

# Resolution on Africa



A Guide for Study & Reflection

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Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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Faces at the beginning of each session are wooden masks from Kenya.

Trees on pages 2 and 63 are digital adaptations from photographs.

Egyptian art on page 4 is detail from an Egyptian metal souvenir plate.

Figure on page 13 is a carved wood impala from Kenya.

Woman on pages 32 and 35 is a doll from Ghana.

Figure on page 40 is a soapstone statue from Zimbabwe.

Rhinoceroses on page 41 are carved from soapstone, specific African country unknown.

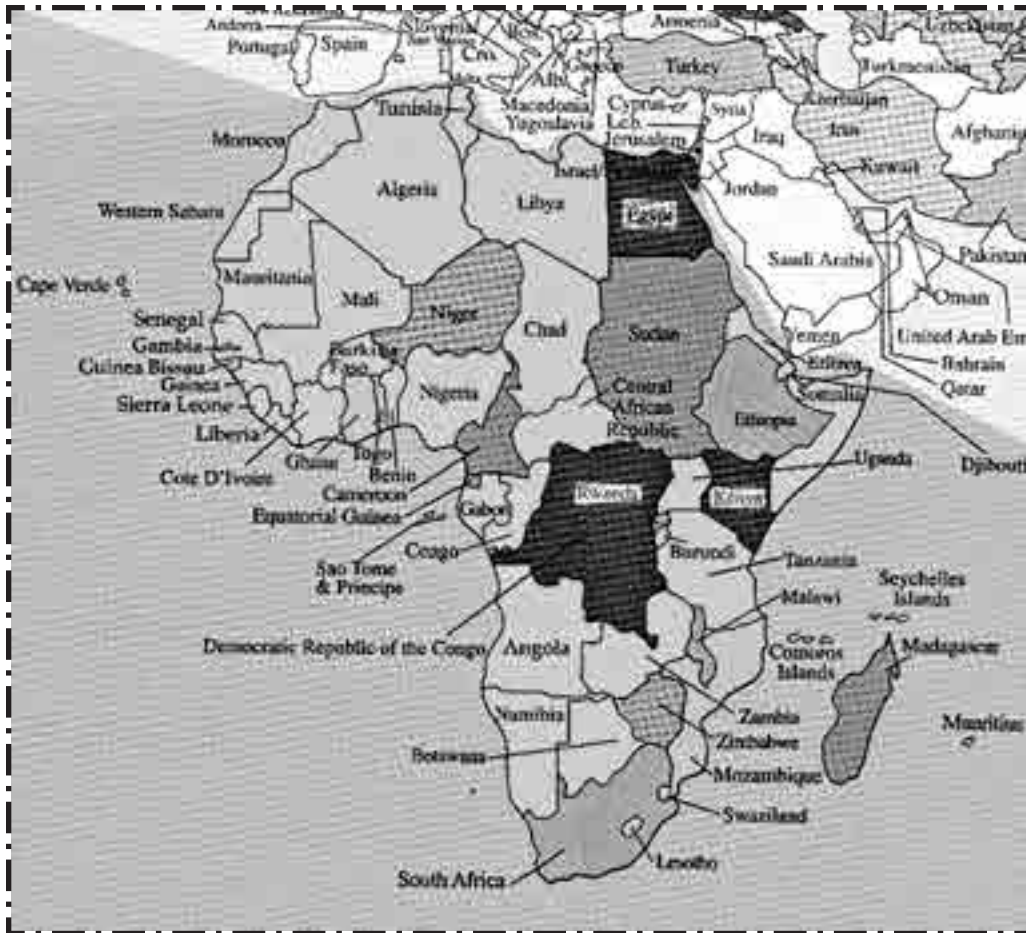
Picture on page 52 is carved into a piece of wood, specific African country unknown.

Figures on page 64 are from the bottom of a decorated gourd, specific African country unknown.

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*This map is from the Presbyterian Planning Calendar 2003-2004*

*Shaded areas indicate where the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has mission personnel. As an example, the chart below shows the number of mission workers in various countries in 2003.*

<b>1 mission worker in</b>	<b>3-5 mission workers in</b>	<b>8-11 mission workers in</b>
Equatorial Guinea	Cameroon	Malawi
Niger	Madagascar	
Rwanda	Sudan	<b>12-19 mission workers in</b>
Uganda		Egypt
Zimbabwe	<b>6-7 mission workers in</b>	
	Democratic Republic of Congo	<b>20+ mission workers in</b>
<b>2 mission workers in</b>	Ethiopia	Kenya
Lesotho	Ghana	
Mozambique	South Africa	

## How to Use This Resource

Nineteenth-century images of Africa continue to replay in our minds, even in this twenty-first century. We tend to be ignorant of the history of Africa and of its great diversity of life. We hold stereotypes of a backward continent. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has invited its members and friends to embark on a journey with Africans. If we no longer wish to look at Africa through a dim glass, but rather through high-intensity lenses, then we will have to be intentional in seeking new perspectives on a contemporary continent.

This guide for study and reflection is intended for adults of all ages. Older youth may find it informative also.

There are six sessions, but there probably is more material than you can get through in six one-hour sessions. You may divide sessions 4 and 5 in order to make two more sessions for a total of eight, or you may be selective about the discussion questions to keep to a shorter time frame. In the back of this Guide you will find the complete *Resolution on Africa*; you may refer to it in your study.

If participants are to learn something about Africa and gain new perspectives they need to have information. Plenty of information is in this guide; the question is how to get it to the participants. Ideally each participant would have a copy of the book and would commit to reading the pages for the session before the session begins. However, this is not always practical, and where it is not the leader must be prepared to share the information with the group.

At the end of each session there are Leader Helps. One person might be the leader for all six sessions, or your group may prefer the shared leadership approach with a different leader for each session. Leaders might choose their session based on interest or knowledge.

Invite Africans in your congregation or community to speak to your group, or invite an International Peacemaker or a mission co-worker to speak. See *Get Involved* page 9 for information.

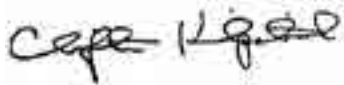
Dear Friends in Christ:

One of the most significant—if not most widely reported—actions of the 215th General Assembly (2003) was the adoption of the *Resolution on Africa*. I am pleased to write a brief preface to this Study Guide and to encourage all Presbyterians to study this important document, to respond to its recommendations, and to join in partnership with Christians in Africa in our common mission for Jesus Christ.

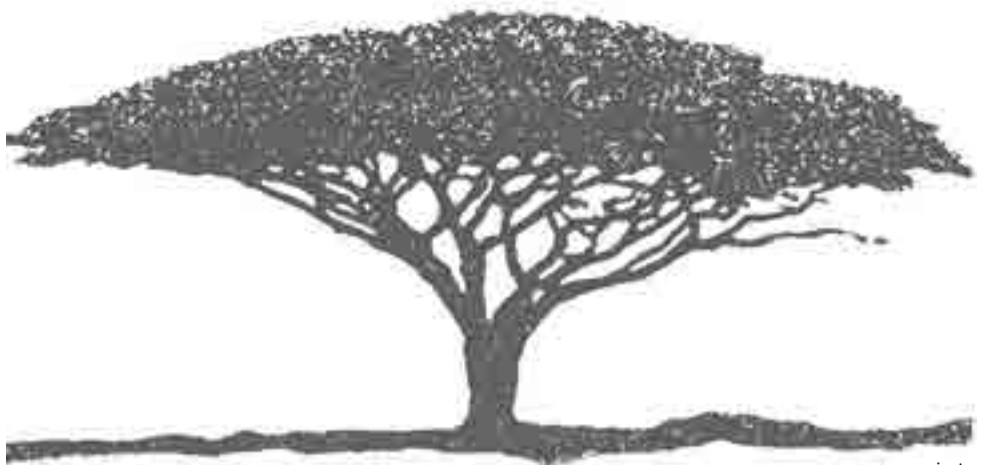
Africa is the continent with both the fastest growing, most vital Christian community, and with the greatest human suffering. In spending time with Christian partners in Africa over the years, my life has been transformed by the joyful Christian faith and the powerful Christian witness of our brothers and sisters in Christ on that continent. To use a phrase from Charles Wesley, "my heart has been strangely warmed" by the call of God to join with African Christians in alleviating human suffering and injustice in that part of the world. This Resolution and Study Guide is an invitation to all Presbyterians to explore both dimensions of our calling to be partners with Christians in Africa—and to do something about it!

May God richly bless you as you engage in this study, and may God bless Africa!

Yours in Christ,



Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



acacia tree



## PARTNERSHIP and the Resolution on Africa

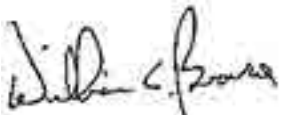
A soon-to-be-published history of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) involvement in Africa tells the amazing story of the Holy Spirit using our church in the evangelization of Africa. The story is also about the gifts and limits of the interaction between believers in the One Lord who come from vastly different cultures. We can celebrate a host of illustrations of loving, sacrificial, faithful and effective ministry. We can also celebrate the birth and creation of autonomous churches across the continent.

But, despite this well-documented history, we must confess that our country's and our church's involvement with Africa also has been flamed and contaminated by our own cultural prejudices. A leader in the national offices of a denomination in Congo tells the story of his own experience of the disrespect with which we have been guilty of treating African church leaders. He says that it was only after he had been a trained and ordained pastor for 18 years that he was invited to attend the Mission Meeting at which decisions were made about the life of the church in that part of the Congo. He was invited to attend but instructed to remain silent.

We have moved past the days of "Mission" dominance over African churches and we celebrate the partner churches, and their invitation for our church to join them in support of what God is doing in their midst. However, concern and support for our sisters and brothers in Christ in Africa is woefully and strangely lacking in our church. While our attention was riveted in 1998-1999 on the war in Kosovo, a much larger war spread death literally across Africa from the south Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. Since that time, for instance, more than a million persons have died in conflict and disaster in the Democratic Republic of Congo alone.

As Christians, we stand in wonder at what God is doing in the explosive growth of Christianity in the southern hemisphere. We kneel in prayer for God's intervention in the terrible causes of human suffering: war, corruption, poverty, and diseases of poverty—tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS.

As Presbyterians we approach all of this in special ways. We acknowledge that all is under the sovereignty of God's control. We remember that we are made real sisters and brothers in our receipt of God's grace in Jesus Christ. We believe that we are called in humility to follow the primacy of our partner church in discerning what the Spirit is doing in a particular place. We assert that God calls us to serve with grace the needs of the whole person. We pray that our whole church will respond to the Spirit's invitation expressed through our partners to be at work in a place God loves.



William C. Browne  
Associate Director, Ecumenical Partnership



## Session 1

# Getting Acquainted

## Introduction to Africa and the Church in Africa

### Resolution on Africa

Sections A, part of B, D1

#### Preview

Africa, the birthplace of humanity, is largely unknown to most Americans. We will take a brief historical look at four cities—north, south, east, and west—in Africa, along with a bit of church history as it relates to the continent. And we will get a first glimpse at partnership as it is understood in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

#### Scripture

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalm 96

### A Little Geography and Demographics

Africa is our homeland and yet many of us know little about it. Africa is a continent of 30,420,000 square kilometers. Its land mass equals that of the combined mass of China, India, Europe, Argentina, the United States, and New Zealand. In our unfamiliarity with the continent some of us speak of Africa as though it were one country. In fact it is home to fifty-four independent nations, including island nations. South of the Sahara there are forty-eight countries. Twenty-two of them have less than five million people. Half of the twenty-two have less than one million inhabitants. Altogether the continent of Africa has close to 800 million people. For comparison the country of India has just over one billion in population. Africa has over 1,000 languages and dialects.

**Africa! Birthplace of humankind.**

### Hmmm. I Didn't Know That!



**Alexandria**, founded in the third century B.C., sitting proudly on the edge of Egypt, with a toe in the Mediterranean, is a tribute to Alexander the Great. It was a cosmopolitan city that attracted people from many places and was a center of learning. Science and literature flourished there. While the Ptolemies ruled, Alexandria boasted a library of 500,000 books, the largest collection in the ancient world. In Alexandria Jewish and Christian communities thrived. There the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek (to be known as the Septuagint). The early Christian theologians Clement and Origen taught in Alexandria. Some of the first and foremost bishops, such as Athanasius and Hesychius called the city home.

*Some information from the Resolution on Africa is integrated into this session.*

To the west three other early Christian theologians from Africa had a great influence on the development of Christian thought: Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. Both Tertullian, born around 150 A.D., and Cyprian, born about 200 A.D., were from Carthage (modern Tunisia). Augustine was born in 354 A.D. in Algeria and served as bishop of Hippo (Hippo being near modern day Bona, Algeria). Except for Paul, Augustine probably has had the greatest impact on Christian doctrine.

**Great Zimbabwe** was founded by Shona-speaking people in the eleventh century A.D. in southern Africa and was a thriving metropolis from the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century. The modern city of Masvingo is located near the ruins. The walls of the city were 32 feet high and 17 feet thick. Most of the buildings were made of well cut stone. Zimbabwe is a distortion of the Shona phrase *dzimba dza mabwe*, meaning houses of stone. Great Zimbabwe was a center for the gold trade. As the Shona rulers' wealth increased, so did their armies until they dominated a large region of southern Africa. Their influence spread even further.

**Axum** is Ethiopia's oldest city. Around 500 B.C. Semitic-speaking people from southern Arabia went west across the Red Sea, settled and mixed with the Kashitic-speaking people, and they all became known as the Aksumites (Axumites). The people read and wrote Semitic, and because of them, Ethiopia has the longest continuous tradition of literacy in Africa. Living along the Red Sea in the Highlands of Ethiopia—at an elevation of 7,500 feet—the Aksumites controlled what became a major trade route for commerce through Africa, Arabia, and India. The Aksumites traded in rhinoceros horns, hippo hides, gold, ivory, and slaves, amassing great wealth.

There was a strong Jewish tradition in Ethiopia, and Christianity was not unknown. See the story of Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-39. (In biblical times everything south of Egypt was considered Ethiopia, but today the area is known as Sudan and Ethiopia.) At the beginning of the fourth century King Ezana made Ethiopia one of the first Christian states in the world, perhaps edging out Constantine's conversion of the Roman Empire as the first. In the seventh century Islam spread across the north of Africa, but pockets of Christianity persisted. The Egyptian Coptic Church remained strong as did the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Christian tradition in Ethiopia holds that the Ark of the Covenant is safeguarded in an Orthodox church in Ethiopia. According to tradition the Queen of Sheba was from the Axum region. When she visited King Solomon she became pregnant by him and returned home. The resulting child was a boy named Menelik. As a young man Menelik traveled to Jerusalem to visit his father. All was well until others became jealous of Solomon's attention to Menelik, and Solomon's advisors recommended the boy go home. Solomon agreed on the condition that the firstborn of the advisors accompany Menelik. Before leaving, some of the young men carted off the Ark of the Covenant. During the trip when Menelik discovered the deed he decided that God would not have allowed it to happen if it hadn't been meant to be. And so the Ark, reportedly, is secure and revered in Ethiopia to this day.

**Kumasi** was the capital of the Ashanti (Asante) confederacy for about 200 years, until the end of the nineteenth century. The Ashanti—a matrilineal



**For Discussion**

- ✦ In the information presented, what struck you as new or interesting?
- ✦ What romantic or fanciful notions about Africa are you aware of?
- ✦ Why would Americans and Europeans refer to Africa as the "dark continent"? What does this viewpoint tell us about Euro-Americans?
- ✦ Why is African history, generally speaking, not taught in our schools?
- ✦ What do we need to do to gain a better understanding of Africa?

society—were part of a larger group of people called the Akans who lived in what is now southern Ghana. Their main commodity was gold, and they were so active in the gold trade that in the 1600s Europeans began referring to the coastal area of Ghana as the Gold Coast. In 1482 the Portuguese had built the first European fort in sub-Saharan Africa. The Ashanti used gold to buy slaves from the Portuguese, buying 12,000 between 1500 and 1535. The slaves did deep mining and also cleared forests which helped the Ashanti people move from a hunting and gathering culture to an agricultural society. Gradually they prepared themselves for city life and built Kumasi. During the 1600s Ashanti was just one of several small states. Kumasi survived as a vassal town paying tribute to another state, but by the end of the seventeenth century, under the leadership of the Oyoko clan, Ashanti had consolidated power and won wars. Kumasi had developed into a major city and the Ashanti ruled. Though the Ashanti and the British signed friendship pacts in the 1800s, they still battled through the century. The British destroyed the Kumasi palace in 1874, but the city—the second largest in Ghana—is still the seat of Ashanti kings.

Though we may have not known about it, Africa has had a long and influential history. For the rest of this study we will be looking at contemporary Africa, but as we do, keep in mind the civilizations, the African thinkers, builders, astronomers, adventurers, and theologians whose work through the ages has contributed to the development of humankind.

**For Discussion**

- ✠ What are the similarities between siblings and partners?
- ✠ What does it mean to live in community for mutual benefit?
  - Give examples of situations that are not mutually beneficial.
  - Give examples of situations that are mutually beneficial.
- ✠ If the brothers and sisters have unequal resources how might the partnership become distorted or forgotten?
- ✠ Why is partnership so important to mission?
- ✠ If the brothers and sisters have unequal resources, give examples of how the partnership might be safeguarded so that each benefits mutually.

**Brothers and Sisters**

**Partnering**

*Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" Genesis 4:9*

Poor Cain. He didn't have much understanding of brotherhood. He didn't have role models to follow. His parents had not read up on how to deal with sibling rivalry. They couldn't even speak out of their own experience.

In the church we are learning to recognize our relationship to other people and learning to work in partnership. People are to live in community for mutual benefit, to be "keepers" of their brothers and sisters. We are discovering that the world is our community. One of the biblical understandings that supports the idea of partnership is that we are, or we become, sisters and brothers by faith in Jesus Christ. We are joint heirs of the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17a). As we do mission in the world we seek to build an understanding of partnership as a practice of mission.

Working in partnership brings benefit to both partners. Each encourages the other, each serves and is served, each has the opportunity for spiritual renewal and transformation. Working together, we witness together, glorifying and praising God.

In this study we will look particularly at doing mission in partnership with African Christians.

## Listening

Read Kings 5:1-14. Naaman was a noted warrior, a general in the Syrian army, a man of confidence and strength who had won strategic victories for his country. Nevertheless Naaman had leprosy, a disease that society looked on with disgust—though in Syria lepers were not shunned as they were in Israel. Ironically this commanding officer of position and wealth was cured of his disease only through the advice and insights of his servants—and after a humbling experience with a foreigner.

- Why did Naaman put so much stock in the claims of a servant girl?
- What was Naaman expecting when he went to Israel?
- Why was Naaman angry about Elisha's message?
- How would you characterize Naaman?
- How would you characterize the servants?

## Singing A New Song

In the first three centuries of its existence, the Christian church was blessed with African theologians who wrestled with what it meant to be Christian and what it was that Christians believed. They contributed to the foundational building blocks of what we believe today. Then came a lean time for the church in Africa. While the Christians in Egypt and Ethiopia persevered, Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa withered. Today, as Christianity seems to be languishing in North America and Europe, the church in Africa is robust and growing rapidly. For example the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus averages 200,000 new members a year.<sup>1</sup>

The church in Africa is as concerned about the practical day-to-day needs of its members as it is about their spiritual needs. The members are as concerned with the needs of the church as they are with their own. Many women in the Presbyterian Community of the Congo participate in small collectives, run by the women themselves as they develop projects and skills that enable them to make a little money. Some raise crops or animals to sell, some cook or bake food to sell, some might sew clothing to sell. The women are committed to giving twenty percent of their profits to the church. The first ten percent goes to the general funds of the church. The second ten percent goes to support the work of the women's section. The women's section typically provides for the care of the sick, the elderly, the orphans, and the widows. In 2002 a group of five women had a good year with their manioc crop: it brought them \$5 in profits. Each woman received a dollar, and each gave twenty cents to the church.<sup>2</sup>

Read Psalm 96. The church in Africa seems to be more enthusiastic than the church in the United States in testifying to God's marvelous works and singing praises to the Lord. If the Western church is suffering a malaise, as Naaman was, how can the church in Africa help us be renewed with a new song? How willing are we to learn a new song? Will we join the choir and sing with our sisters and brothers?

Mercy Oduyoye of Ghana tells of Afua Kuma, a charismatic leader in one of the African Instituted Churches, whose prayers are resplendent with potent names of God. Afua incorporates African traditions, customs, and proverbs into her prayers and her praise of Jesus' name. Her praise

What can American Christians learn from the story of Naaman that would apply to their relationship with the church—and individual Christians—in Africa?

...ascribe to the Lord glory  
and strength.  
Ascribe to the Lord the  
glory due his name....  
Psalm 96:7b, 8a

Jesus  
is the pod which  
explodes to scatter  
beans that make the  
sterile  
beget twins.

Afua Kuma<sup>9</sup>

names for Jesus are wide-ranging, from "friend and mother, the highest praise a woman gives a man", to "mountains, rocks, pythons, or ...dependable human creations like unsinkable boats."<sup>3</sup>

*Oriki* is a Yoruba word meaning praise names and generally refers to praise names for one's ancestors. *Mmrane* is the word in Twi. Afua Kuma gives the church the *Mmrane of Jesus Christ*. Oduyoye reports that believers who hear *Mmrane of Jesus Christ* "walk confidently in the power of those praise-names. Their spirits are lifted, their faith established, and their hope is strengthened. With all this, their strength is renewed for the tasks of life before them."

## The African Element

People believe and express their religious convictions within a cultural context. Though we are brothers and sisters we have different ways of being in the world, of being in community, and different ways of perceiving the world. John Pobee of Ghana has identified six elements of Africanness.<sup>4</sup>

- *Africans are human beings.* They are humans seeking to define and understand their African identity in relation to other human beings.

- *Africans see life in religious and spiritual terms.* They are not "satisfied with a purely materialistic and secular worldview."

- *An African finds being and meaning in the community.* Unlike the American's tendency toward individualism, the African understands him or herself as a social being whose welfare and salvation is tied to the community.

- *Africans see the world holistically.* Many Europeans and Americans harbor a dualistic view of the world that they inherited from the ancient Greeks. Africans do not split the material world from the spiritual, the individual from the community, the political from the religious. All are embraced as interrelated, each a facet of the whole.

- *Africans recognize chieftancy as a model for leadership.* The chief is central to community life and culture. The chief is not only the political leader but also a religious leader and is at the center of the community's ritual expression—much like the kings of Israel and Judah.

- *Africans need religious art to be African art.* Missionaries saddled Africans with European images of Christ, the madonna, and other figures. Such art smacks of colonialism and condemns Christianity to being a foreign religion. Some churches cling to these images and have no room for African artistic interpretations. Africans appreciate beauty not only in tangible forms of art, but in thought, appearance, action, and speech. Africans value a quick wit, humor, sarcasm, and rhetoric (which leads to Afua Kuma's *Mmrane*s of Jesus Christ).

### For Discussion

✠ What difference does it make if you view the world holistically or dualistically (separating the material world from the spiritual world)?

✠ Where do you see connections between chieftancy as a leadership model and Christianity?

✠ Why is art important?

## Counting Our Blessings

Many people in the United States are African or of African descent. Recent immigrants may have come as political refugees, and some have come simply because they wanted to be here. The majority of African-Americans in the United States are here because their ancestors were kidnapped, sold, and shipped to these shores against their will. Though slavery was—and is—an abomination, we, as a church and as a nation, must acknowledge that men, women, and children were held in bondage to help

build our nation and create the world's wealthiest economy. While we decry the cruel, mercenary motives that forced Africans to America, we can still acknowledge and rejoice in the legacy they brought with them. Any consideration of Africa must begin with the recognition of the contributions the continent of Africa, through its people, has made to America. In our music, art, literature, medicine, culinary habits, philosophy, theology, and worship we see and celebrate the many gifts we have received from Africa.

## Get Involved

- ◆ Create your own Oriki of Jesus the Christ.
- ◆ Look on the website to see what the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is doing in Africa. See [www.pcusa.org/wmd/countries.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/countries.htm).
- ◆ Using the *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study*, read a selection from the Africa section each day as your personal devotional during this study.
- ◆ As individuals, give yourself a homework assignment. Each one choose a country in Africa and find out something about it. Come to the next session with an interesting tidbit to share with the others.
- ◆ Invite a speaker to talk with your group about Africa. Contact the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program for an International Peacemaker from Africa: [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/intlpeace.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/intlpeace.htm). Or contact Worldwide Ministries for someone who is, or has been, a mission co-worker in Africa: [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/speakers/speakers.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/speakers/speakers.htm).
- ◆ Watch and discuss *Roots*, the mini-series.

