSION PRACTICE

Biblical Christianity and mission stand or falter on sound theology, biblical teaching and discipleship. While everyone acknowledges the dire need for discipleship in the Church in Africa, we don't seem to have the will and the determination to invest significant resources - human and financial - in it. I believe we need to make the ability/skill to disciple people a prerequisite qualification for missionary candidates and enquirers and peg all ministry funding in Africa to robust discipleship training programs. We need a mission-focussed discipleship revolution in Africa! Indeed, Missio Dei is about BEING and DOING, but the current mission enterprise is too heavy on 'doing' and little on 'being'. It's time to match our mission theology with our mission practice.

2. OVERCOME RACIAL & CULTURAL BARRIERS

The Africa mission movement will flourish through kingdom partnerships built on genuine trust and hope. As they say, 'attitude leaks'; Africans still face racial obstacles, and we must work hand-in-hand to overcome these racial and cultural barriers and demolish every negative stereotype that creates doubts in the abilities of Africans to be missionaries in North Africa, Asia, Middle East and Europe. While mission strategy that links gospel workers with unreached peoples of similar/closer cultural affinity can be helpful

to determine how and where to effectively mobilise a country's missionaries, this can lead to unintended negative implications which can marginalise and have a crippling effect e.g. determining that Africans can only be missionaries among dark-skinned unreached peoples. This does not advance God's mission or motivate participation. Where is the faith and confidence in the power of the cross to both confound and save nations (Psalm 2:1-4)? God's mission is colourblind and Africa shall be a blessing among all nations.

LISTEN TO SAM TALK ABOUT THE BOOK

**HE CO-AUTHORED, AFRICA TO THE
REST: FROM MISSION FIELD TO
MISSION FORCE**



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