List specific gifts of Africans or Africans in the diaspora (African-Americans) in music, art, literature, medicine, food, philosophy, theology, and worship.

O God of Zimbabwe and Arizona, of Kumasi and the Carolinas, of Axum and Maine, of Alexandria and Kansas: We begin our study of Africa with gratitude and humility for the many ways that Africa and its people have helped to develop and enhance our country and the world. Open our minds and our hearts that we may be spiritually and culturally enriched in our encounter with this continent and its people. May we be sensitive to the opportunities for partnership with African sisters and brothers as together we spread the gospel, and as together we struggle for peace, justice, and the wholeness that you desire for all your people. Amen.

## Sources of Information for this Session

1. *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study, Mission Interpretation and Promotion* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2002),. 33.
  2. *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study, Mission Interpretation and Promotion* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2004),. 40.
  3. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "The Empowering Spirit of Religion," in *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*, ed. Susan Brooks Thistlewaite, and Mary Potter Engels (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 248-50.
  4. John Pobee, *West Africa: Christ Would Be an African Too* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1996), 22-27.
- *Resolution on Africa* approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
  - Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970).
  - Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia Standard 2002, Microsoft Works Suite 2002.

### Web Sites

- [www.ashanti.com.au/](http://www.ashanti.com.au/)
- [reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/k/kumasi.html](http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/k/kumasi.html)
- [www.bartleby.com/65/as/Ashanti.html](http://www.bartleby.com/65/as/Ashanti.html)
- [www.hp.aub.edu/image-archive/um/umn.html](http://www.hp.aub.edu/image-archive/um/umn.html)
- [www.ethiopiatravel.com](http://www.ethiopiatravel.com)
- [www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CIVAFRICA/AXUM.HTM](http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/CIVAFRICA/AXUM.HTM)

## Other Resources

- To learn more about the nature of mission in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) see *God for the World—Church for the World* by Shirley C. Guthrie, Witherspoon Press, 2000. Six sessions. PDS #097708. \$10.95.
- *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study, Mission Interpretation and Promotion*. Order from PDS. (It has a different order number each year.)
- *Roots* (the mini-series) is available on DVD, 8 episodes, on 3 disks. You might be able to find it at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.tvshowsondvd.com/releaseinfo.cfm?ReleaseID=414](http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/releaseinfo.cfm?ReleaseID=414).



## Leader Helps

### Before the Session

- Put up a map of Africa that people will be able to refer to each session.
- Read over the information so that you can share it with the group.

### During the Session

1. Welcome the participants. If people are likely not to know one another, take time for introductions. You might ask that after they say their name they mention one thing they would like to take with them if they were going on a trip to Africa and one thing they would like to bring back.
2. Preview the session for the group.
3. Share the information under *A Little Geography and Demographics* and *Hmm, I Didn't Know That*. Ask participants to briefly identify information that they found new and/or interesting.
4. Discuss the questions on page 5.
5. Discuss partnership (questions on page 6) and list positives and negatives of being brother or sister's keeper.
6. Read Kings 5:1-14. Discuss the questions, particularly the one in the shaded box (p.7). (An example of a response to the question in the box: even though we live in a powerful nation we have to be willing to listen to, and learn from, Christians in Africa.)
7. Read Psalm 96 and discuss *Singing a New Song*.
8. Discuss *The African Element*.
9. Count the blessings that Africans brought to America. List specific African-Americans and the gifts they have contributed to the whole society.
10. Ask participants to give themselves a homework assignment as suggested in *Getting Involved*.
11. Close with prayer.



## Session 2

# Singing a New Song

## The African Church

**Resolution on Africa**  
Sections part of B, C, G

### Preview

The church in Africa is thriving. Africa has more Presbyterians than North America. We will learn a little bit about the church in Africa, and challenge some of our old, out-dated images.

### Scripture

Romans 1:11-12  
Amos 5:24

Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-3  
Matthew 25:31-46

## Mutually Encouraged

Long before western Christians thought about sending missionaries to Africa, long before much of Europe—or any of the Americas—was even Christian, there were Christian communities in Africa. Between the second and the seventh centuries Christianity thrived in Africa, but with the advent of the new Muslim religion Christianity faced a decline. From then to the nineteenth century there were three main focal points in African Christianity: (1) the continuing life of the Coptic and Ethiopian churches; (2) some glaringly unsuccessful attempts to convert the Muslims of North Africa; and (3) the Portuguese establishment of Catholic churches in sub-Saharan Africa beginning in the sixteenth century. The Portuguese missions were weak and of little effect, linked as they were with the slave trade.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Americans and Europeans began expressing concerns about the slave trade; the abolition movement was born. Beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth, the United States experienced a religious reawakening, a time of revivals and emphasis on mission, both home missions and foreign missions. While Presbyterians and others were planting new congregations in the western United States, they also felt called to ministry in Africa and other continents. Presbyterians mostly concentrated their work in West Central Africa, and in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan.

From the late 1950s on, African nations secured their independence from European colonial powers. The same can be said for African Christians: their denominations are African and independent of their foreign mother churches. Christianity expanded dramatically in Africa during the twentieth century. According to projections there will soon be 400 million African Christians. For a few centuries the Christian “center of gravity” had been in Europe and North America, but it shifted and now rests in sub-Saharan

### **Bwana Asifiwe!**

“Praise the Lord!”  
*used as a greeting among  
Kenyan Christians*

*Some information from the  
Resolution on Africa is integrated  
into this session.*

Africa. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has corresponding relationships with more than fifty churches and Christian councils in Africa as well as other relationships through the World Reformed Alliance and the World Council of Churches.

There are several reasons why the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourage its entities, congregations, and members to give greater attention to Africa.

1. One of the basic theological tenets of the PC(USA) is that the church is a worldwide community of faith in Christ without boundaries.
2. Presbyterians cannot understand the gospel using only the concepts of our Western culture. Our biblical and theological tradition needs to be supplemented by African theological insights and sensitivities.
3. The American church bears some responsibility for what has or has not developed in African Christianity. We should both celebrate what has happened and support the correction of mistakes.
4. Responsibility for mission "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) remains a mandate of the gospel. In partnership with African Christians we share responsibility for mission in the United States and in Africa.
5. "The Gospel is never safe in any culture unless there is a witness from beyond that culture."<sup>1</sup> Since the future of the world Christian movement is in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we have mutual need of each other's testimony of the work of the Holy Spirit among us. Much of what American Presbyterians lack in evangelistic fervor is present in abundance among African Christians, but our strength in witnessing to societal issues is sometimes missing in African churches.
6. Matters of justice relative to American influence in Africa and the rest of the world make it incumbent upon Presbyterians to nurture stronger relationships with Christians in Africa (Rom. 1:11-12).

Read Romans 1:11-12.

- How do Christians mutually encourage each other's faith?
- What might happen to a community of Christians that was isolated from the rest of the faith?
- How might African Christians help us come to a deeper understanding of the gospel? What happens to our concept of the gospel if we do not allow ourselves to listen to the insights and sensitivities of others?



## New Eyes

We think we are up-to-date, up-to-the-minute, knowledgeable people with our cell phones, and internet hook-ups, and PDAs. But some of us are stuck with old-fashioned ideas about mission work, Africa, and the church in Africa. Most of us are very twentieth century; some of us are still nineteenth century. Our old-fashioned, condescending attitudes, policies, and practices have to go.

People in North America and Europe have a fundamental assumption of cultural superiority. For centuries we have seen ourselves as the model of Christianity, as the guardians who would graciously bestow Christianity upon benighted souls in far off places. For years we also assumed that Euro-American culture was Christian culture and that anyone who would be Christian would have to give up his or her own culture and take on Euro-American culture—even though Christianity did not originate in Europe. We are only now beginning to learn how culturally bound we are and how arrogant and dismissive we are when it comes to foundational questions about being Christian in the world today. It has been a slow process, but we are beginning to grasp the idea that our faith in Christ transcends a particular culture; we are beginning to see that the society and culture in each place is impacted by the gospel, but that no single culture is the Christian culture.

We have to take a look at the realities of Africa and the African church with new eyes.

### Worldview

People living in different cultures and in different parts of the world usually have different ways of looking at, and understanding, the world. No worldview is the correct one. No one worldview is best. People just have different worldviews. Usually one's worldview reflects the reality of the little piece of the world where one lives.

Africans see the world differently from Europeans and North Americans. For example, we in the United States assume a split between science and religion. Science is concerned with facts, empirical evidence, things that can be documented and verified with our senses. Religion is believing without seeing; it is a leap of faith; it is expressing ideas and opinions about what is ultimately unknowable. In American society science wins arguments. The African church works within the context of a combined pre-modern and modern worldview, which makes it much closer to the New Testament world. Dreams, visions, and miracles are expected and accepted in African churches.

In Madagascar about 40 percent of the people are animists. They believe in ancestor worship and that the *tromba*, or spirit of a dead person, can possess one of the living. The *tromba* might do great good, or wreak havoc for one who does not obey it. However, Christians believe that the power of Jesus Christ can overcome the *tromba* and heal those who are possessed. Therefore the Malagasy Christian church practices exorcism.

Arlette Vavimaro Razafimanantsoa is from Madagascar. She grew up in a Christian home and did not practice animism; nevertheless, at age eighteen, she was possessed by a *tromba* when one of the boys in her class kissed her on the cheek in front of others. Not only was his behavior

#### For Discussion

- ✦ What does it mean to be Christian in today's world?
- ✦ What are stumbling blocks for Christians in the United States?
- ✦ What are advantages for Christians in the United States?

considered to be rude, it was seen by some as a kind of witchcraft. Razafimanantsoa experienced sleeplessness, screaming fits, convulsions. She thought the *tromba* wanted to destroy her mind, and she felt herself in a struggle against evil. Razafimanantsoa credits her recovery to her Christian faith, to the work of both a medical doctor and a psychiatrist, to the prayers of other Christians, and to exorcism. Today Razafimanantsoa has a Master of Divinity degree from the School of Theology in the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, and at the time of this writing she is working on her master's degree in marriage and family therapy at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, with help from a scholarship from the PC(USA).<sup>2</sup>

While in the United States Razafimanantsoa has undoubtedly noticed other worldview differences. For example, Africans practice a group ethos in which one is never considered to be alone because one is always part of a family, clan, or tribe; Americans cherish individualism. In the United States, personal money is a personal matter. We guard the confidentiality of our finances. We don't pry into other people's business and we don't disclose our own. Most of us don't see any connection at all between what we do with our money and our relationship with God. In the United States the majority of us live in homes that most of the rest of the world would consider to be exceedingly extravagant. At the same time there are those of us who are homeless, who are hungry, who have no health care and who are sick. In Africa, those who have more resources willingly share with those who have less, and it is appropriate for neighbors to bring it to a person's attention if they are remiss in generosity.

In the United States we pride ourselves on the separation of church and state. In Uganda when they holistically address HIV/AIDS by promoting faith-sanctioned abstinence, we may be appalled that church and state boundaries can be so easily breached. The separation of church and state may be dear to us but is of no consequence to Africans.

## Theology

The three main ways of theological reflection and expression are written, oral, and symbolic. In Africa the written theology is done by those who have been privileged to receive higher education, and most of the writing is done in a European language. Oral theology is what is talked about and practiced in the fields and on the streets, accessible to the masses, and expressed perhaps in song, sermon, prayer, daily conversation. Symbolic theology is expressed through art, ritual, dance, drama, and the like.<sup>3</sup>

Mercy Oduyoye of Ghana tells us that African Christianity as expressed in prayer and song is founded on three affirmations: (1) Satan is real and strong but Satan is no match for God; (2) God can conquer anything that brings pain if we tell God about it; and (3) God can heal the things that break community. The people's songs of prayer and praise are based on "a belief in the lively presence of God/Jesus. Some call on God to come, see, or hear. They expect God to enter into our human experience."<sup>4</sup>

Samuel V. Dansokho of Senegal describes the African churches as "vibrant, appealing, and full of life. Africans have long been a spiritual people, well aware of human strengths and weaknesses and of the constant presence of a greater being, God, beyond ourselves." Dansokho says that "African Christians are considering theologies of reconstruction, discerning the unique gifts God has given to Africans and to their churches, as they attempt to come to grips with the forces shaping the modern world. But

We have come  
to earth to  
tire ourselves out.  
In Jesus  
we find rest.

Afua Kuma

Glory, glory,  
Hallelujah  
Glory, glory to the Lamb  
O! the cleansing blood  
has reached me  
Glory, glory to the  
Lamb.

*Chorus of the East Africa  
Revival movement*

the African church does not stand alone, nor is it the African church alone that is challenged to live as disciples of Jesus and witnesses to his Gospel.”<sup>5</sup>

Christians in different parts of the world, living in different contexts and cultures witness in different ways and are concerned about different issues. In the West theologians discuss the post-Christian era. We all bemoan the shrinking membership, the dwindling of the faithful remnant. Our attention is “. . . inward focused, intellectual, and pastoral . . . rather than . . . outward-looking,” evangelistic, and mission-oriented.<sup>6</sup> We consider faith to be a private subject. We do not evangelistically witness to another, especially one of another faith. That would be rude, pushy, arrogant, and presumptive. It would be proselytizing. In Africa verbal testimony to unbelievers is considered normal and even mandatory. To not witness to your faith would indicate a lack of conviction.

North America and Europe are on the fringe of the world Christian movement. Africa, Asia, and Latin America are leading the parade. Can we reorient our self-understanding, joyfully acknowledge the leadership of our sisters and brothers, and discover our place in the procession?

### Church of the Future

Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa was for the most part initiated by churches in Europe and North America. These churches grew and matured and are independent of their fostering mother churches in the West, while remaining, perhaps, in a cooperative relationship.

There are two Presbyterian denominations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa and the Presbyterian Community of Congo in the Kasai region. These Churches feel compelled to carry out Jesus’ mandate found in Matthew 25:31-46: “...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me...” Both churches have departments of Women and Children, and both churches offer an array of programs. They feed the hungry in an area where many men are out of work and the women must support the family. Partly they help feed them by teaching women skills so that they can make products to sell such as soap, jam, and clothing. They teach classes on nutrition, child care and sexually transmitted diseases. They participate in the Networkers Anti-Malaria project from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Worldwide Ministries. They train women to go into the community to teach others about AIDS. They teach literacy classes and classes on parenting, as well as classes on domestic violence and the necessity for speaking out against violence. They have Bible study classes and choirs. They provide food for people in hospitals and prisons. They care for children orphaned by war and AIDS.<sup>7</sup> There is much to be done by and for brothers and sisters in Christ.

Isaac K. Fokuo of Ghana says, “The church in Africa must come to see itself no longer as a mission post but as a church with a mission.” Part of that mission is to be a servant leader. God has given the People of God in Africa a purpose: “We are called to be a sign of the Reign of God.”<sup>8</sup>

Another group of churches known as African Instituted churches (AICs) sprang up as proud alternatives to the colonial-dominated, racist Euro-American-centric churches promulgated by the West. Through such churches people could be Christian without feeling they were participating

#### For Discussion

- ✠ Why do Christians in different parts of the world have different theological concerns and emphases?
- ✠ How can Christians in Africa and America encourage one another even as we are on different theological journeys?
- ✠ What can we learn from our sisters and brothers in Africa?

African Instituted Churches are also known as African Initiated Churches.

in a "foreign religion." Among the AICs are 200 million believers who have intentionally rejected a Western understanding of the church and theology.

African Instituted Churches feel an urgency in their evangelism and can be characterized as Pentecostal in nature. They are the fastest-growing segment of the world Christian movement. Their spiritual approach deals with the whole person and includes dreams, visions, and healing. The AICs are more welcoming and accepting of the gifts of women in leadership than the traditional, Western-model church.

Oduyoye<sup>9</sup> explains that AICs use Acts 2:17 ("Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy") as a touchstone setting the standard of gender equality in church leadership and liberating women from being nothing more than clients of a male priesthood.

Read Revelation 21:1-4, 22:1-2; Amos 5:24.

- What sins of the past (or present) might we of the Western church repent?
- How do we reorient our self-perception as Christians in relationship with a world of Christians?
- To what purpose is God calling the People of God in the United States?
- What new thing might God be working on with Christians in Africa and the United States? With Christians all over the world? What is new in our relationship with Christians in Africa, or what could be new if we lived in God's vision?
- What connections do you see with the images in the Revelation 22 passage and the Amos passage, other biblical passages, Africa, and the United States? How do you understand the vision?

## Get Involved

◆ Check with your presbytery, synod, or General Assembly office to find out about partnership opportunities with churches in Africa.

◆ Support the program to train indigenous leaders for African churches. Go to [www.pc\(usa\).org/global](http://www.pc(usa).org/global).

◆ Read and discuss a book by African theologians such as  
• *The Journey Continues: African Christians Speak*, by Dansokho, Fokuo, Masango, Bula and Mihevc, (Louisville, KY: Mission Interpretation and Promotion, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1995). PDS #70-350-95-651.

• *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*, Mercy Oduyoye and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro, eds., (New York: Orbis Books, 1992).

### Good News

Between 2001 and 2003 four women were licensed and ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.

Years ago our Elders said,  
It is God who  
drives away flies from the  
tail-less animal."  
The same God touches  
each of us with the  
Spirit of power  
to cope and overcome,  
to drive away fears  
and anxieties,  
to help us walk through  
life in the fire of faith.

Moderator of the  
Evangelical Presbyterian  
Church in Ghana<sup>10</sup>

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  6. Wilbert R. Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from Non-Western Church," *IBMR*, (July 2001), 98. As cited in *Resolution on Africa*.
  7. Information from a consultation of the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, the Presbyterian Community of Congo, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held in Louisville, KY in September 2000.
  8. Isaac K. Fokuo, "Sharing the Fire," *The Journey Continues: African Christians Speak*, by Dansokho, et.al. (Louisville, KY: Mission Interpretation and Promotion, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1995), 50-51.
  9. Information and quotes by Afua Kuma are from from Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "The Empowering Spirit of Religion," *ibid*, 248-50
  10. From *With All God's People: The New Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, compiled by John Carden, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), 182.
- *Resolution on Africa* approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## Other Resources

- For information and stories about International Leadership Development see [www.pc\(usa\).org/globalcd](http://www.pc(usa).org/globalcd).

To order from Presbyterian Distribution Services (PDS)  
call 1-800-524-2612



## Leader Helps

1. Welcome the participants. Preview the session for them.
2. Invite participants who did the homework to tell something about the countries they researched.
3. Present at least some of the information in *Mutually Encouraged*. Read Romans 1:11-12 and discuss the questions.
4. Introduce the concepts at the beginning of *New Eyes*. On newsprint list the outdated ideas about Africa that participants are aware of. Ask for their ideas of what to be aware of when considering Africa today. Discuss the questions on page 14.
5. Share the information in *Worldview*. Ask if participants think it is possible for people in the United States to hold two worldviews: a scientific one and a view closer to New Testament times. What examples can they share?
6. Share information under *Theology and Church of the Future*. Discuss the questions on pages 15-17.
7. Read Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-2; Amos 5:24. Discuss the questions on page 17.
8. Divide the participants into groups of two or three. Explain Oriki as described on page 8. Invite the small groups to make up orikis, poems of praise names for Jesus. After a few minutes ask the groups to share their creations.
9. Discuss other ways to get involved.
10. Close with prayer.

## Session 3

# Sick to Death

## Diseases of Poverty and Health Issues



### Resolution on Africa Section D3

#### Preview

Malaria, tuberculosis, other diseases of poverty, and HIV/AIDS are weakening the continent, draining countries' economies, and shattering families. We will learn about these illnesses, the effect they have on people, and some ways we can help.

#### Scripture

John 9:1-7, 17-34, 35-41

Micah 2:8—3:3

#### Turning a Blind Eye?

Read John 9:1-7.

As the disciples were walking with Jesus they saw a man who had been born blind, and they were prompted to ask Jesus a question: whose sin caused the fellow to be blind? His own sin or that of his parents? The prevalent view in the ancient world, including Judea, was that children were punished for the sins of their parents. Of course people could also bring misfortune upon themselves through their own sinning.

- Why do you suppose that sin as a cause of ill health made sense to the ancient world?
- Where do you see similar ideas in our modern America?
- Jesus told his disciples that he was light for the world. How is Jesus light for us when we face calamities and health problems, or when we witness from afar the suffering of others?

Read John 9:17-34.

The Pharisees didn't seem to be interested in light and truth. The only information they seemed to want was information that would corroborate their own ideas.

- What do you think motivated the Pharisees in this story? Why did they reject the testimony of the man who was cured?
- What about the parents? From what you read here, how do you think they felt about the whole incident?
- Consider the man who was cured. How would you describe his day? How was he changed? What kinds of changes would he still have to make?

The ninth chapter of John reads like a short story. Notice the plot and the characters. Enjoy the story.

*Some information from the Resolution on Africa is integrated into this session.*

- What happens to relationships between/among people when one of them changes? For example when one becomes chronically ill or recovers from a long-term illness (including addiction), or when one changes his or her lifestyle.

Read John 9:35-41.

- What does Jesus mean in verse 41?
- How are we like the Pharisees?
- What might we be blind to, or guilty of, in relation to Africa?

*"Surely we are not blind, are we?"*

*Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."*

John 9:40-41

## Diseases of Poverty

Africa is plagued by a number of diseases, many of them attributable to the poverty of the continent. Eighty percent of the world's cases of malaria occur in Africa, and deaths due to malaria have increased in recent years. Africans also must contend with tuberculosis (TB), river blindness, sleeping sickness, endemic diarrhea, respiratory infections, sexually transmitted infections, and a mixture of other diseases.

*River blindness* is a parasitic infection that is spread by the blackfly. The infection causes visual impairment, including blindness, severe, itchy rashes, and/or elephantiasis of the genitals. In order to avoid river blindness people avoided the rivers, declining to farm in the fertile soil along the rivers. River blindness became a threat to economic development. For twenty years, beginning in 1974 the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Bank teamed up with nations in west Africa to sponsor a program to control the blackfly population and to virtually eliminate river blindness. The program has been successful and people are returning to the rivers to work the land. However in other parts of Africa river blindness is still prevalent.

*Malaria* is caused by a parasite that is transmitted from person to person by the female mosquito. Each year there are 120 million cases worldwide and one million deaths. In Africa malaria accounts for 10 to 30 percent of all hospital admissions and 15 to 20 percent of all deaths of children under five years of age.

In east Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) they are seeing a connection between HIV and a growing *tuberculosis* epidemic. At least 50 percent of the TB patients are also infected with HIV. Kenya is hardest hit by TB with 96,000 cases in 2003. The number of cases in Tanzania rose from 39,527 in 1995 to over 65,000 in 2003. Of these, 65 percent are men. In Tanzania 19 percent of the population lives in "abject poverty at below a dollar per day."<sup>1</sup> The government spends \$2 million dollars on TB drugs a year. Uganda reports that fewer people are completing the course of their medication (the patient must return every month for six to eight months to get the drugs). In 2002 only 60 percent completed treatment. When all of the drug is not taken the bacteria has a chance of developing drug resistant strains. Since TB is a communicable disease, to stem the epidemic and to prevent TB from spreading, those who are infected must be identified and cured. Beyond the human factor, tuberculosis is a socio-economic problem.<sup>1</sup>

Diseases of poverty are prevalent because millions of Africans do not have access to clean, safe water; neither are they able to provide an adequate amount of nutritious food for themselves and their children. While disease is widespread, health care is not. In Malawi there is one doctor for every 55,000 people. In the Malawi government-sponsored hospitals there is a 25 percent shortage of nurses. In mission hospitals there is a 44 percent shortage.<sup>2</sup> Clinics, health-care centers, and hospitals may be many long miles away requiring those who are sick, and their families, to deal with infrequent, unreliable, or costly transportation. With an average income of less than 65 cents a day, a trip to the hospital may be futile because a family cannot afford to buy the medicine the sick one needs. As in most countries around the world, societal disparities tend to victimize women and children the most.

READ MICAH 2:8—3:3.

As people of the covenant we have entered into a contract with God. But we have broken our part of the bargain—many times. So Micah (as have other prophets) presents God's case against us: citing our infractions, indicting us, and announcing the punishment. As if that weren't bad enough, for some it is worse. Those who rise up against God's people as an enemy, those who oppress the peaceful, the women, the children, the poor, those people—the oppressors—have moved themselves outside the covenant. They have chosen to be enemies of God's chosen people. Like the lioness that stalks the zebra, like the cheetah that brings down the gazelle, there are human predators who strip and devour the powerless.

- Why is it that we in the United States have clean, safe water when people in Africa do not? Why do the European countries that colonized Africa have clean water and Africa does not?
- In a world of human-made disparities, in a world of developed nations and struggling-to-develop nations, what responsibilities do developed nations have toward other nations?
- What does the scripture passage have to do with today's world, with the United States, Europe, Africa, and with health issues?
- What are the implications when some people—predators, oppressors, enemies—set themselves apart from the covenant and God's covenant people?

### **A Woman's Day**

A village woman is up before 5 a.m. She sweeps the yard and then goes for water. The water might be ten minutes away or an hour away—on foot of course. She makes lunch for her husband and children, then she's off to the fields to work for several hours, probably joined by her husband. In the afternoon she goes back to the water source. She may wash her clothes or bathe herself, and she gets more water to take home. She does the household chores. She collects wood for the fire. She pounds the manioc the family will eat. She cooks the dinner. All the while she cares for the children. Meanwhile her husband, after his morning work in the fields will relax in the afternoon or visit with his friends.<sup>3</sup>

Some diseases can be prevented by boiling the water, but boiling water means more work for the woman. Some diseases can be prevented by better nutrition. Adding corn or soy to the manioc adds necessary nutrients. It also adds to the work load of the woman. If she doesn't grow them herself, she must grow more of her crop in order to have enough to sell so she can buy corn or soy.

## HIV/AIDS

Over the past fifteen years HIV/AIDS has become rampant in virtually every country in sub-Saharan Africa. It is possible that a pandemic might have been averted had programs of education and prevention been put in place, but governments, churches and other institutions were hesitant to address the subject because of cultural restrictions about openly discussing bodily functions and sexual relations.

Mercy, a woman from South Africa, had been married five years and had always been faithful to her husband. When she was pregnant with her second child a health care worker at the prenatal clinic informed her she was HIV-positive. She cried all the way home but was afraid to tell anyone for almost a year. When she did tell her husband he refused to believe that he was the one who had given her the virus. He beat her and kicked her out of the house. Her employer fired her.<sup>4</sup>

Many married men, especially those who travel for a living, such as truck drivers, have affairs. Polygamy is also practiced by many. While some of these men bring the HIV virus home to their wives, many of them believe that it is their accursed wives who have given them AIDS. One of the many unfortunate myths around HIV/AIDS is that if a man has sexual intercourse with a virgin he will be cured of AIDS. The result is the rape of girls and young women who themselves are then likely to become infected. Soldiers, guerrillas, paramilitary men frequently look upon women both as the rewards of war and weapons to be used in war. Many of the soldiers have HIV/AIDS. Women who survive the rapes may contract HIV. More women than men now contract AIDS in Africa.

Countries in southern Africa have the highest incidence of HIV among adults: Botswana, 38.8 percent, Lesotho, 31 percent, Swaziland, 33.4 percent, and Zimbabwe, 33.7 percent. The latter three countries are experiencing a food crisis that can be attributed to HIV with so many of the younger adults who make up the work force infected with HIV and unable to be productive.

## Money Is Not Enough

The United Nations has estimated that \$3 billion are needed to combat HIV/AIDS. Africa is receiving about \$300 million from the international community. The United States government has promised one billion a year in loans for vaccines to fight HIV/AIDS, but the money must be used to buy the vaccine from U.S. pharmaceuticals companies and must be paid back in five years at seven percent interest, increasing African indebtedness. However, questions and problems persist even with money and drugs.

Malawi is to receive \$196,138,500 over the next five years from the Global Fund<sup>5</sup> for use against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Dr. Sue Makin, a Presbyterian medical mission co-worker in Malawi has concerns.

Said Mama Tshilolo of Ndumbi, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo): "The man is superior to the woman. He is the chief. He gives orders to the woman who must obey them."

Explained Mama Ngoya of Tshibala "The demeanor of a man differs from that of the woman because when God made creation the man was made first and from his rib the woman was made. This is why the man is superior to the woman."

The anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) must be taken for life. As we have seen, it is difficult for people to maintain their TB drug intake for eight months. ARVs have serious side effects such as inflammation of the liver or pancreas, nerve problems in the arms and legs, metabolic problems, and severe rash. Therefore patients must be monitored. If any of the side effects occur the medication must be stopped. In a country with low educational achievement and with only a smattering of scattered healthcare professionals, managing the drugs will be a challenge.<sup>2</sup>

## Orphans

Every 18 seconds someone in Africa dies of AIDS or AIDS related complications. In Lesotho there is a mountain village with a population of 200, but only 14 of them are adults. The other adults have died of AIDS.

A Congolese doctor living in a village with few resources contracted the virus. He gave it to his wife. They both died quickly of the disease. Their seven children are orphans. The villagers with almost no resources had to find a way to support the seven children, and they no longer had anyone to tend to the medical needs of the village.<sup>4</sup>

Three million African children under age 15 have HIV/AIDS; 90 percent were born with HIV. But an even larger problem looms for children. In 2000 there were 12.1 million children in sub-Saharan Africa whose parents had died of AIDS. The projection is that by 2010 there will be 30 million orphans. Some countries have lost two-thirds of their teachers to AIDS.<sup>6</sup> Communities tumble into abject poverty as adults, debilitated by malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS, have little ability to provide the necessities. The women care for the sick, even when they themselves are gravely ill. The children help out, tending their sick mothers, caring for their younger siblings. What happens in a society with many children but few adults?

## Models for Orphan Care<sup>6</sup>

There are four main models for orphan care in Africa.

*Community-based orphan care.* This is the favored model because it follows in the traditional way and keeps the children with relatives or responsible guardians. Children stay in their communities and culture. The families may receive small grants that help them develop their economic bases and support self-sufficiency.

*Child care.* This is a community-based model that promotes day care centers for children to attend while living with foster families. To work, this model requires more funding and volunteers (often from churches).

*Child village.* Where families, or adults, are not available to take in children, the orphans are grouped as family units and are under the care of a paid guardian. This model is more costly so fewer children may participate.

*Orphanage.* This is the familiar institutional model. Accommodations are limited so fewer children are accepted. Children in an orphanage are removed from their community and their traditions. When they are old enough to leave they often find it hard to integrate back into society. This one is generally considered the least desirable.

### For Discussion

- ✘ What are the differences between the African approach to orphan care and the American approach?
- ✘ What cultural differences do you see in the approaches?
- ✘ What responsibilities might Americans have to provide some help to Africa in caring for orphans?
- ✘ Why would we have responsibilities?

## Response of the Churches

Though the African churches were slow to respond to the AIDS crisis—as were churches in the United States—they have recently taken steps to prepare congregations and communities to take on the challenges of HIV/AIDS. In 2001 regional ecumenical organizations, the World Council of Churches, and other partners sponsored three meetings with 200 representatives of churches, Christian organizations, mission partners, and related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss the challenges. The Africa Churches Mission Consultation held in November of 2003 issued an all-encompassing statement that said in part, “The devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on Africans and on peoples of the world requires that we make HIV/AIDS issues a central aspect of the life of the church in all its dimensions.”

Some churches have produced excellent educational programs, but many Christians still are confused about both sexually transmitted infections and AIDS prevention. AIDS requires intensive, rapid, and effective action, but there are other life-threatening diseases menacing the people of Africa. The world must work with Africa on an aggressive attack on all diseases of poverty.

### Like Sheep in a Fold

Whenever prophets speak of God’s chastisement and impending punishment, they also speak words of forgiveness, reconciliation, and hope.

- What hope does Micah speak to in 2:8–3:3?
- What hopeful signs of God’s work do you see in Africa?
- What happens to relationships among nations when one of them changes? What stakes do other nations have in helping African nations develop or in keeping Africa as it is?
- How can you participate in bringing hope?

### Get Involved

◆ Make AIDS Home-Based Care Kits:

[www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids-hbcp.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids-hbcp.htm).

◆ Make nets to help prevent malaria:

[www.pcusa.org/health/international/networkers.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/networkers.htm).

◆ Insist that the United States government honor both the spirit and the agreement of the Doha understanding over access to affordable medicines.

Get information from the PC(USA) Washington Office at [www.pcusa.org/washington/issuenet/africa.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/washington/issuenet/africa.htm).

◆ Give money. Check out the website for a list of Extra Commitment Opportunities related to AIDS and other health issues in Africa:

[www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids#givemoney](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids#givemoney).

### DOHA

The ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) met in Doha Qatar in November 2001. They considered the balance between the needs and rights of pharmaceutical companies and the need and right of countries to protect the public health. The Doha understanding is that trade regulations and agreements must be flexible so that nations can protect the health of their citizens.

In word and deed,  
in loving and caring,  
in sharing and  
compassion,  
in participation and  
confrontation;  
Lord, speak your  
word to us all,  
give us ears to listen  
and willingness to be  
involved with and for  
one another  
and a spirit of  
obedience.

Johannesburg,  
South Africa <sup>7</sup>

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  2. Dr. Sue Makin, Presbyterian medical mission co-worker in Malawi, [www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids)
  3. Deborah Clugy-Soto, "Learning from Women: A Developmental Study Among Women in Central Zaire," 1988.
  4. From Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, "Women and AIDS: A Global Crisis." Approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001).
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- *Resolution on Africa* approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
  - Women's Ministry Program Area, *Dream, Woman, Dream . . . Dream Africa's Dream: An Invitation to a Partnership with African Women* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2000).
  - Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971).
  - Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1976).

### Web Sites

- [www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids)
- [www.who.int/ocp/ocp001.htm](http://www.who.int/ocp/ocp001.htm)
- [www-micro.msb.le.ac.uk/224/malaria.html](http://www-micro.msb.le.ac.uk/224/malaria.html)
- [allafrica.com/stories/200403300851.html](http://allafrica.com/stories/200403300851.html)

## Other Resource

- Networkers: Malaria Prevention Program, [www.pcusa.org/health/international/networkers.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/networkers.htm)
- AIDS Home-Based Care Kits, [www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids-hbcp.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids-hbcp.htm)
- Extra Commitment Opportunities, [www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids#givemoney](http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids#givemoney)
- Church World Service, [www.churchworldservice.org/](http://www.churchworldservice.org/)
- Global Aids Alliance, [www.globalaidsalliance.org/](http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/)
- Center for Health and Gender Equity, [www.genderhealth.org/](http://www.genderhealth.org/)
- Africa issues and advocacy, [www.woafrica.org](http://www.woafrica.org)



## Leader Helps

1. Welcome the participants. Give them a preview of the session.
2. Read the scripture passages and discuss them as suggested on pages 20-21.
3. Share the information on *Diseases of Poverty*. Ask participants to comment on information that was new to them or to add information they have.
4. Read Micah 2:8-3:3, and discuss the questions on page 22.
5. Present the information in *A Woman's Day* and *HIV/AIDS*. Discuss how AIDS and other diseases of poverty effect men and women differently.
6. Discuss the information under *Money Is Not Enough*. Help participants see that simply throwing money at a problem does not necessarily take care of it.
7. Share the information on *Orphans* and *Models for Orphan Care*. Discuss the questions on page 24.
8. Discuss the questions under *Like Sheep in a Fold* on page 25.
9. Discuss ways to get involved. Perhaps you can do something together as a group.
10. Close with prayer.



## Session 4

# Crying Out Loud Human Rights

### Resolution on Africa

Sections D4, D5, D6, D7

#### Preview

With a brief glimpse at governmental issues in Africa, we will take a look at what rights humans might be in general. We will look specifically at what is happening with children, education, and women in Africa in the light of human rights.

#### Joseph's Story (drastically condensed)

"... When some Midianite traders passed by, (Joseph's brothers) drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

... Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought (Joseph) from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ... Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison.

... After two whole years ... Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was hurriedly brought out of the dungeon.

... (Joseph's) proposal pleased Pharaoh ... And Pharaoh said to Joseph "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.

... And since the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. Moreover, all the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine became severe throughout the world."

Genesis 37:28; 39:1, 20a; 41:1a, 14a, 37a, 41, 56-57.

#### Scripture

Joseph's story: Genesis 37:28; 39:1, 20; 41:1a, 14, 37, 41, 56-57.  
Exodus 1:8-11, 13-14; 2:23-24

#### God Remembers

#### To Do and Discuss

- List what you think are universal human rights. Compare your list with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights on page 38.
- The UN Declaration was written in 1948. Why do you think the UN thought it was necessary to have a Declaration of Human Rights?
- In 1986 the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted the African Charter of Human and People's Rights. With relentless civil war in Angola (and other places), with dictators (such as Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire) using enormous sums of their countries' money to support a lavish lifestyle for themselves while their countries crumbled in economic ruin, and with apartheid in South Africa, what do you suppose the OAU was hoping to accomplish with the African Charter?
- Kwasi Wiredu<sup>1</sup> points out that the African Human Rights Charter has qualifying phrases in a number of places, which can serve to nullify the right it refers to. For example, the Charter protects freedom of association *provided the citizen abides by the law*. So a dictator may have a law that limits, or even prohibits, free association, yet according to the Charter would not be violating human rights. Why would there be such loopholes in a Human Rights document?
- The *Resolution on Africa*, approved by the 215th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2003, says that many international bodies are calling for a commitment—which the church supports—to basic nutrition, education, health, and protection against vulnerability. Why are

international bodies concerned with these four basic rights? Whose responsibility is it to provide for basic needs?

• Imagine the concept of responsibility for basic needs as concentric circles. In the center is the primary responsible entity. Each ring out is another entity with a lesser amount of responsibility. How many rings would you draw? Identify the responsible entity in each of your rings.

## Politics and Government

For thousands of years Africans handled their own affairs; then the European colonial powers invaded. The Europeans divided up the continent as they saw fit, plundered the natural resources and sent the profits to their European homelands. Africa was occupied by foreign armies and run by foreign bureaucrats. In the meantime the world changed: there was an industrial revolution, not that the colonizers introduced much industry; rapid developments were made in medicine and technology, not that the colonizers shared much of the advances with the Africans. African church leaders were at the forefront of the push for freedom, freedom for both the state and the church. Two world wars were fought, and political policies changed. Europeans came to view colony-keeping as politically incorrect, and the colonizers finally gave the continent back to the Africans.

However, Samuel V. Dansokho of Senegal reminds us that, "colonialism did not disappear, and independence was not achieved with the signing of political treaties. The struggle for political, social, and economic autonomy continues."<sup>2</sup> Such struggle is not peculiar to Africa. The political, judicial, and economic systems in place in Europe and America were developed after long struggle and experimentation and are still evolving. No one Euro-American model of government exists; each was worked out to fit its own setting. Africa needs time to research and experiment with acceptable democratic political and judicial systems in the various African settings. Africa is not the only site of struggle. Nations worldwide are seeking ways to involve the people in the devolution of power and effective representative forms of governance.

Struggle, conflict, and political experimenting take a toll on ordinary citizens, people who usually have no input into the decision making process. In Africa 3.5 million people are living in refugee camps or other temporary shelters, and 10 million children are traumatized by war.<sup>3</sup>

Mercy Oduyoye of Ghana says that nothing seems to work in Africa. "Africa continues to produce structures and systems barren of all creativity, not because her sons who run the affairs of the continent are intellectually impotent but because they use the strength of their manhood on what does not build a living community." Connecting the past with the future she says, "Raped by the patriarchal manipulations of the North, Africa now stands in danger of further battering by home-grown patriarchies."<sup>4</sup>

Oduyoye contends that a "lack of vision in creating alternatives can be partly attributed to the lack of resources." The lack of resources is the result of the exploitation of the continent, the "bondage of Africa's human, material, and spiritual resources." Continuing the thought she identifies "the injustice experienced by young people and women" as "part of the larger challenge of global inequities."<sup>5</sup>

*Some information from the Resolution on Africa is integrated into this session.*

### For Discussion

- ✘ Thinking of Joseph. What clues do you get about the style of government in ancient Egypt? What responsibility do you think the Pharaoh felt toward the people? How might the ancients have defined human rights?
- ✘ How did religion influence the perspective on government and human rights in ancient times? What role does religion play in modern times?
- ✘ When will Africans know that colonialism has finally disappeared?
- ✘ How do large groups of people come to agreement on their own governance? How does a population's understanding of human rights influence the development of its political and judicial systems? As Africans work on issues of governance what kinds of help might they appreciate from world neighbors? What kinds of "help" would not be appreciated?
- ✘ In what ways can governments become more effective instruments to safeguard human rights?

### For Discussion

- ✦ Read *A Vision for Children and the Church* (page 41). How could it be shared with churches in Africa?
- ✦ What rights do you think children should have?
- ✦ What are your feelings about child labor and child slavery? How do we in the United States encourage such practices?
- ✦ During the famine, Joseph and the Pharaoh didn't keep the food for Egyptians only. They apparently sold to whomever came. Why do you think they aided those outside their own country?
- ✦ Why would the churches of the world want to aid children and adults in Africa?

When two elephants fight  
it is the grass  
that gets trampled.

African proverb

## Children

Children are treasured in Africa and considered "always a blessing." Even with a high infant mortality rate, children under age fifteen make up about 50 percent of the total population, and like children everywhere, they have no voice and no vote. Children are easy prey for epidemic diseases; they are often malnourished, lack clean water, and have little access to medicine. Many are stunted, unable to fully develop physically or mentally. Unimaginably large numbers of children in Africa are orphaned by war and AIDS. Children are always victims of war, but many children in Africa have been kidnapped and forced into soldiering.

Child labor is on the rise and so is child slavery. For so many families their only source of income is the vegetables they grow. But with drought and the ensuing famine the situation is dire. Some parents may sell a child to obtain money for basic necessities, perhaps believing the buyer who falsely promises a good life for the child. Some children are stolen to supply the slave business. Of Ghanaian boys who are trafficked sixty-five percent are sent to the fishing industry. Few boys are paid. They catch and smoke the fish, mend the nets, and push carts loaded with fish to the market. Girls sold across borders are most likely to end up as sex slaves.<sup>6</sup>

In 2001 it was estimated that hundreds of thousands of children were stolen and sold as slaves to cocoa farmers on the Côte d' Ivoire which produces forty-three percent of the world's cocoa beans. The International Labor Organization, an agency of the United Nations, figures that 378,000 children are working on the Côte d' Ivoire on cocoa farms and in other economic sectors.<sup>7</sup>

## Education

Between 1980 and 1995 Africa's population grew, but the proportionate primary school enrollment rates were lower in 1995 than they were in 1980. Fifty million children—most of them girls—are denied education.<sup>3</sup> In the last forty years, the mean years of schooling for Africans rose from 1.5 to 2.4 years.

Most of the public schools use outmoded teaching methods and still rely on curriculum left over from colonial days. Oduyoye says, "In Africa we continue to educate for unemployment, rural exodus, and brain-drain."<sup>5</sup> There are not enough classrooms, desks, writing materials, or instructional materials. Along with the other shortages, there is a teacher shortage made worse by AIDS. Teacher salaries are low and commonly in arrears or simply not paid. Many who feel called to teach have left for positions in other parts of the world where they can make a living. The overall expenditure per student is \$50 a year. Yet African countries spend a greater proportion of their limited national budgets for education than is the case in many other regions of the world.

Many of our African partner churches have major responsibilities for thirty to sixty-five percent of the primary and secondary schools in the different countries. The church-run schools are generally known for the superior quality of their teaching. One aspect that is often ignored, though, is that girls are not schooled equally with boys, and the higher the grade, the fewer the girls. This is true even though international research has

shown that educating girls lowers the infant death rate and generally contributes to the health and economy of the entire community.<sup>8</sup>

In many places governments, churches, and parents are resource-poor. Some teachers receive less than \$20 a month in salary. Some parents may not be able to afford to pay the tuition, though it may be only \$8 a year.<sup>8</sup> Shouldering education is an immense burden on the churches but an enormous contribution to their society. Their effort is heroic. We celebrate and support their endeavors to upgrade and spread educational opportunities. Many of these churches are pleading for help with school supplies, renovation of school buildings, and improving the quality of the teaching.

## Women

Women in Africa are the mainstay of the society. Women maintain the home; produce, care for, and educate the children; and provide food and family nurture. They gather water and wood for cooking, prepare the meals, wash the clothes, and generally supervise the home. In most cultures women plant, cultivate, irrigate, and harvest family plots. If the men are away because of work or war, women are the sole maintainers and providers. And yet women have little status—legal or otherwise. Their identity is dependent upon their husbands.

Teresa Hinga of Kenya says, "It is important to note that the colonial ideology that led to the extreme abuse of the African environment also led to the gross abuse and exploitation of women . . . . The colonial presence and ideology in Africa led to the radical patriarchalization of African societies, with the consequent disempowerment of women in all spheres of life."<sup>9</sup>

Sicily Mbura Muriithi, also from Kenya, agrees. She has seen the devastating impact of culture, economics, and politics on women and girls. She says to be a girl-child is to be disadvantaged. "To be a woman is to suffer gross oppression, discrimination, and social, cultural, economic, and political violence."<sup>10</sup>

Women generally only have secondary access to essentials such as medicine, credit, and even food. In many cultures the women feed the men first and eat whatever remains. Bank accounts, credit, and passports are in the man's name. Even in the church women have little status. Though they may be eighty-five percent of a congregation, most churches do not permit women to be ordained as elders or ministers. Men govern the church.

In some countries in Africa change is occurring and the lives of women are improving. For example, in some places girls and women are given access to higher education. The fertility rate is dropping, though it is still high, and the maternal mortality rate continues to be high. Some countries now grant equal legal status to women, including citizenship and the right to vote and to work, but the way it reads on paper may not be the way it works out in everyday life where it may be difficult for women to exercise their rights. As for political involvement women's participation is low: six percent of national legislatures are comprised of women, and only two percent of those in cabinet positions are women.<sup>11</sup>

Women in Africa are brought up to believe that they should be owned by a man: a father, a husband, an uncle. Men look at a single woman

### For Discussion

- ✦ Compare women's situation in Africa with women's situation in America.
- ✦ Why do women not have the same rights as men?
- ✦ Why would we in the United States be concerned about women's rights?
- ✦ How can we support women in Africa? How can we support countries that are changing their outlook on women?

A notable exception is Luisa Diogo who is the first female prime minister of Mozambique. She nurtured economic growth and a government that relies on accountability rather than corruption.

who is on her own as one that is available for their pleasure, as fair game. A woman who makes a success of her life, on her own, is a slap in the face to the men who want to possess her, and a threat to the patriarchal system.<sup>12</sup>

As much as colonialism may have infected Africa with sexism and even misogyny, Africa also had its own dehumanizing rituals for females. We will look at two examples: widow rituals and trokosi.

### Widow Rituals

Since in many traditional societies the woman earns her place and her identity through her husband, when the husband dies the widow is transformed into a non-person. Often tradition requires widows to go through mourning rituals that perpetrate psychological violence on the grieving spouse. In her research Daisy N. Nwachuku found that in Nigeria the rituals may include shaving the head, a designated mourning period, wearing certain clothing, following unhygienic food and bathing practices, sleeping on the floor though one may have a bed. Further, the male relatives of the dead husband may take from the widow any money and property of the deceased to disperse as they wish.

Though the widow receives some sympathy she is "perceived as taboo to living husbands and other males. She is subject to hopelessness, punishment, neglect, contempt, suspicion about her treachery, or lack of good care. She is perceived as threatening to other couples' relationships and suspected of adulterous living. The result is that the widow is usually a neglected and deserted lonely woman."<sup>13</sup> Nwachuku also found that many Christian women were resisting the traditional mourning rituals, and that some churches were developing new mourning ceremonies that are more sensitive to the widows.



### Trokosi

Not all people in Africa are Christians or Muslims. Some adhere to the traditional religions. In at least one of these religions girl children can be subjected to ongoing ritualistic enslavement. *Kosi* is the word for slave and *Tron* is the name of a deity. So *trokosi* means slave of the deity. Throughout Ghana there are a number of shrines to the god Tron. What keeps the shrines operational are girls and women who are given to the priests at the shrines and who may live out their lives at the shrines. Little girls and virgins are sent to the shrine as offerings that will redeem male relatives who have committed crimes. The men do the crime, the girls do the time. Some boys are trokosi, but boys do not receive a life sentence, as the girls do, and are reunited with family and community after a certain period of service.

The Institute Way Forward Seminar, sponsored by the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, took on trokosi as a challenge and asked the leaders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana to help stop the practice. One woman, a former trokosi, and the sister of a Presbyterian minister, told her story, through sobs, to the group.

"I was about seven years when my uncle asked me to accompany him to the next village. We ended up at a shrine. He left me with an elderly woman and disappeared. A week

later my aunts came with clothing for me and gifts for the old woman that had been looking after me. They too left me there. My mother died when I was born, but the whole family had brought me up, and I trusted them all. I was sad and puzzled when they said the shrine was going to be my new home.

There were other women at the old woman's house, but I was the youngest and was loaded with all the unpleasant jobs at the house as well as carrying all the farm implements when we went to farm. You see we worked on the priest's farm. While I was there two girls left and one more came in. I discovered by chance they were transferred to the priest's quarters as soon as they had their first menses. So when I had mine, I hid it and got into plenty of trouble when I was discovered. So my turn finally came, I was transferred to the priest's quarters and found his many wives.

I had three children with the priest and then ran away. When I got back at my village, I found my age mates with homes, education, income from professions and trade. I was angry and troubled. I had three more children with men who wouldn't be seen with me at any time or place. I was almost out of my mind until my brother came along to help me re-establish myself."

A trokosi is not supposed to escape; if she returns home she is thought to bring bad luck to her family who will suffer many misfortunes. Throughout her life in the shrine the trokosi's family must provide for all her needs and those of the children she has with the priest.<sup>14</sup>

Read Exodus 1:8-11, 13-14; 2:23-25.

- What do you think is God's intention for human beings? If God were to write a declaration of human rights, what do you think would be in it?
- Do you think God favors one side or another in human affairs? If God were to favor a side, how would you describe that side? On what do you base your choice?
- What does it mean in Exodus 2:23 where it says, "The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out"? How does this verse relate to Africans today?
- What does it mean in 2:25: "God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them"? What relevance might this passage have for modern day Africans?
- What implications do these passages have for Presbyterians in the United States?

What reactions do you have when you hear about the treatment of widows and about trokosi?

In 1997 a law was passed in Ghana banning the practice of trokosi. Since then some women and girls have been released, but not all.<sup>15</sup>

## Get Involved

- ◇ Strategize how your congregation can work for a world where all children find a safe place.
- ◇ Learn which manufacturers do and do not use child labor to make their chocolate, and buy accordingly. See [www.radicalthought.org](http://www.radicalthought.org). Also see Divine Chocolate at [www.divinechocolate.com](http://www.divinechocolate.com).
- ◇ Get the scoop from the PC(USA) Washington Office ([www.pcusa.org/washington](http://www.pcusa.org/washington)), then urge your congresspersons to
  - limit, during times of conflict, international agreements regarding natural resource exploitation;
  - strengthen the Kimberly Process, with independent monitoring and investigations of any violations in the diamond certification regimen.
- ◇ If you buy a diamond, know where it comes from. Don't buy blood diamonds; these diamonds finance wars and rebellions and the suffering of millions as human rights are trampled.
- ◇ A newly-formed group made up mostly of volunteers, is seeking to establish more effective ways for American Presbyterians to enter into partnership with churches in Africa to share what they can to strengthen the educational initiatives of our partner churches. Check out the International Presbyterian Education Network to see how you can get involved. [ipen@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:ipen@ctr.pcusa.org).
- ◇ Challenge violence against women wherever it occurs in the world. Inform the powers that be that violence against women and children (and men) is not appropriate or acceptable. It is not manly, not God's will, and it does not have to be normative.
- ◇ Contribute to the Ghana Project through the PC(USA)'s Women's Ministry and help support the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture. Find all the information at [www.pcusa.org/women/mission-ops.htm#ghana](http://www.pcusa.org/women/mission-ops.htm#ghana).
- ◇ Consider volunteering. Check out the PC(USA)'s National Volunteer Office web page at [www.pcusa.org/nvo](http://www.pcusa.org/nvo).

Lord, we wait for you today. We pray that you will have compassion on the poor—those who have no chance of school, no work, no place to belong. Give strength to those in exile and the thousands who work in mines far from home. We remember those who live in fear, and any who have been threatened or attacked.

Give courage to your people. Enable Christian leaders to inspire hope and unity. Help all who are striving for justice. And let your peace descend again and wash over the land.

written by staff and students at Roma Theological Seminary, Lesotho<sup>16</sup>



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4. Mercy Amba Oduyoye "The Smoke in the Fire," *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1997).
5. Mercy Oduyoye, "The Empowering Spirit of Religion." In *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*, ed. Susan Brooks Thistlewaite and Mary Potter Engels (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 246, 245.
6. Anna H. Bedford, "Lost in Traffick," *Horizons*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (May/June 2003): 25-27. With information from Wilbert Tengey and Emelia Oguah *The Little Ghanaian Slaves Cry for Help: Child Trafficking in Ghana*, by (Accra, Ghana: African Centre for Human Development, 2002).
7. Pat Chapman and Melanie Hardison, "Child Labor," *Horizons*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (May/June 2003): 14-16.
8. Jeff Boyd, "Why Are the Churches in Central Africa Still Involved in Education?" *Global Education and International Development*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2003. See [www.pcusa.org/globaled/boyd.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/globaled/boyd.htm).
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10. "Meet Sicily Mbura Muriithi from Kenya," in *Global Education and International Leadership Development*, 2003. See [www.pcusa.org/globaled/scholarlist/muriithi.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/globaled/scholarlist/muriithi.htm).
11. *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, April 2000), p 24. As cited in *Resolution on Africa*.
12. Oduyoye, "The Smoke in the Fire," *ibid.* pp. 4-5.
13. Daisy N. Nwachuku, "The Christian Widow in African Culture." In *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*, ed. Mercy Oduyoye and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 61-62.



14. Mercy Oduyoye, Director of the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, a program of Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Accra, Ghana, in a personal email.

15. *Dream, Woman, Dream . . . Dream Africa's Dream: An Invitation to a Partnership with African Women* (Louisville: Women's Ministries Program Area, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 25. PDS #72-700-00-003.

16. Adapted from *With All God's People: The New Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, compiled by John Carden, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), 346-47.

- *Resolution on Africa* approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
[www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)

*Time* (April 26, 2004): 60.

## Other Resources

*The State of the World's Children 2003*. Put out by the United Nations, this document is mostly written from the viewpoint of children and youth. Especially see the chapter "Listening to Children." Online at [www.unicef.org/sowc03/](http://www.unicef.org/sowc03/). Also in print for \$12.95; ISBN: 92-806-3784-5.

*The Africa Game*. Developed by Jeff and Christi Boyd, PC(USA) mission workers in Cameroon. Introduces players to real-life issues that African students have to deal with. Available at your presbytery resource center or from PDS (poster-size, without the game pieces). \$10. #7428004003.

*The Answered Call: Presbyterian Response to the Year of the Child*. Contains examples of congregational and individual response to children's needs, both nationally and internationally. PDS #72651-62-001.

Church World Service has an Africa Initiative. See [www.churchworld-service.org](http://www.churchworld-service.org).

The International Justice Mission works to rescue girls from forced prostitution, working with indigenous government officials. See [www.ijm.org](http://www.ijm.org).

The International Organization for Migration has implemented a program to free and return home trafficked children. See [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int).

Antislavery International works to eliminate the system of slavery around the world. See [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org).

## Leader Helps

### Before the Session

Read over the *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Choose a few Articles that you think are most important and share them with the group.

### During the Session

1. Welcome the group and preview the session for them.
2. Ask the participants to group themselves into clusters of three or four. Invite them to list what they think are, or should be, universal human rights. Only allow a few minutes for this activity. Ask the groups to quickly share their lists.
3. If participants don't have their own copies of this guide share with them some of what is in the UN Declaration, Articles that confirm what the groups were thinking and a couple of Articles that no one thought of.
4. Discuss the remaining questions under *To Do and Discuss* on pages 28-29. Perhaps participants could work in their small groups again to draw their ideas about circles of responsibility.
5. Share the information on *Politics and Government* and discuss the questions on page 29.
6. Share the information on *Children and Education* on page 30. Read *A Vision for Children and the Church* on page 41. Discuss the questions on page 30.
7. Share the information on *Women* on page 31 and the top of page 32. Discuss the questions on page 31.
8. Share the information on *Widow Rituals* and *Trokosi*. Ask what reactions people have to the stories.
9. As suggested on page 33, read Exodus 1:8-11, 13-14; 2:23-25. Discuss the questions that follow.
10. Discuss ways to get involved.
11. Close with prayer.

## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

*Article 1.* All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience.

*Article 2.* Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

*Article 3.* Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

*Article 4.* No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

*Article 5.* No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

*Article 6.* Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

*Article 7.* All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

*Article 8.* Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

*Article 9.* No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

*Article 10.* Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

*Article 11.* (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence. (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed.

*Article 12.* No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.

*Article 13.* (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

*Article 14.* (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

*Article 15.* (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

*Article 16.* (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

*Article 17.* (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

*Article 18.* Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

*Article 19.* Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

*Article 20.* (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

*Article 21.* (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country. (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

*Article 22.* Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

*Article 23.* (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

*Article 24.* Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

*Article 25.* (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

*Article 26.* (1) Everyone has the right to education. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

*Article 27.* (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of

the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

*Article 28.* Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

*Article 29.* (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

*Article 30.* Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

To see the full version of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights see [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html).



# A Vision for Children and the Church

Because we affirm that all children are a gift of God, . . .  
all children have the right to be children;  
and all children are not just tomorrow, they are today.

We believe that all children depend upon adults for safety and security  
in a world that does not always value children;  
all children are affected first and most deeply  
by those things that work against health and wholeness:  
where there is disease, children sicken and die;  
where there is homelessness, children sleep on the streets  
and in other dangerous places;  
where there is war, children are frightened and without a safe place;  
where the air and water are polluted, children feel the effects  
in their bodies and in their futures;  
where there is shame, children's spirits are wounded.

Therefore we hope for a world where  
all children can find a safe place; . . .  
where all children have "first call" on the world's resources  
and first place in the minds and hearts of the world's adults . . .  
Because Jesus lifted up a child  
as an example of what the realm of God is like.

Therefore we hope for a church  
where we take seriously our baptismal vow to nurture all children  
committed to our care; where we bring good news to all those places  
where children are in need . . .

We covenant to act so that this vision may be made real for all children,  
now and in times to come.

Adopted by the 205th General Assembly (1993)  
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)  
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## Session 5

# Brick by Brick Development



### Resolution on Africa

Sections part of D2 E, F

#### Preview

We will look at three broad aspects of development that must be taken into account in Africa: investing in people; governance and economics; reducing aid dependence and strengthening partnerships. Also we will look at the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa's development. We will consider Africa's crushing debt load and Jubilee's hope of relieving some of the burden.

#### Scripture

Genesis 1:28-31

John 10:1-10

John 1:10-13

2 Corinthians 9:8

### Thieves in the Sheepfold

God said, "See, I have given you every plant . . . every beast of the earth, and . . . bird of the air . . . everything that creeps. . . ." God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good.

Genesis 1:29-31

Jesus said: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

Read the John passages and the verse from 2 Corinthians.

The Old Testament has many references to the allegorical shepherd and his sheep. The shepherd is a metaphor for the protector, which is itself, almost always, a metaphor for God. Sometimes the scripture sets before us the characteristics of the good shepherd, but perhaps more often the biblical writers assume we are familiar with what being a good shepherd entails. Jesus' story is a little different than Old Testament allusions. As well as telling us about the shepherd, Jesus also tells us about the sheep and how they respond to the shepherd. He shows us the relationship between the two.

- What characteristics or behaviors of the sheep does Jesus mention?
- If we were telling this story today we might use a different metaphor than shepherd and sheep, something that most of us are more familiar with. What would be good choices for today's world?
- How do we tell the difference between the good shepherd and the thief? How do we know what is of God—or God's will—and what is a false god or thievery?
- God gave humans every plant, beast, and bird, and God expects humans to exercise stewardship for the earth. How is a good steward like a good shepherd?



Amos the prophet looked at what was going on in his society and was appalled at the way the leaders and the moneyed people were treating the poor. Amos declared that God said,

*For three transgressions of Israel  
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;  
because they sell righteousness for silver,  
and the needy for a pair of sandals—  
they who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth ...*

*...  
Hear this word, you cows of Bashan ...  
who oppress the poor, who crush the needy,  
who say to their husbands, "Bring something to drink!" ...*

*...  
Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory,  
and lounge on their couches,  
and eat lamb from the flock,  
and calves from the stall;  
who sing idle songs ...  
who drink wine from bowls,  
and anoint themselves with the finest oils ..."*

(Amos 2:6-7; 4:1a; 6:4-6)

During the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.) Israelites experienced a boon time. The economy was up, homeland security was not a worry. The good times were on a roll. Never again would ancient Israel see such prosperity. Some thought that the wealth was a sure sign of God's delight in them and God's favor toward them. Some were so enthralled by their money they didn't think about God at all. In his preaching Amos revealed how disgusted God was.

- With whom was God upset and why?
- Try setting Amos in the world today (consider the whole world, not just our corner of it). What similarities do you see between then and now?

Today, as in Amos' time, poor people around the world are not able to meet their basic needs. Yet God created the world and gave us everything we would need, and Jesus came that we might have abundant life. So...

- Why isn't there enough to go around—or is there? Was God not good at long range planning?
- Jesus mentions thieves who steal, kill, and destroy. Identify who or what these thieves might be in our modern world.
- How might these biblical passages relate to globalization and development in Africa?

*And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.*

2 Corinthians 9:8

*Some information from the Resolution on Africa is integrated into this session.*

## Around the World in 80 Seconds

### For Discussion

- ✘ What does globalization mean to you? How does it affect your lifestyle?
- ✘ What is the positive side of globalization? What do you like about it?
- ✘ What is the downside of globalization? What do you worry about?
- ✘ What responsibilities do you have relative to globalization? Women?
- ✘ What might Amos say if he could see us now?

From the earliest of times humans have exhibited curiosity about people living in other places and an eagerness to do business with them. All the expeditions and explorations, the trading of feathers and shells, beads and salt that we have done from ancient times has led us to where we are today, caught up in the excitement and devastation of globalization. For business people globalization means being able to market and sell a product to people in another country, making the adjustments in language and culture to carve out a niche in a foreign market. For consumers in the United States it means we can buy fruit and vegetables that are out of season here from growers in the southern hemisphere—as well as other products from around the world.

We like to think of the marketplace as an equal opportunity bazaar—each seller with a little booth—and an arbitrator of popular taste. In reality there is nothing equal about it. While some vendors have a small, colorful booth with an awning, others sit in the sun beside the dusty road, a few trinkets in front of them, and yet others are wowing the customers from their air conditioned shop with whirligig attention-getters. The money goes to the wealthy and powerful. The competition is rigged.

There are different arenas in the globalization game. Some of us just want to buy a TV from Japan at a discount. Some hope their jobs won't be outsourced to another country. Some want to sell their bolo ties in Canada. But globalization is bigger than that and there are some sumo-sized players playing for keeps.

With the technology that has developed in the last twenty years or so it is quick and easy to complete global financial and trade transactions which means that we are seeing an increasing integration of world economies. With integration comes a reorganization of the world economy and the formation of a global economic system—with implications for law and politics—that will be dominated by the transnational trade and financial conglomerates that are beyond the reach of national governments and democratic process.

Relinquishing control of the economy to multinationals is an unsettling thought, but more than that we need to be aware of the effect globalization has on the poorest of us. It may be an old saw, but we have seen that it is true: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

## Development in Africa

We cannot include in this small study guide every aspect of African development, but we will look at three key areas: (1) Investing in People; (2) Governance and Economics; (3) Reducing Aid Dependence and Strengthening Partnerships.

### 1. Investing in People

When you invest in people, helping them attain the basics such as clean water, enough food, and shelter and providing for education and health care, then their ability to cope effectively with other concerns is dramatically increased. While the figures for a country's gross national product (GNP) give economic data for the country as a whole, the United Nations

Development Program, when evaluating development, puts people first and looks at these social factors as well as the GNP.

a. *Health.* Although many nations have increased life expectancy the well-being of Africans is tentative, depending on access to health services, basic sanitation, clean water, and health education. These four amenities are, however, only scantily available. With the advent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the continued devastation by malaria, tuberculosis (TB), and other highly infectious diseases the health services and healthcare providers that are there are stretched thin. Malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS are identified by the World Health Organization as "diseases of poverty."

b. *Education.* Adult literacy grew during the 1990s, yet millions of adults in Africa are illiterate and increasing numbers of children lack access to primary and secondary schools.

c. *Food and Nutrition.* Global food production per capita, with increased supplies for calorie and protein intake, is on the rise overall. Yet in much of Africa food consumption has declined, leaving many Africans malnourished and hungry.

d. *Income and Poverty.* The gap between the richest and the poorest worldwide has increased with the richest fifth of the world holding seventy-four times the wealth of the poorest fifth. The gap is echoed in Africa and elsewhere for the many who live on less than a dollar a day, unable to meet basic nutritional requirements.

e. *Women.* Some levels of education for women have increased along with a rise in the economic activity of women. Still African women, most often the chief producers of economic goods and wealth, have lower educational opportunities and lower survival rates than males. At the same time women endure high levels of abuse.

f. *Children.* Each time there is war, economic distress, and degradation of health, children suffer. Infant mortality has been reduced overall with increased available immunization, yet child labor, as well as the recruitment and enslavement of child soldiers, plagues the lives of millions of children. With the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we are warned of the creation of twenty-three million orphans in Africa in the next ten years.

g. *Environment.* Pollution has been reduced in many regions of the world, but not in Africa. Africa's forests and water and mineral resources are exploited at increasing rates. Deprivation of resources, pollution, and especially the lack of clean water cause and contribute to the death of Africans.

h. *Human Security.* While more of the world's population lives in relatively pluralistic and democratic regimes than previously, regions remain in intense conflict, as in Africa, with the combined number of 12 million people living as internally displaced persons or as refugees.

**For Discussion**

✠ What relationships do you see between the Bible passages and development factors a-h listed to the left?

✠ How do we who live so far from Africa contribute to development or poverty in Africa?

### For Discussion

- ✦ In what ways might economic development, gender equality, and social justice be linked together?
- ✦ Why would Kabira put so much emphasis on broad participation in defining and shaping the development process?
- ✦ How can Kabira's ideas inform developmental work in the United States?
- ✦ How can her ideas help churches in the United States who partner with churches in Africa?

### For Discussion

Imagine your presbytery is in partnership with a governing body of a denomination in Africa. Choose one of the societal factors of development (items a-h on page 45) and talk through a partnership scenario. Since the development would be in Africa, the African church would have to identify and prioritize their needs.

- ✦ What common vision might the U.S. and African churches share?
- ✦ What might you receive from the African church?
- ✦ What would it mean to submit to a common task or goal? How might this be difficult for a partner in the United States?

### WOMEN AND MEN TOGETHER

Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira of the African Women's Development and Communication Network in Nairobi, Kenya argues that in order for substantial development in Africa, gender equity has to be part of the development process. She says that too often men assume that their priorities and visions are the priorities and visions of the community, but women may have different concerns, different visions and priorities. She calls for development that includes "greater participation of women and men, especially the poor, in defining and shaping the development process" and "in shaping their own destiny." Her approach is "aimed at achieving economic development, gender equality and social justice."<sup>1</sup>

### HOWDY, PARTNER

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to doing mission in partnership. "The discipline of partnership assumes that mission can best be done by joining hands with those who share a common vision. Partnership in mission involves two or more organizations who agree to submit themselves to a common task or goal, mutually giving and receiving and surrounded by prayer so that God's work can be more faithfully accomplished."<sup>2</sup>

The five Principles of Partnership are

- ◆ Shared grace and thanksgiving;
- ◆ Mutuality and interdependence;
- ◆ Recognition and respect;
- ◆ Open dialogue and transparency;
- ◆ Sharing of resources.<sup>1</sup>

### READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:16-24.

- How many partnerships—and with whom—can you find in the passage?
- How many of the principles of partnership can you identify in the passage?
- What qualities did Paul think were important for people working together in partnership?

## 2. Governance and Economics

The church is caught up in the development debate at a time when even the specialists do not agree about proper approaches to world poverty, specifically in Africa, nor do they agree on ways to meet the needs of heavily indebted poor countries.

Some economists believe that economic growth should be the principle engine to propel the reduction of poverty, while others believe that poverty is relieved through redistributive taxes<sup>3</sup> and spending policies. The World Bank stresses economic growth with limited emphasis on poverty reduction.<sup>4</sup> Recent meetings of the world's leading economic powers, plus Russia, have been criticized for failure to give sufficient attention to global poverty and failure to take action for debt relief.

Churches may not be able to wend their way around these specialized and highly technical economic arguments. Nevertheless, churches may agree that whatever the approach, whatever the policy directives set forth to address African needs, the poor and dispossessed deserve primary attention in the global action agenda.

Almost half the population of Africa lives on less than 65 cents a day. Current purchasing power is decreasing, and the number of poor persons is steadily increasing. Poverty propagates itself especially in the rural areas, although increasingly, signs of extreme poverty are visible among urban dwellers as well. Children suffer the most from poverty. Mortality rates and education levels show Africa to be behind the rest of the world. Africa also has the world's highest income inequality.

The World Bank proposes several strategies for reducing poverty,<sup>5</sup> one of which is the unlikely prospect of increasing the growth rates of African economies by more than seven percent.

In the 1960s, the African elite tended to dominate the political landscape, assured of their ability in the independence era to achieve development through their authoritarian control. By the 1970s economic decline began to put the brakes on development. Continuing high levels of government corruption thwarted development of any kind.

Isaac K. Fokuo, a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, writes, "One of Africa's woes is poor political leadership. The church in Africa must demonstrate the way of the servant leader. Christians occupy high places in many African countries. . . . The church should, in her own governance, be light and salt to the whole continent."<sup>6</sup>

#### JUBILEE AND DEBT RELIEF

Many African countries are carrying heavy debt burdens, money owed to developed countries and the World Bank. Omega Bula of Zambia and John Mihevc have declared the debt situation as morally unacceptable. Talk of debt reduction, rescheduling and cancellation has given many people around the world the impression that Africans are not paying on their loans. To the contrary Bula and Mihevc report that between 1982 and 1992 African countries paid out \$240 billion in debt service. Of that sub-Saharan countries paid \$101 billion.<sup>7</sup> Paying a high percentage of the national budget in loan payments saps a government's ability to provide education, health care, and other social services to its citizens. Little is left for development and the building of infrastructures that keep a nation functional. Countries are caught on an economic hamster wheel: their debts will never be paid off and development will never get off the ground.

Jubilee is a biblical concept that calls for the release of slaves and the cancellation of debt. Many denominations, including the PC(USA), have joined in the Jubilee movement advocating for debt forgiveness for many developing countries around the world. "Recognizing that many of these debts are unpayable and exact a great social and environmental toll, the Jubilee 2000/USA Campaign calls for a time of Jubilee and cancellation of debt that includes:

1. definitive cancellation of the crushing international debt in situations where countries burdened with high levels of human need and environmental distress are unable to meet the basic needs of their people or achieve a level of sustainable development that ensures a decent quality of life;

#### For Discussion

- ✠ What evidence have you seen of the PC(USA), in its own governance, being light and salt to the North American continent?
- ✠ What are appropriate ways for Christians to demonstrate servant leadership in a secular society that is tolerant of different religions and viewpoints?
- ✠ How can the Christian churches in Africa bring hope to the continent?
- ✠ How can churches in the United States be supportive of Africans as they conceive a vision of a healthy government and economy in Africa and bring it to reality?

#### Khotso

"peace"

a Sesotho greeting  
(Lesotho)

**For Discussion**

✘ How could a time of Jubilee and debt relief benefit developing nations? How would it benefit all the nations?

2. definitive debt cancellation that benefits ordinary people and facilitates their participation in the process of determining the scope, timing and conditions of debt relief, as well as the future direction and priorities of their national and local economies;
3. definitive debt cancellation that is not conditioned on policy reforms that perpetuate or deepen poverty or environmental degradation;
4. acknowledgment of responsibility by both lenders and borrowers, and action to recover resources that were diverted to corrupt regimes, institutions, and individuals; and
5. establishment of a transparent and participatory process to develop mechanisms to monitor international monetary flows and prevent recurring destructive cycles of indebtedness." <sup>8</sup>

### 3. Reducing Aid Dependence and Strengthening Partnerships

Generally there are two kinds of aid that are given as government-to-government, or UN- (or other multilateral institutions) to-government:

- humanitarian aid, such as disaster assistance and direct food aid;
- aid for projects, also known as development assistance or development aid.

*Humanitarian aid*, if it is done well, can save lives in an emergency situation; but if it is done poorly it may cost lives in the long run. Take food aid for example. People in a particular region may be in desperate need of food, but if the agriculturally rich nations dump huge amounts of their surplus grain on the region, they effectively lower the price of food in the area and erase the income of neighboring farmers. A better way might be to send emergency funding—and assistance in distribution—so that food could be bought from farmers in surrounding regions to supply some or all of the need.

*Aid for development assistance* has a high failure rate. The World Bank estimates that about 40 percent of its projects have failed to meet their objectives, much less done anything to reduce poverty. Some pitfalls include corruption, lack of local buy-in and participation, misguided plans, inflaming the differences between the haves and have nots. Historically economic aid has been linked with military aid: a nation is given economic aid with the agreement to buy weapons from the benefactor (usually from the United States), which repressive governments then used on their own people to suppress unrest. Citizens of those countries tend not to have a favorable view of aid. Then there is the problem of the western cookie-cutter development schemes (one model fits everybody), based on U.S. or European models that some givers of aid think are exportable and applicable to complex situations that are culturally and contextually different from the situation in which the model originated.

With the recognition of the failure of aid to combat poverty and bring about prosperity over the past four decades, some people have proposed a new motto: "Trade not aid." From the Age of Slavery, and even before, the inequities of global trading have been seen in Africa. Even the World Trade Organization, and its predecessors, with its accent on free trade, has not been able to assure poor countries of their fair share in the

**For Discussion**

- ✘ Why is aid an important topic?
- ✘ What factors related to the donor country and to the recipient country might determine whether aid is effective?
- ✘ What benefits might nations get from giving and receiving aid?
- ✘ What pitfalls do you imagine donor countries must avoid when giving aid?
- ✘ What headaches might come attached with the aid to a receiving nation?

trading process. Indeed, trade tends to favor the more prosperous, in both private and public spheres. Trade may play an important role in global prosperity, but poorer nations only benefit when the conditions for trade are more equitable for less-advantaged trading partners. "Trade with Aid" rightly practiced may move matters forward. Trade alone will not serve the full ends of economic progress in Africa. Trade among unequal partners will not bring prosperity to poorer nations. In fact, as poor nations are intergrated into the global marketplace, their poverty may well increase.

Then what of foreign aid? In a comprehensive study of aid, Carol Lancaster<sup>9</sup> seeks to answer the question, "Why with so much aid has there been so little development in Africa?" Here are some of her answers.

- a. While foreign aid "can promote development, it does not guarantee development." So while aid is given, steps should be taken to reduce aid dependence.
- b. Large flows of aid do not necessarily retard development and factors other than the amount of aid (such as poor policy environments, weak institutions) may play a critical role in determining its effectiveness.
- c. "Donor countries" may give large sums of aid that have nothing to do with commitment to development.
- d. The way aid is designated becomes key in recognizing three factors:
  - The increasingly complex and experimental nature of aid intervention is often based on complicated programming processes and little knowledge of local conditions or even assistance by locals receiving aid.
  - Donor countries often designate aid more in line with their own domestic imperatives under the influence of specific agencies and/or private interest groups.
  - The multiplicity of aid organizations, both public and private, often act without consulting others or seeking coordination either at donor or recipient levels.
- e. Donor nations have much to learn from each other about the limitations and powers attributed to aid-giving agencies and their relative success or failure in furthering the development process. Too often foreign aid is "donor driven" with consequent lack of "ownership" by receiving nations.

Perhaps the most important reason that significant development has not occurred in Africa is the exploitation of its resources by foreign countries and foreign companies and the imposition of trade restrictions and tariffs imposed by other nations. The trade barriers cost Africa tens of billions of dollars annually, an amount that dwarfs the aid dollars coming in. By paying interest on their debts, poor countries send more money to the already rich lending nations than they receive from them in aid.

#### For Discussion

- ✪ What role can NGOs (including churches) play in the development of a country?
- ✪ If you were going to draw up guidelines for an NGO what issues or items would you consider?

## Nongovernmental Organizations and Civil Society

Most citizens are involved in some aspect of civil society. Civil society refers to the array of groups, service organizations, associations, individuals, institutions, and non-profit organizations that sponsor, for example, the arts, hospitals, universities, books and magazines, ethnic fairs, organized sports, and that advocate for medical research, animal rights, the ecology, and so on. Each country will have its own expression of civil society. While a government is "in charge" and oversees much of the development of a nation, NGOs and civil society provide many of the services, push many of the agendas, do much of the work, and contribute greatly both to the development of the nation and to the moral of the people.

Governments in developing countries rely on aid from the developed nations. The United States government has reduced aid to scandalously low levels in the last two decades. If we, as a nation, are concerned about the challenges of development in Africa we will keep trying to get aid right and to give aid without decreasing it. Lancaster sees a need for the involvement of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the churches, many of which have supported people-oriented aid activities. As Lancaster sees it, aid funding must increase but the aid must be done in a way that decreases the dependency of the recipients. In some cases churches and other NGOs have unthinkingly, or inadvertently, created dependencies on the part of their recipients. In other cases churches and NGOs have successfully fostered self-sufficiency by providing funds for projects that help people obtain the capital, skills, and experience to run their own businesses. Churches and their members also are important in influencing public opinion and supporting appropriate approaches to aid programming and funding.

Civil society, though often stymied by ineffectual or overbearing governments, rarely sits idly waiting for the government to make something happen. The marketplace, churches, institutions, individuals, and associations have their own interests, goals, requirements, and ministries to pursue. These civil activities contribute to, and support, economic development. In many places NGOs are supportive partners—and sometimes influential shapers—of civil society. Though most NGOs have a positive effect, situations have developed, especially in war time, when a faith community's action, nonaction, or division has heightened the levels of hostility thereby ripping the social fabric and fragmenting civil society.

In some countries the church has contributed to conflict resolution. In South Africa the church encouraged and promoted nation-building in the post-apartheid era. In Mozambique the church worked with others for a postwar reconciliation. And in Southern Sudan the New Sudan Council of Churches is promoting a people-to-people peace process.

## Humans, Gorillas, and Cheetahs, Oh My!

Only a small percent of Africa's land is arable. That percentage varies from nation to nation. Less than six percent of the land is cultivated and of the land that is planted, less than seven percent is irrigated. Crop

### For Discussion

- ✘ What is involved in being faithful stewards caring for all of creation?
- ✘ Why will it be difficult for affluent people—and when we take a worldview, almost everyone in America is affluent—to work with the rest of the world toward sustainable development?
- ✘ What benefits might nations get from giving and receiving aid?
- ✘ How might African churches partnering with churches in the United States help us understand and adopt the concept of sustainable sufficiency?
- ✘ What headaches might come attached with the aid to a receiving nation?
- ✘ God requires that we "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Living faithfully, we cannot duck controversial political policy questions. What, then, is the appropriate role of the church as an institution, and of us as faithful disciples, in seeking to influence the policies of our government, in particular as those policies affect nations in Africa?



yields are low. Yet Africa's population is growing at the highest percentage of growth in the world. The need for productive land is equally high. People clear the rain forest in hopes of a plot for farming, but, contrary to popular belief, rain forest soil is nutrient-poor and soon exhausted.

The extensive clearing of land, whether rain forest or savannah, is putting stress on the animals whose habitats are disappearing. Many species are on the brink of extinction. Since God has provided for all of creation we shouldn't have to choose between the survival of humans and the survival of other animals; God intends for there to be enough for all of us. Worldwide we need to do some creative thinking about how to provide a living for humans while sustaining habitat for wildlife.

One example is in the Virunga Conservation area which includes the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Mgahinga National Park in Uganda, and Rwanda's Volcano National Park. Residents of these nations can work as rangers protecting the mountain gorillas, charging tourists for arduous guided hikes to see gorillas in the wild, and thereby provide a living for their families.

Another example is the work of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF). Cheetahs are among the most endangered animals. Farmers in Namibia were killing cheetahs at a rate of about 800 a year in an effort to protect their goats from the predators. Working together the farmers and the CCF came up with the idea of having dogs guard the goats. The CCF (a registered NGO) helps provide farmers with Anatolian Shepherds, a breed of dog that was raised in Turkey to protect against bears and wolves. The dogs, about the same size as a cheetah but heavier, guard their charges loyally and run off hungry cheetahs. The program has been successful: farmers are not losing their stock and the cheetah population is replenishing itself.<sup>10</sup>

The 208th General Assembly (1996) called "Presbyterians and other Christians to lead the way to a basic reconception of the 'good life,' one that, in accordance with our Christian and Reformation heritage, is less materialistic and more frugal."<sup>11</sup> We must identify what is just and sustainable human development, finding a level of sufficiency that can be enjoyed by the entire human family and putting us in harmony with creation so that the environment and all that lives in it is sustained as well.

Keep us sovereign Lord  
from panic when crises and panics arise.  
Help us to know that though you do not always remove troubles  
from us you always accompany us through them.

O Lord, stablish, strengthen, and settle all Christians in Africa  
and encourage in them and in us  
an awareness of our common bond as members of your body.<sup>12</sup>

## Get Involved

- ◆ Contact the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and invite an International Peacemaker from Africa to visit your presbytery. See [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/intl/international.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/intl/international.htm), or call 888-728-7228. extension 5786.
- ◆ Work with the Jubilee USA Network and other ecumenical partners to advocate for debt relief and debt cancellation. See [www.pcusa.org/hunger/jubilee](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/jubilee).
- ◆ As a congregation participate in the Presbyterian Coffee Project and enjoy fair trade coffee while supporting the farmers who grow it. PDS #74360-01-316. Also see [www.pcusa.org/coffee](http://www.pcusa.org/coffee).
- ◆ Check out the PC(USA) Just Trade website at [www.pcusa.org/trade](http://www.pcusa.org/trade). Get information and ideas for action, and look at the photos.
- ◆ Let your congressional representatives and senators know that you support fair trade, debt reduction, and global assistance programs (aid) as means of reducing poverty and supporting just and equitable development.
- ◆ Visit the website of the PC(USA) Washington Office to get information on issues. Then urge government officials to take appropriate action. In an election year ask candidates about their positions on issues related to Africa. See [www.pcusa.org/washington](http://www.pcusa.org/washington).
- ◆ Visit the PC(USA) Hunger Program site on agriculture. Information and suggestions for action are plentiful. See [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger).



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2. "Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership," approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
3. *The New Internationalist*, (January-February 2000): 19-20, reports the Tobin tax plan, approved by the Canadian Parliament, which proposes a small worldwide tariff levied on foreign exchange transactions to stabilize exchange rates earning approximately \$159-300 billion each year, thereby reducing speculative currency transactions and creating market stability to help wipe out the worst forms of poverty and environmental destruction. As noted in *Resolution on Africa*, endnote 35.
4. *Guardian Weekly*, (June 22-28, 2000): 14. As noted in *Resolution on Africa*.
5. *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2000), 99-102. As attributed in *Resolution on Africa*.
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7. Omega Bula and John Mihevc, "Food for the Journey," *The Journey Continues: African Christians Speak* (Louisville, Ky: Mission Interpretation and Promotion, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1995), 84-85.
8. From "The Jubilee Platform." See [www.pcusa.org/pcusa/wmd/hunger/jubilee](http://www.pcusa.org/pcusa/wmd/hunger/jubilee).
9. Carol Lancaster, *Aid to Africa: So Much to Do, So Little Done* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999). A study sponsored by the Century Foundation.
10. Information on the Cheetah Conservation Fund from a talk by Laurie Marker, Director of CCF, and staff from the Cincinnati Zoo. Also see [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org), and *National Geographic* Vol. 196, No. 6 (1999).
11. *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
12. Combined and adapted from *With All God's People: The New Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, compiled by John Carden, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989) p.109.

- *Resolution on Africa* approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- Stephen Knisely, *Faith in Action: Understanding Development Ministries from a Christian Perspective* (Louisville, KY: Office of Global Awareness and Involvement, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2001).

#### Web Sites

- International Forum on Globalization, [www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org).
- International Monetary Fund, [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org).
- Globalization.com, [www.globalization.com](http://www.globalization.com).
- [www.gorilland.co.ug/touruganda/mgahinga.htm](http://www.gorilland.co.ug/touruganda/mgahinga.htm).
- [www.mountaingorillas.org/our\\_work/our\\_influencing.asp](http://www.mountaingorillas.org/our_work/our_influencing.asp).

## Other Resources

To learn about development ministries see these two resources:

- Stephen Knisely, *Faith in Action: Understanding Development Ministries from a Christian Perspective* (Louisville, KY: Office of Global Awareness and Involvement, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2001).
- Gabrielle Beasley, *Interactive Sessions for Faith in Action: Understanding Development Ministries from a Christian Perspective* (Louisville, KY: Office of Global Awareness and Involvement, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2001).

National Network of Presbyterian College Women "Globalization: Money, Power, and Violence," in *Lifting Up Our Voices: Young Women Explore Life, Liberty, & Faith*, (Louisville, KY: Women's Ministries Program Area, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2002).

- Ross Kinsler and Gloria Kinsler, *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life* (New York: Orbis Press, 1999).

- Presbyterian United Nations Office:  
[www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/un/issues](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/un/issues)

- Church & Society Magazine, *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, Jan/Feb 1997. PDS #72-630-97-013.

- Bill Weber and Amy Vedder, *In the Kingdom of Gorillas* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2001).

## Leader Helps

1. Welcome the group. Preview the session.
2. Read John 1:10-13, and John 10:1-10. Invite the participants to discuss the questions on pages 42-43.
3. *Around the World in 80 Seconds* is a brief introduction to globalization. Share the information and engage the group in discussing the questions on page 44.
4. Go over the factors mentioned in *Investing in People* on pages 44-45. Discuss the questions at the top of page 45.
5. Share Kabira's thoughts that successful development will depend on gender equality. Discuss the questions at the top of page 46.
6. Divide the participants into small groups of three or four. Present the principles of partnership on page 46 and ask the participants to work in their groups, imagining themselves as a presbytery, and discuss the questions at the bottom of page 46.
7. Share the information on *Governance and Economics* (pages 46-47), and discuss the questions on page 47.
8. Explain about *Jubilee and Debt Relief* on page 47, and then discuss the question on page 47.
9. Share the information on *Reducing Aid and Strengthening Partnerships*; discuss the questions on page 48.
10. Comment on the role NGOs can play in development. Invite the participants to work in their small groups to discuss NGOs and to draw up a list of what they think guidelines for NGOs should be.
11. Present the concept from *Humans, Gorillas, and Cheetahs, Oh My!* that sustainable development includes all of creation, not just humans. Discuss the questions on page 50.
12. Discuss ways to get involved.
13. Close with prayer.



## Session 6

# A Faith Journey with Africans

The Role of the PC(USA) with  
the Churches in Africa

### Resolution on Africa

Sections H, I, J

#### Preview

How can we work together? We will look at how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), its presbyteries and congregations can work as partners with the churches in Africa.

#### Scripture

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

### We Always Thank God for You

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10.

Thessalonica was originally called Therma because of the hot springs there, but when Alexander the Great conquered the area the city was renamed for Alexander's sister Thessalonike. Later when the Romans conquered the territory they designated Thessalonica as the capital of Macedonia. The city is still there today.

Paul established the church at Thessalonica soon after he left Philippi. The church at Philippi was the first church that Paul started in Europe, making Thessalonica the second European church. Paul's initial contact in Thessalonica was with the Jews in the synagogue, following his usual method of introducing the good news of Christ Jesus to the Jewish community—if there was one—in the cities he visited. You will notice, however, that this letter is addressed to Gentile converts, those who had turned from idols to God (verse 9). Paul liked to keep in touch with the congregations he had started, so he wrote them letters. This letter to the Thessalonians—written perhaps in the year 51—probably is the first of Paul's letters, the beginning of a practice that set the theological foundations of Christendom. But his letters were not all theology, admonitions, and advice. He also expressed concern for individuals, and he tried to provide practical answers for the questions the congregations were facing.

*Some information from the Resolution on Africa is integrated into this session.*

- What parallels do you see with the church in Thessalonica and the churches in Africa?
- In verse 3 Paul remarks on the Thessalonians (1) work of faith, (2) labor of love, and (3) steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus

Christ. List example of ways your congregation embodies these three attributes. List ways you think the churches in Africa embody these attributes.

Look at verse 6. In our society we think of an imitation as a cheap knock-off of the real thing. In Paul's place and time it was common for teachers to teach by personal example and to expect their students to heed the example. If Paul had not conformed to this standard teaching method people might have assumed that he knew himself to be unfit for emulation. Also he doesn't hold himself up as the only one to be imitated; he includes Silvanus, Timothy, and most importantly the Lord Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

- How does your congregation imitate the Lord Jesus? If your congregation also follows another role model or teacher, identify that person and the nature of the imitation.
- See verses 6-8. In what ways might these verses describe the churches in Africa?
- Where might Paul seem to acknowledge an equality with the Thessalonians and a sense of partnership in mission?
- Suppose you were writing to Christians in Africa. What reasons can you list for including the words *we always thank God for you*?

Paul told the Thessalonians to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:16-18). Africans view Paul's counsel to give thanks in all circumstances as a discipline of Christian living. They are able to do so with unshakable faith, in the face of all kinds of catastrophes and personal perils and trials; such is the depth of their spirituality. They often add a petition on to their thanks: "Let us not give thanks in sorrow."<sup>2</sup>

## The Vision

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) vision for its relationship with the churches in Africa is summed up in *partnership*. Though we do not call the shots with our African partners, it would be self-deceptive to say we have no power in the relationship. Our church's wealth and its abundance of other resources gives us influence, which can be a blessing or a curse. In a partnership both parties have something to contribute; we must be honest about what we bring to the table.

What is hard for us to learn is how to listen to our partners, how to be supportive as they identify their needs and prioritize their work to meet those needs. If partners are to develop a common agenda, then they must consult with one another. It is the place of the PC(USA) to listen as African partners express their ideas for a comprehensive action plan that will foster the creative building of a strong civil society. The churches in Africa have their own organization and their own goals. They meet in their own General Assemblies, making their own decisions and plans for the short and long term. As we are in partnership with them our resources become part of the picture. The Africans know we have resources that can help them with the ministries they are called to do. We have to decide how to

respond to the needs that are put before us, to the requests that our partners make of us.

The interplay between those of us with wealth and those of us without wealth is quite complex. Then mix in the difference in cultures, our differing customs and expectations. For example, in the United States we throw our ideas into a group discussion and then—for the most part—detach ourselves from them. Perhaps in the course of discussion it becomes clear that our idea is not the best one, but, though it is rejected, we do not feel rejected ourselves. Maybe we come up with a new idea, or build on someone else's idea. We are used to discussing the merit of ideas in a group and choosing the one that seems the best for the situation. Whatever the fate of our idea, we feel we have contributed to the good of the whole.

Africans, on the other hand, are more reserved about laying it all out in front of everyone. For them saving face is more important, and so they are reluctant to tell someone they don't like their idea, or that the idea won't work, or even to reveal that the idea was already tried and rejected. So when U.S. Presbyterians visit in Africa and propose their ideas, Africans almost always agree with them. A number of thoughts may be going through the minds of the African hosts: our guest has suggested this and it would be rude not to go along with it; our guest has the money, so who are we to say differently? Thoughts also may arise about the differences in levels of education, differences in race, in origin, and so forth, that make it nearly impossible for an African to challenge an American's idea.

When does the American find out that the Africans didn't really like the idea? When nothing happens. When Africans don't get involved with the project, it means they really didn't agree with it in the first place. As we attempt to engage in mission, we need to learn about the culture of our partners, and we need to learn to interact in ways that minimize our tendency to dominate relationships.

Africans point out that mission has often been misconstrued in a narrow and impoverished way. The Statement of the African Churches Mission Consultation of 2003 states that "Mission has sometimes been understood as a current flowing only in one direction: from North to South, from the superior to the inferior, from the male to the female, from the White to the Black." When this is the case, the statement says, "mission has been replaced by something that some people do to others rather than as a mutual sharing and participation in God's mission of love for the world." Those at the Consultation saw mission as

- service,
- acting in compassion,
- engaging in ministries of reconciliation, and
- acting in unity.

### Priorities

The PC(USA) has identified four priorities that deserve special attention:

- emergency relief for natural and human disasters,
- support for peace and conflict resolution,
- efforts to develop infrastructure for the long-term well-being of civil society, and
- leadership development, especially in education, evangelism, and health.

### For Discussion

- ✠ How can we as presbyteries, congregations, or individuals share what we have in a way that is freeing, building up, respectful, and humble?
- ✠ How do we avoid creating dependencies upon us and the resources we have?
- ✠ What are appropriate ways of attaining accountability and collaboration?

The involvement of the church in mission is by invitation and therefore a privilege to be embraced with humility and gratitude rather than a right to be exercised with arrogance and carelessness.

*The Statement of the African Churches Mission Consultation, November 2003*



### *Emergency Relief*

Four years of alternating floods and droughts devastated Malawi. People were starving. In response the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its Disaster Assistance program, joined together to provide food for 57,500 people. Along with the food came classes in health education, adult literacy and parenting. People there were also introduced to new crops that may bring variety to their diet and add to the economic resources of the community. When a group from the PC(USA) visited Malawi the people greeted them with songs, plays, dancing and enthusiasm. One of the pastors told the group that if they had come a year earlier there would have been no dancing, no singing. There was just dying—and funerals, eight or nine a week. A year later the famine had been vanquished, at least temporarily.<sup>3</sup>

### *Peace and Conflict Resolution*

Sudan has been engulfed in a civil war since 1983. Millions have lost their lives and millions more are refugees. Primarily the government in the mostly Muslim north is battling with the rebel-held south where people generally adhere to Christianity or traditional religions. The south itself is fragmented rather than united. The mass killings in Darfur, described as genocide by U. S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, define the desperateness of the situation. Yet the Presbyterians of the Sudan cling to a "guarded hope," putting their trust in neither government nor rebels, but solely in God. As part of the New Sudan Council of Churches they are working for peace among the southern tribes.

The congregation at Leer is one example of faith and hope in the midst of war. In the spring of 2005, the hospital was full of patients but had no food. The United Nations World Food Program delivered a three-month supply to the drop-off point two miles away. The only way to move the 110-pound sacks was on human backs, but who would carry it? When the Presbyterian Church in Leer learned about the need the members showed up at the drop-off and within three hours had moved every sack of food to the hospital.

World-wide Christians are pitching in to help the people in Darfur. So far the Presbyterian Church (U.S. A.) has contributed \$200,000 through its Disaster Assistance program to help set up schools in refugee camps. Class size can reach 100, and materials are scant, but education is happening, and that is another sign of hope.<sup>4</sup>

### *Development of Infrastructure*

It is estimated that 80 percent of the world's diseases are the result of people drinking polluted water. In the United States we take our clean water for granted, but in Africa it is hard to come by. Mission co-workers in Mozambique are helping villagers dig wells, and in that area they have to be dug deep. Other co-workers in Kenya are helping to build schools in Maasai villages. Schools, wells, and clean water are part of the infrastructure that can improve the quality of life and contribute to the development of a nation.

### *Leadership Development*

It used to be in times past that Presbyterian missionaries ran the schools and seminaries in overseas missions. Since 1952, however, the emphasis has

### **If someone**

*from an African (or other) country comes to your congregation and asks a group from your church to go on a mission to his or her land, there are some questions you should ask.*

✓ How is this person connected to her or his national church body?

✓ How does what the person suggests fit with the goals and priorities of his or her national church?

✓ What is the relationship between the PC(USA) and that person's church?

✓ What agreements are in place and what has been the experiences of other PC(USA) members with this church?

✓ Would what this person is asking you to do cause some kind of imbalance within their home church system? (For example: asking you to pay her or his pastor's salary when that pastor is part of their national church's employment system, thus causing the pastor to get paid more than anyone else in their church.)

*There are more Presbyterians in Malawi than in the PC(USA).*

### For Discussion

✠ How do the four PC(USA) priorities mesh with the African understanding of mission as presented in the statement (page 54) of the African Churches Mission Consultation?

been on training national Christian leaders to run their own schools and to train others. Dr. Elisée Musemakweli of Rwanda is one of the leaders that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has helped train. In the early 1990s, with funds from the PC(USA), Musemakweli went to study theology in Belgium. During that time Rwanda was engaged in a horrendous civil war. In 1994 Musemakweli got word that twenty members of his family had been murdered, including his mother, two brothers, and seven of his brothers' children. Musemakweli wrote to the Development office in Louisville saying he didn't know what to do; he was depressed and couldn't concentrate on his dissertation. Then the President of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda called him home to help with the work of reconstructing and healing his country. Musemakweli and his wife went home and ministered to the survivors of war, and with them, to a broken country. In 1998 he went back to Belgium to complete his doctorate and he graduated with distinction in 1999. He served as president of the seminary in Rwanda and was elected President of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda.<sup>5</sup>

### A Proposed Agenda of Hope

The churches of Africa, alongside other NGOs, have played and will continue to play a significant role in bringing fresh approaches to governance and development, approaches that will benefit those in poverty. With the impressive growth of faith communities in Africa, the same hope that nurtures spiritual growth may be the new hope that fosters social and economic change. With hope the church calls on the millions of Christians who sing and pray about their faith in the sovereign God to claim their role as God's people working for a just and peaceful society. Faith's journey with Africans is a pilgrimage of hope.

The 208th General Assembly (1996) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved the policy statement *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, which sought to address "international issues in the economic structure by calling for just and sustainable human development." The report calls for

- sufficient production and consumption,
- full respect for all human rights,
- just and effective governance,
- universal and adequate education,
- population stability,
- environmental sustainability and food sufficiency,
- ethical universality with cultural and religious diversity,
- dismantling instruments that promote warfare while building processes for peace,
- equitable debt relief,
- just and sustainable international trade, and
- more and better development assistance.

The policy statement *Hope for a Global Future: Toward a Just and Sustainable Human Development* seeks to provide a guide for study, dialogue, and action, and it calls for a new way of life for members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Much remains to be done to move toward truly just and sustainable development in Africa. The following are the main principles enunciated in the 1996 policy:

*Dear friends in  
Louisville,*

*I want to share my  
joy with you because  
you have been with me  
and my family,  
spiritually and  
financially, from  
beginning up to now.  
This success is also  
yours.*

Elisée Musemakweli,  
1999

1. In order to develop, humans must have their basic needs met. Sufficiency for all requires that the affluent live more frugally so that poverty is eradicated.
2. Human rights are essential to the expression of human dignity and are fundamental to the quest for human development.
3. Public participation of all persons in the decisions that affect their lives and well being is a fundamental human right.
4. Human life and well being depend on the flourishing of other life and on the integrity of the life supporting processes that God has ordained.
5. Authentic human development does not come in a single fixed pattern. There are differences in cultural and worship practices that express the same universal values of justice, integrity of the person, solidarity, and sustainability.
6. The demand that repayment of debts and interest be made at the expense of the basics of life raises serious questions of justice. The burden of debts must be shared equitably in ways that reduce poverty, protect the environment, and avoid perverse incentives in the future.
7. The international trading system must incorporate the basic norms of social justice and environmental sustainability rather than depend solely on the norms and outcomes of free trade.
8. The purpose of development assistance is to equip people and communities through financial and technical means to implement their own plans for just and sustainable development.<sup>6</sup>

*Resolution on Africa, along with Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development, calls the church to a renewal of hope. "Justice, community, and sustainability are too often overwhelmed by the greed, pride, and carelessness of the powerful, or by the relentless dynamics of systems and institutions dominated by other values . . . we lift them up because, as biblical people, we cannot do otherwise, and because they show the way to go. They light the path of adventurous faithfulness to the God who judges and restores, commands and forgives, makes new and gives hope."*<sup>6</sup>

Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, reminds us that ultimately the future of Africa rests in African hands. He is quoted as saying,

Africa is beyond bemoaning its past for its problems. The task of undoing the past is ours, with the support of those willing to join us in a continental renewal. We have a new generation of leaders who know we must take responsibility for our own destiny, that we will uplift ourselves only by our own efforts in partnership with those who wish us well.

### Zikomo

the Chichewa word  
for thank you.  
(Chichewa is spoken  
in Malawi)

*We are not swimming alone.  
We have brothers and  
sisters who are praying for  
us all over the world and  
are partners who are fully  
involved in what we are  
doing.*

Haruun Ruun, executive  
secretary of the New Sudan  
Council of Churches, 2000.

Christians in Africa sing and pray every day for the kingdom of God. We can do no less than join them—and in so doing fortify and renew our faith by sharing the pilgrimage of God's people everywhere who seek justice, peace, and freedom. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins African church partners in working for the liberation of all people worldwide.

### For Discussion

✘ Why would *Resolution on Africa* call the church and its membership to a renewal of hope? What do you hope for?

✘ If members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were to advocate and work for worldwide sustainable development how would your lifestyle change?

✘ Which of the eight principles on page 61 require decision making in institutions other than the church? How do church members and the church as a body influence the decisions of others?

### Get Involved

◇ Which of the eight principles on page 61 require attitudinal changes? Whose attitude needs to change? How can you effect attitudinal change?

◇ What changes in ourselves, our denomination, our country would most benefit the peoples of Africa?

◇ What are you going to do?

God bless Africa,  
Guard her children,  
Guide her leaders,  
and grant her peace,  
for Jesus Christ's sake.  
Amen

used in Anglican worship  
in South Africa<sup>7</sup>

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4. Pat Cole, "'Guared Hope' in Troubled Sudan." *Highlights* spring/summer 2005 (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Worldwide Ministries Division). 4-5

5. Barbara Roche, "From Generation to Generation," *Horizons*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (May/June 2002).

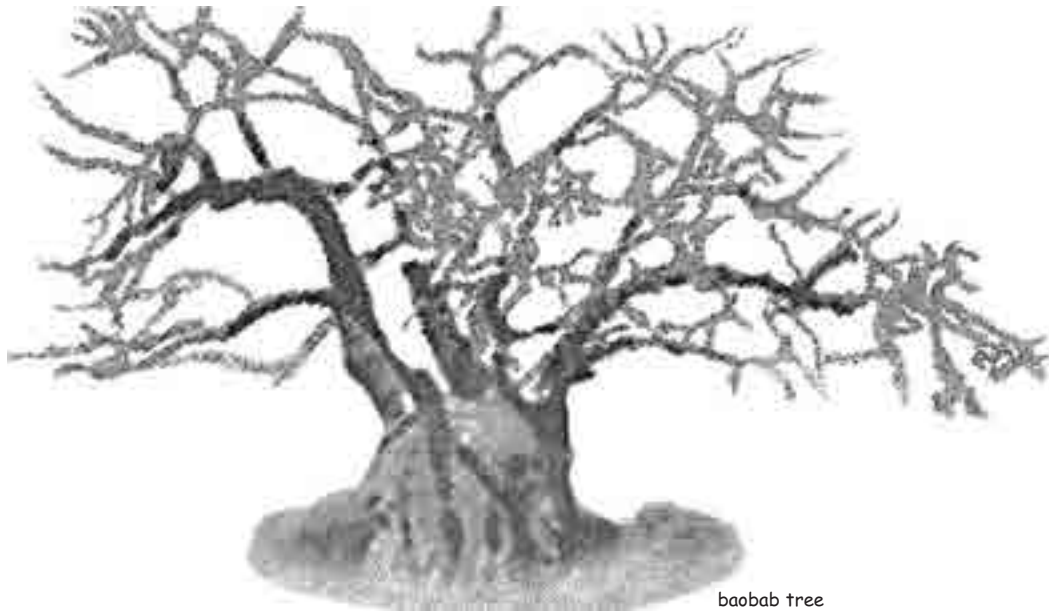
6. *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

7. From [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/jonesk\\_0405.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/jonesk_0405.htm).

- *Resolution on Africa* approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- Henry Snyder Gehman, ed., *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1970).

- Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV): An Ecumenical Study Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).



## Leader Helps

1. Welcome the participants. Preview the session for them.
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10. Discuss the questions on pages 56-57.
3. Share the information under *Vision*. Emphasize the four components of mission as identified at the African Churches Mission Consultation on page 58 (just above *Priorities*). Discuss the questions on page 58.
4. Present the information under *Priorities*. Discuss the question on page 59.
5. Go over the *Proposed Agenda for Hope*. Discuss the questions on page 62.
6. Invite participants to share some of their learnings during this time of study and reflection.
7. Discuss *Get Involved*. What are you going to do? What are participants going to do as individuals? What will your congregation do? What are people going to do within the presbytery, the synod? How are they going to support the work and programs at the national level of the church? As citizens of the United States, what are they going to do in relation to Africa?
8. Close with prayer.

## Mission Partnership in Africa

When we work together as partners in mission we give expression to the oneness of the whole church. Through this living example the world may come to know God's love for all people. With this in mind a number of governing bodies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including congregations, presbyteries, and other mission agencies relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ in Africa through a variety of styles of partnership. The Ecumenical and Mission Partnership office, works closely with presbyteries as they seek to establish and maintain mission partnerships with churches in Africa. Following is a list of PC(USA) presbyteries and their African partnerships, as of the time of this writing.

Country in Africa	PCUSA Presbytery	African Partner	African Church
CAMEROON	St. Andrew	Ntem Presbytery	EPC
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	New Castle	Mujimbayi Presbytery	CPK
	Eastern Virginia	Entire Church	CPK
	Whitewater Valley	North Kasai Presbytery	PCDRC
	Sheppards and Lapsley	Nganza & Tshibashi Presbyteries	CPK
ETHIOPIA	Shenandoah	Illubabor Bethel Synod	EECMY
	Susquehanna Valley	Western Wollega	EECMY
	Washington	Central Southwest	EECMY
GHANA	Foothills	Kwahu Presbytery	PCG
	James	Ga Presbytery	PCG
	Lackawanna	Brong Ahafo	PCG
	Mid-Kentucky	Asante Akyem	PCG
	New Brunswick	West Akyem	PCG
	Salem	Kwahu	PCG
KENYA	Blackhawk	Imenti Presbytery	PCEA
	Cimarron	Gatundu Presbytery	PCEA
	Los Ranchos	Limuru Presbytery	PCEA
	National Capitol	Elburgon Presbytery	PCEA
	Newton	Nairobi Presbytery	PCEA
	Redwoods	Kikuyu Presbytery	PCEA
	West Virginia	Nyeri Presbytery	PCEA

*continued on next page*

### African Partner Churches

CCAP Church of Central Africa Presbyterian  
 CPK Communauté Presbyterienne de Kinshasa  
 EECMY Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus  
 EPC Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise  
 EPC,G Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana  
 PCCA Presbyterian Church of Central Africa  
 PCDRC Presbyterian Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo

PCEA Presbyterian Church of East Africa  
 PCG Presbyterian Church of Ghana  
 PCOS Presbyterian Church of Sudan  
 SPEC Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church  
 UPCSA Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa  
 URCSA Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Country in Africa	PCUSA Presbytery	African Partner	African Church
<b>MALAWI</b>	Eastern Oklahoma	Livingstonia Synod	CCAP
	Northern New York	Livingstonia Synod	CCAP
	Pittsburgh	Blantyre Synod	PCCA
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	Donegal	Umtata Presbytery	UPCSA
	Florida	Western Cape Presbytery	UPCSA
	New York City	Uthukela Presbytery	UPCSA
	North Alabama	Egoli Presbytery	UPCSA
	Northern New England	Amatolah Presbytery	UPCSA
	Western New York	Wynberg Presbytery	URCSA
<b>SUDAN</b>	Trinity	Entire Church	PCOS
	Shenango	Entire Church	SPEC
	Redstone	Entire Church	SPEC
<b>ZIMBABWE</b>	Philadelphia	Zimbabwe Presbytery	UPCSA

Check with your presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly office of Ecumenical and Mission Partnerships to see the possibilities for partnership in your area.

### African Partner Churches

CCAP Church of Central Africa Presbyterian  
 CPK Communauté Presbytérienne de Kinshasa  
 EECMY Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane  
 Yesus  
 EPC Eglise Presbytérienne Camerounaise  
 EPC,G Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana  
 PCCA Presbyterian Church of Central Africa  
 PCDRC Presbyterian Church in the Democratic  
 Republic of Congo

PCEA Presbyterian Church of East Africa  
 PCG Presbyterian Church of Ghana  
 PCOS Presbyterian Church of Sudan  
 SPEC Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church  
 UPCSA Uniting Presbyterian Church of  
 Southern Africa  
 URCSA Uniting Reformed Church in Southern  
 Africa

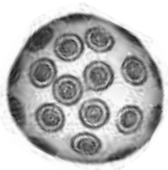




## Resolution on Africa



Following is the report approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



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## A. Introduction

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), along with the Africa Offices of the Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD), has long sought to engage the church, as a whole, in action for Africa. This report submitted to the 215th General Assembly (2003) does not purport to be a comprehensive statement of the PC(USA) mission engagement with African churches. Rather it seeks to call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to a deeper understanding of and a more effective witness to contemporary Africa. Its focus is on health, education, and development challenges facing the people and the churches of Africa.

Nineteenth-century images of "dark Africa" continue to prevail in the twenty-first century. Many maps of Africa represent outmoded sixteenth-century sketching of the African landscape. Yet much more is known today about its physical geography than even fifty years ago. People in the west, however, tend to be ignorant of the great diversity of life in Africa, or hold stereotyped views of a backward continent, perpetually at war and subject to pandemic HIV/AIDS.

In its 1994/95 "Year with Africa"—extended through June 1996 (Minutes, 1993, Part I, pp. 123-24, 665; and Minutes, 1995, Part I, pp. 31, 338)—the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) invited its members to embark on a journey, "Walking with Africans: A Healing Journey." That invitation continues. If the PC(USA) no longer wishes to look at Africa through a dim glass but through high intensity lenses, she will have to look purposefully, seeking newer perspectives on contemporary Africa.

The purpose of the report and the recommendations in "Resolution on Africa" is to engage the PC(USA) in a more intimate exploration of Africa. We have to acquire a deeper understanding of life lived daily on the edge of poverty as we seek a greater sense of the broad economic and political realities of Africa. Such an understanding will better equip us in our relationships with African churches as they seek to witness for Christ in their nations.

## B. The Concept and Practice of Partnership in Mission

We begin with a biblical and theological understanding of the concept of Partnership in Mission as the PC(USA) continues a faith journey with Africans in the twenty-first century.

Partnership is inherent in the very nature of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and is intrinsically a part of God's action in the world, in both creation and redemption. In the creation story men and women are created in the image of God, which implies a fundamental relationship to God (Gen. 1:27). Created by God, it follows that all humankind is to be related to each other. People are to live in community for mutual benefit one to the other to be "keepers" of their brothers and sisters (Gen. 4:9). We are all creatures of the living God and, therefore, called to live "in partnership" with all people.

In God's call to Abraham, God promised to make of him a great nation, not only to bless him, his wife, and their descendants, but also to be a blessing to all people—"in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). To this end God entered into a covenant with Abraham and Sarah, promising to be their God, and through them to be a blessing to all nations, so long as they recognized and honored God. In the Hebrew tradition a covenant is always an agreement with conditions and promises. As Christians we inherit the tradition of the covenant of Abraham. However, in the Reformed tradition the Hebrew concept of covenant is fulfilled in the "new covenant" that God offers to all people in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Christians become a blessing to other people as we recognize them to be equal in God's eyes, and yet equally in need of God's grace. Thus we share in the call to Abraham to be "a blessing to all nations." The model of a covenant, with conditions and with promises, is a biblical guide for our relationships with other people, and particularly as we reach out to do mission. As we live within the covenant, being sustained by God's grace, we act out our commitments in thankful response to God's loving-kindness.

For Christians the central biblical point of reference for the idea of partnership is that we are, or that we become, sisters and brothers by faith in Jesus Christ. We are joint heirs of the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17a). The word "partner" is said to be derived from the Anglo-French word *parcener*, which is an old legal term denoting "co-heirship."<sup>1</sup> Such a root for the word "partner" connects us in significant ways to our relationship to God. It also connects us with an understanding at the heart of Reformed theology that what we do in faith is a responsive expression of gratitude for what God has first done for us. Christians are to go out into the world and so live among other peoples that they too will become disciples of Jesus (Matt. 28:19-20). As we do mission in the world, we seek to build an understanding of partnership as a practice of mission on the basis of grateful humility.

Furthermore, in Christ we receive the gift of unity (John 17:20-23), and therefore we have an obligation to give expression to this unity—in all things—along with all others who profess to have faith in Jesus Christ. Baptized into Christ, "all the members of the body, though many, are one body" (1 Cor. 12:12). "The only frame of reference in the Bible to determine proper patterns of relationships is the body of Christ in which all the members are equal, indispensable, and useful."<sup>2</sup> As members of one body we are called to be witnesses to God's love in Christ, and to do so together with all others who share the same faith.

As members of a particular church in a particular country we are to see other churches in other cultures as equally a part of the church and "[make] every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:4-6). It follows that when we work together as partners in mission we give expression to the oneness of the whole church, to the end that the world may know that God sent Jesus into the world and that in him God shows his love for all people (John 17:20-23).

Another biblical point of reference for the concept and practice of "partnership of mission" rests in the idea of community, as suggested by the Greek word *koinonia*. This word may be translated as "fellowship," "participation," or "sharing." The word is used in the New Testament "for sharing with someone in something, and it usually stresses a common bond in Jesus Christ that establishes mutual community."<sup>3</sup> To develop community in mission requires a two-way relationship of giving and receiving. The Apostle Paul affirms this when he says, "I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine." (Rom. 1:11-12).

Several scripture passages may be cited to illustrate the importance of the word *koinonia*. Of particular note are the occasions in Philippians when Paul uses this word, or similar words. First, he thanks the Philippians for their partnership, or their sharing in the Gospel (Phil. 1:5). Then he speaks of their sharing in God's grace (Phil. 1:8). A little further along in the letter, Paul speaks of "sharing in the Spirit" (Phil. 2:1). In giving his own testimony Paul says, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death" (Phil. 3:10). Toward the end of this personal letter, Paul thanks the Philippian Christians for their sharing in his troubles (Phil. 4:14). And finally he says "no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone" (Phil. 4:15). In each of these ways, Paul gives expression to vitally important dimensions of Christian community through reference to practical expressions of partnership in mission.

As we seek to engage in mission with others who like us are called to mission, we have before us the vision of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1)—a new community God is creating in God's own time and way. God is at work in the nations, and through the church. "People will bring into [the new Jerusalem] the glory and the honor of nations" (Rev. 21:26). Therefore, as we engage in mission there will be times when as Christians we need to join hands with people of other faiths and with secular organizations in order to preserve and improve the quality of life "for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2).

As surely as there is a missionary message in both the Old and New Testaments, so also are there many indications throughout the Bible that the idea of partnership—working together in community—is

central to God's activity in the world. The idea is "not only convenient and desirable but in its ultimate significance is an idea about God which does not cut across the grain of the universe but moves along it, being wholly consistent with the creative and redemptive purposes of God." <sup>4</sup>

### **C. A Faith Journey with Africans in the Twenty-first Century**

Africa has possessed vital living Christian communities from the first centuries of the Christian epoch. Mission efforts from the West were preceded by the strong presence of Christian churches and movements from the second to the seventh century in Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia.

North African churches produced many of the early church leaders, leaving a rich heritage still referred to in contemporary theological studies,<sup>5</sup> but the North African church was often divided because of its many ecclesiastical disputes that left the church weakened and isolated. Apart from the Coptic Church in Egypt, seventh-century militant Islam wiped out most North African churches. There is some evidence that earlier Christian communities in North Africa and Asia Minor played a significant role in introducing Christianity to Nubia and other sub-Saharan areas.

Christianity in Africa in the centuries between the Church of Clement and Augustine (in North Africa), and that of the nineteenth century, has three main themes: the continuing life of the Coptic and Ethiopian churches, some strikingly unsuccessful attempts to "convert" Muslim North Africa, and the history of the Catholic churches founded in black Africa, initially by the Portuguese. <sup>6</sup>

While there are some signs of early Portuguese mission activity, there is little evidence of its lasting effect or continuing vitality. "The great weakness of the Christian enterprise in black Africa in the Middle Years (between 16-19th) was its close association with the slave trade." <sup>7</sup>

The Presbyterian church began to face the African reality in at least two ways:

1. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century concern about the slave trade and the resultant abolition movement.

2. The inauguration of mid- to late-nineteenth-century mission endeavors, mainly in West Central Africa, notably in Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and also in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. As newly independent nations began to emerge from the late 1950s onward, new partnerships have been cultivated with other churches in Africa.

The expansion of African Christianity in the twentieth century has been dramatic, with close to 400 million African Christian adherents projected in the near future. Indeed Christianity's "center of gravity" has shifted from Europe and North America to the so-called third world, most notably, to Africa south of the Sahara.

African Christians provide new windows into the life of the ecumenical community worldwide. The PC(USA) has corresponding relationships with more than fifty churches and Christian councils in Africa today and with many others through the World Reformed Alliance and the World Council of Churches.

But why continue our faith journey with Africans in the twenty-first century? Why should the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourage its entities, congregations, and members to give greater attention to Africa? There are several valid reasons:

1. What the PC(USA) believes about the church being a worldwide community of faith in Christ without boundaries is a basic theological tenet.

2. Presbyterians cannot understand the gospel using only the concepts of our Western culture. Our biblical and theological tradition needs to be supplemented by African theological insights and sensitivities.

3. The American church bears some responsibility for what has or has not developed in African Christianity. We should both celebrate what has happened and support the correction of mistakes.

4. Responsibility for mission "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) remains a valid mandate of the gospel. In partnership with African Christians we share responsibility for mission in the United States and in Africa.

5. "The Gospel is never safe in any culture unless there is a witness from beyond that culture" (D. T. Niles).<sup>8</sup> Since the future of the world Christian movement is in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we have mutual need of each other's testimony of the work of the Holy Spirit among us. Much of what Presbyterians lack in evangelistic fervor is present in abundance among African Christians. Our witness to societal issues is however sometimes muted among African churches.

6. Matters of justice relative to American influence in Africa and the rest of the world make it incumbent upon Presbyterians to nurture stronger relationships with Christians in Africa (Rom. 1:11-12).

## **D. An Overview of the African Continent**

Africa is quite simply a continent of people—not angels, but not rudimentary souls either—just people, often highly gifted people and often strikingly successful in their enterprise with life and society (Chinua Achebe).<sup>9</sup>

### **1. Geography**

Africa holds close to 800 million (people) representing more than one thousand languages and dialects (many, such as some San dialects in South Africa, on the way to extinction).<sup>10</sup> Africa's 30,420,000 square kilometers equal the combined land mass of China, India, Europe, Argentina, the U.S.A., and New Zealand.<sup>11</sup> According to some experts, anthropologically, Africa is the oldest continent on earth, now broken into fifty-four discrete independent nations, including offshore island nations. These states are of varying size, population, constitutional makeup, economy, climate, ecoculture, and language. Africa, south of the Sahara, remains a "fragmented continent" that is "demarcated by 165 borders into 48 countries—22 with less than 5 million people, 11 with less than one million."<sup>12</sup>

Africa exhibits vast ecological variation, from rain forest to arid desert. It has a vast land surplus (ratio of people to land) and more landlocked countries than any other continent. Africa has one of the world's least developed infrastructures, with inadequate transport systems and vast inaccessible locations. Human development is at a low level measured by low literacy and education rates, low school enrollment, and limited access to health and social services. The United Nations Development Programme Report (2000) lists thirty sub-Saharan African countries among the thirty-five nations at the lowest human development index (HDI) level worldwide (see Appendix C)<sup>13</sup>

### **2. Africa's Land and People**

Attention has already been drawn to the number of nations, island states, landlocked countries, and small territories that define the physical and human geography of Africa today. So much in Africa depends on weather performance that it is difficult to separate land and agricultural production from rainfall. Africa has not experienced the Green Revolution. Only a small percentage of Africa's total surface is arable, though the percentage varies in each nation. Less than 6 percent is cultivated and less than 7 percent of cropped land is irrigated, with resultant low yields. Fertilizer usage remains low as well. Endemic livestock diseases are inordinately high.

Africa's percentage of population growth, the highest in the world, also produces increased demands for availability of limited productive land. While land is seemingly plentiful, poor soil conditions and limited arable land cause many people to move from rural enclaves to urban conglomerations. City populations now constitute about 33 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa. The percentage of urban population growth is the highest in the world. In three decades, cities will rival rural areas in population percentages so that by 2025 the urban population will be three times that of today. The growth of African cities constitutes a recent phenomenon with all the attendant problems of urbanization—lack of jobs, up to 50 percent living in poverty, poor housing, crowded conditions, street children, increased rates of crime, and so on.

Modern Africa with all its possibilities and problems tends to resemble other continents, yet with its own distinctive configurations and models. One finds traditional practices alongside the most advanced technologies—from traditional healers to sophisticated hospitals, from drums to cyberspace, from sorcery and voodoo to high tech. Rapid social and cultural change continues in remote areas of the continent as well as in the cities.

The Christian churches of Africa continue to explore the changing setting in which they find themselves often poorly equipped by prior experience and sometimes hampered by previous Western-oriented mission tutelage. They depend on individual stewardship from people who are expected to live off a land yielding diminishing returns, people rooted in traditions and conditions undergoing rapid transformation. Many of the young, who now make up more than 50 percent of the population, appear to be dissatisfied with inherited religious practices and often join sects or become totally secularized.

### 3. Health

Africa has long known the ravages of malaria, (80 percent of the world's cases occur in Africa; deaths due to malaria have increased), tuberculosis, river blindness, sleeping sickness, endemic diarrhea, respiratory infections, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and mixtures of other diseases.

Millions do not have access to clean, safe water or proper nourishment. Even where health care is available, most cannot afford the costs of visiting health-care centers or hospitals and are unable to pay for medicines with incomes of less than 65 cents a day. Distance, combined with inadequate or costly transportation, also impedes access to health care. Overall health spending is poorly targeted. Societal disparities tend to victimize women and children most.

In addition to the facts stated above, the impact of HIV/AIDS has been disastrous. Well-publicized international conferences addressing the urgency of the HIV/AIDS pandemic have gained worldwide attention. By the end of 2002, 29.4 million of the 42 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the world lived in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 70 percent of the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS. Of those living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, 10 million are young people (aged 15-24), and almost 3 million are children under 15. United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) noted, "Rampant epidemics are under way in southern Africa where, in four countries, national adult HIV prevalence has risen higher than thought possible, exceeding 30%: Botswana (38.8%), Lesotho (31%), Swaziland (33.4%) and Zimbabwe (33.7%). The food crises faced in the latter three countries are linked to the toll (on the lives of young, productive adults, particularly) of their longstanding HIV/AIDS epidemic."<sup>14</sup>

Over the past fifteen years there has been a steady increase in the rate of HIV prevalence in virtually every country in sub-Saharan Africa. The international community has offered some financial and technical resources, with roughly \$300 million being spent in contrast to the U.N. estimate of \$3 billion needed. It is now important for African leadership to design their own approaches to the AIDS crisis. The church in Africa must play a critical role in this effort.

The U.S. government, through its U.S. Import/Export Bank, has promised one billion dollars a year in loans for vaccines to fight HIV/AIDS. The loan moneys, at 7 percent plus fees, are to be paid back in five years (which will increase indebtedness), and they will only buy medicines produced by U.S. pharmaceutical companies. To date many African nations are refusing to accept this proposed aid package since pharmaceutical products continue to be sold at full market cost. More favorable conditions will need to be worked out if there is to be any effective attack on HIV/AIDS.

It is important not only to treat present victims of the disease but also to promote major preventive programs. So far little funding has been found to institute such programs. Many governments and churches face further reluctance due to cultural strictures restraining open discussion of bodily or sexual relations. In other cases, governments and churches have failed to institute preventive education programs because of continuing denial.

Although initially slow in responding to the AIDS crisis, the church in Africa has recently taken several positive actions in preparing congregations and communities to face the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS in Africa. During the first half of 2001, regional ecumenical organizations, the World Council of Churches, and other partners sponsored three meetings for church leaders in Mukono, Johannesburg, and Dakar. More than 200 representatives of churches, Christian organizations, mission partners, and related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were present. Individual ecumenical agencies have also been involved in supporting work on HIV/AIDS.

It must be added that some churches have produced excellent educational programs, but too many Christians in Africa remain confused about both STI and AIDS prevention. There is the danger that accent on HIV/AIDS may also draw attention away from the ever-present need to improve health in Africa by attacking the full range of "diseases of poverty." While HIV/AIDS requires intensive, rapid, and effective action, there are other life-threatening diseases that make the problem of health more burdensome in Africa than elsewhere.

#### 4. Education

The World Bank reports that, given the high population growth rate in Africa, primary school enrollment rates were proportionally lower in 1995 than in 1980 and remain lower than in other world regions.<sup>15</sup> Long distances from schools for rural children make for limited access to education. Mean years of schooling increased over the last forty years from 1.5 to 2.4 years, but the number of students enrolled in secondary schools and colleges remains low. Overall expenditures for education remain at \$50 per student per year.

It is not the intent of this report to detail the great educational task that African churches have undertaken to build and maintain schools. Their effort has been heroic. A brief report on education and literacy can do no better than celebrate and support action by the churches for a greater national effort to upgrade and spread educational opportunities.

The quality of "public" education points to continuing educational crises. Most national educational establishments parrot outmoded pedagogical methods with curricular materials inherited from colonial days. Added to this, students of all ages do not have sufficient access to adequate instructional materials, classrooms, or even desks and writing materials. Teachers are often poorly trained. In some countries the deadly scourge of HIV/AIDS that has affected many regular classroom instructors has exacerbated the shortage of teachers.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) counts progress in education as one of the principal measures required to boost levels of human development. No country, the World Bank report states, has "sustained economic progress without literacy rates well over 50 percent."<sup>16</sup> A poorly educated population is not prepared to assume the necessary responsibilities of active citizenry in countries that



aspire to progress in development. Yet African countries spend a greater proportion of their limited national budgets for education than is the case in many other regions of the world. Where military expenditures have increased, public spending has either remained static or has been cut back.

At a time when African educational institutions seek nationals to staff the education system, when dependency on expatriate teaching staff remains somewhat constant, Africa must confront its own brain drain. Many who feel a vocation to teach have left for positions elsewhere, given the pressures, with little if any promised return and with salaries often unpaid or hopelessly in arrears.

## 5. The Role of Women

Women in Africa represent the mainstay of the society. Women maintain the home: produce, care for, and educate the children, and provide food and family nurture. They gather the water and wood for cooking fires, prepare the meals, wash the clothes, and generally supervise the home. Where men are away because of work or because of engagement in wars, women are the sole maintainers and providers. In most cultures, women plant, cultivate, irrigate, and harvest family plots. A frequent problem for women has been the loss of status of widows in many African societies. Since a woman earns her place in many traditional societies through her husband, the death of the husband often transforms widows into non-persons.

In some African regions, however, the condition of African women, according to human development index (HDI) indicators, has improved in comparison to the early days of independence. Two examples are improved access to education at higher levels and lowered fertility (but still high) rates. However, improvement is inconsistent when one looks at individual countries. Some countries' HDIs outshine others. Still, maternal mortality rates continue high, and more women than men are now victims of AIDS.

Access to many vital components such as medicine, credit, and even food are only secondarily available to African women. In many cultures, men are fed first and women then receive the table remains. A woman's identity often depends on her husband's forbearance. Banking and credit rights are held in the husband's name and even passports are issued primarily to the "man of the house." There are positive changes and now many countries grant equal legal status to women, including citizenship and the right to vote and to work, but every-day reality often incorporates past practice and behavior when it comes to the full exercise of these rights. "Women political participation is low—only 6 percent in national legislatures and 2 percent in cabinets."<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, while women are in the majority in most Christian churches, many churches do not permit the ordination of women to the office of elder or minister. Although they are the backbone of the church, women remain subordinate to men in church governance. This includes the kinds of tasks allocated to women and the question of fair and equal pay.

## 6. Children in Africa

African societies treasure their children. They are considered "always a blessing," the assurance of a community living into the future, and a link between yesterday and tomorrow. However, infant mortality rates continue high among the rural and urban poor. Children are most vulnerable to Africa's epidemic diseases because of a lack of proper food, medicine, and clean water. Many are stunted, lacking full physical and mental development. Statistics tell a sad story relative to health, education, and victimization due to wars, including displacement to foreign-sited refugee camps. News photos of child warriors, street children, and exploding populations of orphans due to AIDS appear frequently on television and in the press. Child labor continues to grow in many societies. Although African children under fifteen make up almost 50 percent of the total population, children are voiceless, having no vote in the political process. Therefore advocacy for the rights and needs of children depends on the actions of others. Altogether, the picture for the wellbeing of the African child does not inspire optimism. Every effort needs to be made so that all children will have a fruitful present and future.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has set forth its vision for children in the proclamation. This vision for children should be shared by the PC(USA) as it works with partner churches in Africa.

### **A Vision for Children and the Church**

Because we affirm that all children are a gift of God, . . . all children have the right to be children; and all children are not just tomorrow, they are today.

We believe that all children depend upon adults for safety and security in a world that does not always value children; all children are affected first and most deeply by those things that work against health and wholeness: where there is disease, children sicken and die; where there is homelessness, children sleep on the streets and in other dangerous places; where there is war, children are frightened and without a safe place; where the air and water are polluted, children feel the effects in their bodies and in their futures; where there is shame, children's spirits are wounded.

Therefore we hope for a world where all children can find a safe place; . . . where all children have "first call" on the world's resources and first place in the minds and hearts of the world's adults. . . . Because Jesus lifted up a child as an example of what the realm of God is like.

Therefore we hope for a church where we take seriously our baptismal vow to nurture all children committed to our care, where we bring good news to all those places where children are in need . . .

We covenant to act so that this vision may be made real for all children, now and in times to come.<sup>18</sup>

## **7. Human Rights**

A cornerstone of the struggle for Human Rights in the modern world is the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those commitments were echoed in the African Charter of Human and People's Rights adopted in 1986 by almost every member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We add a call by many international bodies for a commitment to basic nutrition, basic education, basic health, and basic protection against vulnerability.

Strong and just government is necessary for the implementation of these rights to all citizens. Article 21 of the 1948 declaration states that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country directly or through freely chosen representatives." While most African states have held elections in the past decade, citizen participation either directly or through "freely elected representatives" has been stymied in many cases. Kwasi Wiredu points out that the African Human Rights Charter of 1986 appears to affirm the right for full political participation, yet it has added a qualifying interpolation after the affirmation of political rights, adding, "in accordance with the provisions of the law."<sup>19</sup> Thus dictator-ruled states, or one-party democratic states, may impose laws that abrogate true and full political freedom. That may account for the fact that many less than democratic African leaders were willing to sign the proclamation.

Wiredu also points out how the African Human Rights Charter protects freedom of association by the added subscription to a citizen's right of free association, "provided he abides by the law." Thus one is free as far as the national law and its application permits a citizen to be free to be a part of the political process, or even to belong by "free association" to any citizen group. However, not a few countries prohibit or limit the possibility for free association or free speech, or both.

While most Western nations assume that multi-party democracy is the best model to assure the most just political system, it is not always clear to Africans (or for that matter to Westerners) that the multi-party system continues to function in the best interests of the general populace. Recently, in Lesotho, year-long negotiations about a more representative electoral system have led to the adoption of a new electoral system (still to be tested in practice) that combines majority vote with proportional representation.

Human rights groups continue to verify the abuse of human rights in many African states. The OAU and many other regional bodies condemn violations of basic human rights. Research into acceptable democratic political or judicial systems in an African setting is needed. One is reminded that the Euro-American political, judicial, and economic systems that are seen by many as normative were only arrived at after long struggle and experimentation in their original setting. The political crisis in Western democracies now pushes many to seek a fairer, more effective form of government and justice, a truly representative and universally participatory democratic system.

The African experience to set in place acceptable governmental and judicial systems and approaches to human rights may mirror a wider crisis as nations worldwide seek ways to involve the populace in the devolution of power and effective representative forms of governance. In other words, the search is for a more effective instrument to safeguard human rights.

## **E. Agenda for African Development**

While not inclusive of all aspects of what is required for African development to succeed, the following three areas encompass much of what is at stake: Investing in People; Governance and Economics; Reducing Aid- Dependence and Strengthening Partnerships.

### **1. Investing in People**

It is evident that some real investment in people is needed if Africa is going to move out of its present state. The World Bank underlines four factors necessary for this forward movement: "improving governance and resolving conflict; investing in people; increasing competitiveness and diversifying economies; and reducing aid dependence and strengthening partnerships."<sup>20</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), over the last decade, has published annual reports on human development worldwide. The UNDP records each country's status relative to development factors in a human development index (HDI; see Appendix C). The index, although in no way definitive, includes such factors as health, education, food and nutrition, income and poverty, the status of women and children, the environment, human security, and cultural factors. It seeks, more than measures of gross national product (GNP) or gross domestic product (GDP), to build in the social as well as the per capita income ratios. The HDI puts people and their basic needs to the fore in the development quotient.

What indeed are the results of investing in people and what part do these play in moving forward the development process? Let us look briefly at the balance sheet of each of these over the past decade.<sup>21</sup>

a. Health—While many world nations had previously increased life expectancy at birth, the lack of access to health services and basic sanitation has been aggravated, especially in Africa, by the advent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the continued devastation by malaria, TB, and other highly infectious diseases. Malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS are now identified by the World Health Organization as "diseases of poverty."

b. Education—Adult literacy has grown during the 1990s, yet millions of adults in Africa remain illiterate and increasing numbers of children lack access to primary and secondary schools.

c. Food and Nutrition—Global food production per capita, with increased supplies for calorie and protein intake, is also on the rise. Yet in much of Africa food consumption has declined, leaving a substantial base of malnourished Africans.

d. Income and Poverty—The gap between the richest and the poorest worldwide has increased with the richest fifth of the world holding seventy-four times the wealth of the poorest fifth. The gap is echoed in Africa and elsewhere for the many who live on less than a dollar a day, unable to meet basic consumption requirements.

e. Women—Some levels of education for women have increased along with a rise in the economic activity of women. Still African women, most often the chief producers of economic goods and wealth, have lower educational opportunities and lower survival rates than males, suffering at the same time high levels of abuse.

f. Children—The youngest sector of the population suffers each time there is war, economic distress, and degradation of health. Infant mortality has been reduced overall with increased available immunization, yet child labor, as well as the recruitment and enslavement of child soldiers, plagues the life of many children. With the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we are warned of the creation of 20-30 million orphans in the next ten years.

g. Environment—Pollution in many regions of the world has been reduced although such does not seem to be the case in continental Africa. It is subject to the increased exploitation of forests and water resources, with death to Africans attributable to pollution, deprivation of resources, and especially a lack of clean water.

h. Human Security—While more of the world's population lives in relatively pluralistic and democratic regimes than previously, there remain regions of intense conflict, as in Africa, with the combined number of 12 million people internally displaced or refugees.

## 2. Governance and Economics

Almost half the population of Africa lives on less than \$0.65 a day. Current purchasing power is decreasing, and the number of poor persons is steadily increasing. Poverty builds on and propagates itself especially in the rural areas, although, increasingly, signs of extreme poverty are visible among urban dwellers as well. Children fall to the lowest level and suffer the most from poverty. Mortality rates and education levels show Africa to be behind the rest of the world. Africa also has the world's highest income inequality.

The World Bank proposes several strategies for reducing poverty.<sup>22</sup> It speaks of increasing the growth rates of African economies by more than an unlikely 7 percent. Also, it refers to a need to attack the sources of persistent inequality by addressing the distribution of income; that is, by targeting specific regions and populations for assistance. Examples would be building a stable, sure rural infrastructure, and creating jobs.

Clearly it is time for the invention of new models for governance and economic delivery. In the 1960s, the African elite tended to dominate the political landscape, assured of their ability in the independence era to create effective development organs by means of authoritarian control. As indicated above, by the 1970s economic decline was inhibiting forward movements for development. Today there is greater uncertainty produced by incipient poverty and questionable economic policies. Certainly high levels of government corruption have produced countermovements opposed to a positive ethos for development of any kind.

### 3. Reducing Aid-Dependence and Strengthening Partnerships

With the recognition of the insufficiencies of aid in the early 1970s, a new motto emerged: "Trade Not Aid." Today most specialists have become aware that trade itself, especially with the inauguration of the World Trade Organization and its accent on free trade, has not been able to assure poor countries of their fair share in the trading process. Indeed, trade tends to favor the more prosperous, in both private and public spheres. Trade may play an important role in global prosperity, but poorer nations only benefit when the conditions for trade are more equitable and fair for less-advantaged trading partners. "Trade with Aid" rightly practiced may move matters forward. Trade alone will not serve the full ends of economic progress in Africa.

Then what of foreign aid? In a comprehensive study of aid, Carol Lancaster<sup>23</sup> seeks to answer the question, "Why with so much aid has there been so little development in Africa?"

a. While foreign aid "can promote development, it does not guarantee development." So while aid is needed, at the same time steps should be taken to reduce aid dependence.

b. Large flows of aid do not necessarily retard development and factors (poor policy environments, weak institutions) other than the amount of aid may play a critical role in determining its effectiveness.

c. "Donor countries" may commit large sums to aid that have nothing to do with commitment to development.

d. The way aid is designated becomes key in recognizing three factors:

- The increasingly complex and experimental nature of aid intervention that is often based on complicated programming processes and little knowledge of local conditions or even assistance by locals receiving aid.

- Donor countries often designate aid more in line with their own domestic imperatives under the influence of specific agencies and/or private interest groups.

- The multiplicity of aid organizations, both public and private, often acting without consulting others or seeking coordination either at donor or recipient levels.

e. The donor nations have much to learn from each other about the limitations and powers attributed to aid-giving agencies and their relative success or failure in furthering the development process. Too often foreign aid is "donor driven" with consequent lack of "ownership" by receiving nations.

The U.S. government aid has been reduced to scandalously low levels. The challenges of development in Africa serve as a necessary imperative to try to get aid right, to keep trying without decreasing aid funding, which has taken a decidedly downward direction over the past two decades. Lancaster calls especially for the involvement of NGOs, including the churches, many of which have become constituent supporters of people-oriented aid activities. For her, aid-funding must increase through the form of aid support and must assure decreasing dependency on the part of recipients.

The role of the church in aid-funding is alluded to in the aid study cited above. Lessons learned, along with consultation of other studies and donor/recipient experiences, may well serve to direct church agencies both in assigning personnel to deserved places and in designating appropriate funding. This should be done in concert with partner churches and ecumenical bodies. The churches and their members have an important role to play in seeking to influence public opinion in support of newly learned approaches to aid programming and funding.

We are at a new day in partnership—"Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership." The 212th General Assembly (2000) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved the following statement:

We have, in recent decades, sought to be more intentional in our mission through a "partnership" based on mutual respect and sharing with churches around the world. We understand Partnership in Mission to be that disciplined approach that assumes the goals can best be accomplished by joining hands with those who share a common vision. Partnership in mission involves two or more organizations who agree to submit themselves to a common task or goal . . . and are brought together in mutual submission and commitment to serve the people and world God created (Phil. 2:5-11-24).<sup>24</sup>

We may well rejoice that we have moved to an era of partnership replacing paternalism, but we must also be aware that

when one partner has far more money than the other and when one seems far more needy than the other, questions of power and control arise. Even when all parties are sensitive to these realities it remains difficult to avoid the subtle maneuvering to communicate or to discover the priorities of those with resources: one party might say the right thing to sustain the relationship so as to secure the funds or press for the project.<sup>25</sup>

## **F. Civil Society and the Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in African Development Process**

Much attention has been focused on the role of civil society in relation to the whole development process. Accent is now being placed on the way general society, through its more autonomous institutions and networks, may build a strengthened underpinning both for the advance of governance and for economic progress. Peter Lewis<sup>26</sup> defines civil society as a "novel paradigm" which combines an array of separate and discretionary interests, individuals, associations, churches, market mechanisms—all of which develop and express themselves dynamically through free association. These organizations and interests may be encouraged from above or organize themselves in contrast to the state and yet at the same time engage the state in setting "the boundaries of public power." Here, "State and civil society are engaged in a dialogue at arm's length."

Julie Fisher, in her Kettering Foundation-sponsored study, *Nongovernments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World*,<sup>27</sup> points to the many forms of civil society and the multiple manifestations of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the creation of "social capital," important alongside market and public capital—a third societal force in modern governance and economic development. While Africa has not as yet found itself far down the road in the growth of civil society, still there are amazing numbers of NGOs in some countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe. In this latter instance, however, the presence of many NGOs (especially numerous foreign NGOs) has not yet assured a more open society.

In her study, Fisher includes the churches among the many kinds of community-based efforts, basically NGOs in form and substance, and points to the role church-based organizations have played in many societies—often alongside other NGOs. Christopher Clapham in his work points to the pre-eminent position of mission societies, later indigenized, but continuing to draw on foreign resources and personnel, yet at the same time promoting early movements for independence and later efforts for democratization.<sup>28</sup>

The case for church actions benefiting the growth of civil society may further illustrate that while the literature tends to favor the role of NGOs in shifting power arrangements they do not in all cases build the foundations for a more mature civil society. In some situations of intense combat, tantamount to genocidal strife, faith community action, nonaction, or division may have aggravated levels of hostility, and this has led to the destruction of the social fabric and the foundations for growing civil society. Perhaps more might be done to help the churches play a more creative role in cultivating civil society.

In a few countries, the church has contributed significantly to the possibility of conflict resolution. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission points to a positive role, where the church through its various actions has promoted nation building in post-apartheid South Africa. In Mozambique, too, the religious community is recognized for its contribution to peace and for working successfully with others to build postwar reconciliation. Also, in Southern Sudan, the New Sudan Council of Churches is building foundations for peace through a People-to-People peace process.

## **G. Reversing Some Images of the Church in Africa**

Africans have a distinctively different worldview from people in Europe and North America.<sup>29</sup> As children of the Enlightenment, we assume a conflict between science and religion, with science understood as dealing with facts and religion being a matter of opinion, one opinion being as good as any other. In Western understandings of reality, science always trumps religion. In Africa (as well as Asia and Latin America) reality is understood quite differently. Yet the Western captivity of theology continues. If we scratch just below the surface of Western thinking, we find that the African worldview is simply dismissed as primitive and premodern. In reality, as Andrew Walls has noted, the non-Western church is much closer to the situation of the early church than the West.<sup>30</sup>

Theology is done very differently in Africa than in the West. The Western academy focuses on the diminishing remnants of Christendom with its attention to the ". . . inward-focused, intellectual, and pastoral agenda rather than the outward-looking evangelistic and mission agenda . . ." of the African church.<sup>31</sup> Yet, as Andrew Walls proposes, the future of Christian theology is in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We in the West must reorient our self-understanding, acknowledging that we are on the margins of the world Christian movement. The two-thirds (fast becoming the four-fifths) world is leading the parade.

Another image to be reversed in the American mind is our assumptions about the normative church for the future. Sub-Saharan African Christianity was initiated largely from Europe and North America, but we quickly forget a major part of that story today: the Africa-initiated churches (AICs). These are from beyond the colonial dominance that lamentably feeds a present-day reluctance of non-Western people to associate with a "foreign religion." Consequently, the emergence of the AICs represents, ". . . a movement of such momentous significance that it can truly be called an African Reformation."<sup>32</sup> This phenomenon accounts for more than 200 million believers who have self-consciously rejected a Western understanding of the church and theology.

A characteristic of the AICs is their Pentecostal type of expression and their evangelizing urgency. While the African embrace of the Holy Spirit is not derived from Western tradition, it does represent the fastest-growing segment of the world Christian movement. Its appeal responds to a spiritual hunger that deals with the whole person and includes dreams, visions, and healing. These churches often emphasize the gifts of women in leadership.

These are just a few of the surprises about contemporary Christianity in Africa that await the Western church. We must take account of these new realities and move beyond condescending attitudes, policies, and practices. Africa (along with Asia and Latin America) may represent the best resource for the post-Christian situation found in the West today. This is a dramatic reversal of the image of the church in Africa formed in the West during the previous century.

## **H. The Role of the PC(USA) with Churches in Africa**

The General Assembly has defined the vision for the PC(USA) relationships with the churches of Africa as that of "partnership." That clearly means that we do not call the shots, but it is also important to acknowledge that we cannot pretend that we have no power in this relationship. Partnership assumes that both parties have something to contribute. The PC(USA) still has much to learn about identifying needs that can be met by the churches of Africa.

The PC(USA) cannot deny that wealth and other resources of our church give us great influence. If a partner church requests financial or personnel support for an initiative that it has determined to be important, we have the power of our decision to participate or not. It is dishonest for us to profess a lack of responsibility or the resources. The following are priorities to which the PC(USA) should give special attention:

1. Emergency relief for natural and human disasters.
2. Support for peace and conflict resolution.
3. Efforts to develop infrastructure for the long term well-being of civil society.
4. Leadership development, especially in education, evangelism, and health.

## **I. A Proposed Agenda for Churches in Partnership**

During colonial times African churches were forerunners in the movement for the independence of both church and state. The churches of Africa, alongside other NGOs, have played and can play a significant role for fresh approaches to governance and development with benefit to those in poverty. In this era, with the impressive growth of faith communities in Africa, the same hope that nurtures spiritual growth reveals how new hope may be sustained for social and economic change. It is to be hoped that the millions of Christians who sing and pray about their faith in the sovereign God, will claim their role as God's people working for a just and peaceful society. Faith's journey with Africans is a pilgrimage of hope.

Partners should consult before establishing a common agenda for action. It is essential for the PC(USA) to learn from its African church partners their perception of a comprehensive and cohesive action plan in support of more creative roles in building the foundation for a strong civil society.

The 208th General Assembly (1996) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved the policy statement *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, which sought to address "international issues in the economic structure by calling for just and sustainable human development." Several chapters in that report call for sufficient production and consumption, full respect for all human rights, just and effective governance, universal and adequate education, population stability, environmental sustainability and food sufficiency, ethical universality with cultural and religious diversity, dismantling instruments that promote warfare while building processes for peace, equitable debt relief, just and sustainable international trade, and more and better development assistance.

This PC(USA) 1996 policy statement seeks to provide a guide for study, dialogue, and action, and it calls for a new way of life for members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Much remains to be done to move toward truly just and sustainable development in Africa. The following are the main principles enunciated in the 1996 resolution:

1. The satisfaction of basic needs is indispensable for human development. Sufficiency for all requires that poverty be eradicated and that the affluent live more frugally.
2. Human rights are essential to the expression of human dignity and are fundamental to the quest for human development.
3. Public participation of all persons in the decisions that affect their lives and well-being is a fundamental human right.
4. Human life and well-being depend on the flourishing of other life and on the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained.



5. Authentic human development does not come in a single fixed pattern. There are differences in cultural and worship practices that express the same universal values of justice, integrity of the person, solidarity, and sustainability.

6. The repayment of debts and interest at the expense of the basics of life raises serious questions of justice. The burden of debts must be shared equitably in ways that reduce poverty, protect the environment, and avoid perverse incentives in the future.

7. The international trading system must incorporate the basic norms of social justice and environmental sustainability rather than depend solely on the norms and outcomes of free trade.

8. The purpose of development assistance is to equip people and communities through financial and technical means to implement their own plans for just and sustainable development."<sup>33</sup>

This "Resolution on Africa" joins the 1996 policy statement "Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development" in its clear call for a "renewal of hope." There is nothing here that supersedes the conclusions of the 1996 policy statement. This report seeks to amplify certain points while proposing specific actions that relate to Africa with information gathered since the 208th General Assembly (1996) approved its policy statement, which concludes with this affirmation:

Justice, community, and sustainability are too often overwhelmed by the greed, pride, and carelessness of the powerful, or by the relentless dynamics of systems and institutions dominated by other values . . . we lift them up because, as biblical people, we cannot do otherwise, and because they show the way to go. They light the path of adventurous faithfulness to the God who judges and restores, commands and forgives, makes new and gives hope.<sup>34</sup>

The church today joins the development debate at a time when "specialists" do not agree about proper approaches to world poverty, specifically in Africa, nor with plans for meeting the needs of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). Some economists believe strongly that economic growth should be the principal engine to spur poverty reduction, while others point to a primary need to relieve poverty by redistributive taxes<sup>35</sup> and spending policies. The World Bank staff majority accents economic growth with limited emphasis on poverty reduction. A minority in the bank appears to have lost the battle for a heightened accent on poverty reduction.<sup>36</sup> Recent meetings of the world's leading economic powers plus Russia have been criticized for failure to give sufficient attention to global poverty and failure to take action for debt relief.

Churches may not be able to arbitrate a way around these different accents, often reduced to specialized and highly technical economic arguments. Nevertheless, churches may agree that whatever the approach, whatever the policy directives set forth to address African needs, the poor and dispossessed deserve primary attention in the global action agenda.

## **J. Some Concluding Comments**

This report has presented many factors that underline the state of political, economic, and social development in Africa. Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, reminds us that ultimately the future of Africa rests in African hands. He is quoted as saying,

Africa is beyond bemoaning its past for its problems. The task of undoing the past is ours, with the support of those willing to join us in a continental renewal. We have a new generation of leaders who know we must take responsibility for our own destiny, that we will uplift ourselves only by our own efforts in partnership with those who wish us well.

Christians in Africa sing and pray every day for the kingdom of God. We can do no less than join them—and in so doing fortify and renew our faith by sharing the pilgrimage of God's people everywhere who seek justice, peace, and freedom. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins African church partners in working for the liberation of all people worldwide.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) submits this report to the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for resolute action. When approved by the General Assembly, the document should inform and direct the PC(USA)'s Ministries Divisions and serve as a primer for each congregation so that all may be united in a continuing faith journey with Africans.

## Endnotes

1. Max Warren, *Partnership: The Study of an Idea* (London, 1956).
2. Johannes K. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978).
3. Letty Russell, *Growth in Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981).
4. Max Warren, *Partnership: The Study of an Idea* (London, 1956).
5. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary recently sponsored lectures with the theme: "From Tertullian to Tutu: Africa in Christian History," delivered by Andrew Walls, former director of the University of Edinburgh's Center for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World.
6. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 45. The first Portuguese ships landed off the coast of Congo in 1483.
7. Ibid. p. 71.
8. D. T. Niles, former General Secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference.
9. Chinua Achebe, *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 18.
10. Bible translations now in 2,233 languages worldwide help preserve many disappearing languages.
11. These six areas now contain some 3,221,400,000 people.
12. *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, April 2000), p. 245.
13. See United Nations, Human Development Report 2000. Much material that follows is from the United Nations Development Programme report. For statistics covering each area, see the Human Development Index chart in Appendix C.

14. See United Nations AIDS  
[http://www.unaids.org/worldaidsday/2002/press/factsheets/FSAfrica\\_en.doc](http://www.unaids.org/worldaidsday/2002/press/factsheets/FSAfrica_en.doc)
15. *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, April 2000), 105.
16. Ibid. p.105.
17. Ibid. p. 24.
18. *Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 131-32, 643-42.
19. Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 181.
20. *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, April 2000), pp. x, 2-5.
21. Ibid. pp. 103-31.
22. *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, D.C.: The Word Bank, April 2000), pp. 99-102.
23. Carol Lancaster, *Aid to Africa: So Much to Do, So Little Done* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999). A study sponsored by the Century Foundation.
24. This statement followed a year-long study by the Worldwide Ministries Division. It was approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Long Beach, California, (*Minutes*, 2000, Part I, pp. 35-36, 229-30).
25. Leon Spencer, "AIDS in Africa," *Shalom Papers: A Journal of Theology and Public Policy II*, no. 3 (summer 2000), p. 31. World Development Report 2000/2001, p. 194 affirms the dual roles of "ownership and partnership"—the latter having two parts—"The first is partnership between recipient governments and citizens. . . The second is partnership between government and donors. . . ." One need only replace the names—between churches and members and churches and churches—giving and receiving mutually. The World Bank advocates that any funding by donors not become a way by which recipients defer necessary funding for their own church units, for example seminaries, because they receive external funding. The bank also advocates partnership between donors also in relationship to recipients, a kind of multilateral partnership.
26. Peter Lewis, ed., *Africa: Dilemmas of Development and Change* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1998), pp. 137-54.
27. Julie Fisher, *Nongovernments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1998).
28. Christopher Clapham, Ibid. pp. 263-64.
29. Lamin Sanneh, *Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Process Question*, 1993.
30. Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in African Culture*, 1990.
31. Wilbert R. Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from Non-Western Church," IBMR, July 2001, p. 98.

32. Allan H. Anderson, *Types and Butterflies: African Initiated Churches and European Butterflies*, Ibid. p. 107.

33. *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*, a policy statement developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and approved by the 208th General Assembly (1996) (Minutes, 1996, Part I, pp. 107-15, 524-87.

34. Ibid. p. 577.

35. *The New Internationalist*, January-February 2000, pp. 19-20, reports the Tobin tax plan, approved by the Canadian Parliament, which proposes a small worldwide tariff levied on foreign exchange transactions to stabilize exchange rates earning approximately \$159-300 billion each year, thereby reducing speculative currency transactions and creating market stability to help wipe out the worst forms of poverty and environmental destruction.

36. *Guardian Weekly*, June 22-28, 2000, p. 14.

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**Note:** Other publications, journals, and newspapers consulted frequently include: *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Nation*, *The Guardian Weekly*, *The Economist*, *New Internationalist*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *L'Express*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Church & Society*, as well as various local newspapers and electronic Internet sources on Africa.

## Appendix B List of PC(USA) African Partnerships

### Botswana:

- Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches (SAARC). Gaborone, Botswana

### Cameroon:

- Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise, Yaounde, Cameroun
- Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. Buea Southwest, Province, Cameroon
- FEMEC, Yaounde, Cameroun

### Democratic Republic of Congo:

- Presbyterian Community of Congo. Kananga, Democratic Republic of Congo Eglise du Christ au Congo
- Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (CPK). Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

### Equatorial Guinea:

- Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana de Guinea Ecuatorial. Bata, Equatorial Guinea

### Ethiopia:

- Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Bethel Synods Office. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Western Wollega Synod. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### Ghana:

- Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Accra, Ghana
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Ho, Volta Region, Ghana
- Christian Council of Ghana. Accra. Ghana

### Kenya:

- National Council of Churches of Kenya. Nairobi, Kenya
- All Africa Conference of Churches. Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya
- Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Nairobi, Kenya
- CORAT (Christian Organizations Research Advisory Trust). Nairobi Kenya
- PROCMURA (Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa). Nairobi, Kenya

### Lesotho:

- Christian Council of Lesotho. Maseru, Lesotho
- Lesotho Evangelical Church, Maseru, Lesotho

### Liberia:

- Christian Council of Liberia

### Madagascar:

- Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. Antananarivo, Madagascar

Malawi:

- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Blantyre, Malawi
- Blantyre Synod
  - Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Mzuzu, Malawi
  - Livingstonia Synod
  - Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Nkhoma, Malawi
- Nkhoma Synod
  - Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Lilongwe, Malawi
  - General Synod
  - Malawi Council of Churches. Lilongwe, Malawi

Mauritius:

- Presbyterian Church of Mauritius. Republic de Maurice

Mozambique:

- Presbyterian Church of Mozambique. Maputo, Mozambique
- Christian Council of Mozambique. Maputo, Mozambique

Niger:

- Eglise Evangelique de la Republic du Niger, Niamey, Niger

Nigeria:

- Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. Aba, Abia State, Nigeria
- Nigeria Christian Council. Lagos, Nigeria

Rwanda:

- Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda
- Christian Council of Rwanda. Kigali, Rwanda

Sierra Leone:

- Council of Churches of Sierra Leone

South Africa:

- South African Council of Churches (SACC). Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa. Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa
- Presbyterian Church of Africa. Umlazi, Republic of South Africa
- The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa
- Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. Saldanha, Republic of South Africa

Sudan:

- Presbyterian Church of the Sudan. Khartoum, Sudan
- Sudan Council of Churches. Khartoum, Sudan
- Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church. Khartoum, Sudan
- ACROSS (Association of Christian Resource Organizations Serving Sudan), Nairobi Kenya
- New Sudan Council of Churches, Nairobi, Kenya

Swaziland:

- Council of Swaziland Churches. Manzini, Swaziland

Tanzania:

- Christian Council of Tanzania. Dodoma, Tanzania



Togo:

- Eglise Evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo

Zambia:

- United Church of Zambia. Lusaka, Zambia
- Christian Council of Zambia. Lusaka, Zambia

Zimbabwe:

- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). Harare, Zimbabwe
- Synod of Harare
- Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Harare, Zimbabwe
- The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Harare, Zimbabwe
- Presbytery of Zimbabwe

## Appendix C

### Human Development Index

from the United Nations Human Development Report 2001

The HDI measures a country's achievements in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income.

HDI Rank High Human Development	HDI Rank Medium Human Development	HDI Rank Low Human Development
1. Norway	49. Trinidad and Tobago	89. Tunisia
2. Australia	50. Latvia	90. Iran, Islamic Republic of
3. Canada	51. Mexico	91. Cape Verde
4. Sweden	52. Panama	92. Kyrgyzstan
5. Belgium	53. Belarus	93. Guyana
6. United States	54. Belize	94. South Africa
7. Iceland	55. Russian Federation	95. El Salvador
8. Netherlands	56. Malaysia	96. Samoa (Western)
9. Japan	57. Bulgaria	97. Syrian Arab Republic
10. Finland	58. Romania	98. Moldova, Republic of
11. Switzerland	59. Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	99. Uzbekistan
12. Luxembourg	60. Macedonia, TFYR	100. Algeria
13. France	61. Venezuela	101. Viet Nam
14. United Kingdom	62. Columbia	102. Indonesia
15. Denmark	63. Mauritius	103. Tajikistan
16. Austria	64. Suriname	104. Bolivia
17. Germany	65. Lebanon	105. Egypt
18. Ireland	66. Thailand	106. Nicaragua
19. New Zealand	67. Fiji	107. Honduras
20. Italy	68. Saudi Arabia	108. Guatemala
21. Spain	69. Brazil	109. Gabon
22. Israel	70. Philippines	110. Equatorial Guinea
23. Greece	71. Oman	111. Namibia
24. Hong Kong, China (SAR)	72. Armenia	112. Morocco
25. Cyprus	73. Peru	113. Swaziland
26. Singapore	74. Ukraine	114. Botswana
27. Korea, Republic of	75. Kazakhstan	115. India
28. Portugal	76. Georgia	116. Mongolia
29. Slovenia	77. Maldives	117. Zimbabwe
30. Malta	78. Jamaica	118. Myanmar
31. Barbados	79. Azerbaijan	119. Ghana
32. Brunei Darussalam	80. Paraguay	120. Lesotho
33. Czech Republic	81. Sri Lanka	121. Cambodia
34. Argentina	82. Turkey	122. Papua New Guinea
35. Slovakia	83. Turkmenistan	123. Kenya
36. Hungary	84. Ecuador	124. Comoros
37. Uruguay	85. Albania	125. Cameroon
38. Poland	86. Dominican Republic	126. Congo
39. Chile	87. China	
40. Bahrain	90. Jordan	
41. Costa Rica		
42. Bahamas		
43. Kuwait		
44. Estonia		
45. United Arab Emirates		
46. Croatia		
47. Lithuania		
48. Qatar		
		127. Parkistan
		128. Togo
		129. Nepal
		130. Bhutan
		131. Lao People's Republic
		132. Bangladesh
		133. Yemen
		134. Haiti
		135. Madagascar
		136. Nigeria
		137. Djibouti
		138. Sudan
		139. Mauritania
		140. Tanzania, United Republic of
		141. Uganda
		142. Congo, Dem. Republic of
		143. Zambia
		144. Côte d' Ivoire
		145. Senegal
		146. Angola
		147. Benin
		148. Eritea
		149. Gambia
		150. Guinea
		151. Malawi
		152. Rwanda
		153. Mali
		154. Central African Republic
		155. Chad
		156. Guinea-Bissau
		157. Mozambique
		158. Ethiopia
		159. Burkina Faso
		160. Burundi
		161. Niger
		162. Sierra Leone



## Recommendations

The 215th General Assembly (2003) approved the following:

*AFRICA! Birthplace of humankind. Cradle of brilliant civilizations, from Alexandria to Great Zimbabwe, from Axum to Kumasi. Giver of incalculable gifts to Western culture in general and to us in the United States, in particular. Any consideration of Africa must begin with the recognition of the contributions this great continent has made to America. In our music, art, literature, medicine, culinary habits, philosophy, theology, and worship, we see and celebrate the many gifts we have received from Africa.*

On the negative side of our history, we are the recipients of the far more precious gift, albeit unwillingly given, of Africa's human resources—men, women, and children brought to North America and held in bondage to build our nations and create the world's wealthiest economy. With the forcible extraction of human beings from Africa came the ruthless exploitation of one of the greatest stores of natural resources in history.

So we begin our consideration of Africa with a word of gratitude and humility for the many ways that Africa and her children have enriched the United States. Let us open ourselves to Africa afresh, so that we may be both spiritually and culturally enriched in our encounter with this great continent and its people, sensitive to the many ways we can be in partnership with African sisters and brothers in the struggle for peace, justice, and the wholeness that is God's will for all people.

Therefore, the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does the following:

A. Approves the "Resolution on Africa" developed in partnership with the Africa Offices of the Worldwide Ministries Division.

B. Receives the background rationale and appendixes (to be included in the Minutes).

C. Directs the Office of the General Assembly to publish the entire report, "Resolution on Africa," in printed format with background, appendixes, and with a related study/action guide and place the document as a whole on the PC(USA)'s Web site—[www.pcusa.org/oga/](http://www.pcusa.org/oga/).

D. Directs the Stated Clerk to distribute the entire printed report to sessions, middle governing bodies and their resource centers, the libraries of the theological seminaries, and appropriate ecumenical networks.

E. Approves the following recommendations:

### 1. General Recommendations

a. Encourage Presbyterians to celebrate the way that the Holy Spirit has enlivened the evangelistic spreading of the Gospel in Africa, and to learn from the theological insights of African Christians.

b. Encourage congregations, presbyteries, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to establish new, and to strengthen existing partnerships with African churches, parachurch organizations, and mission agencies (in consultation with the Worldwide Ministries Division), and ecumenical bodies in sharing the Gospel and doing mission together.

c. Urge individual Presbyterians, congregations, synods, and entities of the General Assembly to study this document and become more informed and knowledgeable about Africa, its problems, challenges, and opportunities.

d. Invite Presbyterians to learn more of the rich history of this church's mission engagement in Africa.

e. Direct the General Assembly Council, through Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD), to seek funds for and produce a study guide and bibliography in order to assist Presbyterians and others in their study of Africa.

f. Direct the General Assembly Council, through Congregational Ministries Division (CMD) and Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD), to seek funding for and create companion resources to the "Hope for a Global Future: Towards Just and Sustainable Human Development" policy statement as it focuses on development in Africa.

## 2. Mission Through Personnel Recommendations

a. Call on the General Assembly Council, through WMD, and governing bodies of the PC(USA) to strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with African partners that will enable both African and American mission personnel to give direct short, intermediate, and long-term service in areas of health, education, evangelism, relief and development, and church administration.

b. Urge entities of the General Assembly and its governing bodies to work individually and ecumenically to provide financial resources to self-help, development and micro-enterprise projects, and programs in Africa. Particular emphasis should be placed on sub-Saharan Africa and on women.

## 3. Health Ministries Recommendations

a. Reaffirm the action of the 213th General Assembly (2001) in approving the report on "Women and AIDS: A Global Crisis" developed by the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) in consultation with the Presbyterian United Nations Office and the AIDS Task Team of the Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD) (Minutes, 2001, Part I, pp. 54, 335-43).

b. Commissioners to this 215th General Assembly (2003) commit ourselves to mission work that addresses prevention, treatment, and support of people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. This commitment will include seeking funding and encouraging the world ecumenical bodies of which it is a part to seek funding for programs and other material resources (including mission personnel) to address this pandemic.

c. Direct the General Assembly Council, through the WMD International Health Ministries Office, and encourage PC(USA) health-related organizations to continue working with partner churches and institutions in developing mechanisms and resources to address Africa's endemic diseases.

d. Direct the General Assembly Council, through the Worldwide Ministries Division, to continue its work with other faith-based and secular health organizations, domestic and international, that share a similar goal in the massive effort to address major health issues facing Africa: the "diseases of poverty"—malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS—as well as health infrastructure and service delivery.

e. Urge members of the PC(USA) and appropriate programs of the General Assembly (e.g., the Presbyterian Washington Office, the Presbyterian United Nations Office, and International Health Ministries Office) to call for increased public funding that addresses diseases of poverty, particularly HIV/AIDS.

f. That the PC(USA) ask members and congregations to engage in hands-on mission projects that provide care for people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. This can be done by each congregation or a cluster of congregations preparing one AIDS home-based care kit (as being sponsored by the Worldwide Ministries Division, International Health Ministries area) for use by PC(USA) and partner church hospitals and home-care programs in Africa.

#### 4. Education Ministries Recommendations

a. Urge the General Assembly Council, through the Ministries Divisions, and entities of the General Assembly, local congregations, and middle governing bodies to assist Africa partners in developing new church-sponsored educational programs, and strengthening existing ones, equipping Christian schools, and providing Christian education opportunities in secular schools.

b. Request that the General Assembly Council continue to seek to increase financial support to the leadership development component of the church's global education ministry, with particular attention to the training and equipping of pastors, evangelists, and the laity for continued leadership in the church and in civil society in Africa.

c. Direct the General Assembly Council, through the Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD), to seek resources to provide more scholarships for African students wishing to do advanced degree studies and for increased funding for physical facilities of partner educational institutions on the continent.

#### 5. Ecumenical Partnerships Recommendations

a. Direct the General Assembly Council, through the WMD, to enhance its work with partner churches in Africa in organizing bilateral and multilateral programs that enable skilled persons from an African church to provide short and intermediate term service to sister churches.

b. Call on the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the All Africa Conference of Churches to increase their efforts to seek justice and secure human rights for women in all segments of the church and in civil society.

c. Commend the document "A Vision for Children and the Church" to all governing bodies of the PC(USA) and to partner churches for study and action.

#### 6. Human Rights Recommendations

a. Affirm the participation of congregations, presbyteries, synods, General Assembly entities, and individual Presbyterians in ecumenical efforts that encourage and further human rights in Africa; particularly those efforts on behalf of women, children, and disempowered ethnic communities.

b. Call upon Presbyterians to advocate boldly for more just and extensive application of human rights principles and pronouncements by governments, nongovernmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, and religious institutions globally and in Africa.

c. Urge the U.S. government to take a stronger and more active role in addressing the tragic situation in Sudan by directing the Stated Clerk to communicate the church's position on the Sudanese conflict to the president of the United States, the secretary of state, and the special envoy to Sudan.

d. Request the General Assembly Council, through the WMD, to work closely with Sudanese church partners in advocating for just allocation of oil revenues, cessation of the war, and an end to the persecution of Christians, particularly those in southern Sudan.

e. Request the General Assembly Council, through the Ministries Divisions, and entities of the General Assembly to work together and coordinate their support of training programs in and among African communities and churches on conflict resolution, equitable distribution of resources, reconciliation, and consensus-building around issues of good governance.

f. Urge PC(USA) partners in Africa to press for increased levels of transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility in both church and government structures.

## 7. Trade Recommendations

a. Reaffirm the commitment of the 210th and 211th General Assemblies (1998 and 1999) of the PC(USA) to the Jubilee Struggle for Peace and Justice, specifically as it focuses on debt reduction and cancellation (Minutes, 1998, Part I, pp. 78, 675-76; and Minutes, 1999, Part I, p. 726).

b. Direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate entities of the General Assembly Council to express to the U.S. government, the business community, and our world trading partners our continued and strong advocacy for fair trade policies and the restoration of global assistance programs (aid). Primary goals of this advocacy are poverty reduction and just and equitable development.

c. Direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate entities of the General Assembly Council to urge the U.S. government to support by every means the restriction of the arms trade. Particular emphasis should be placed on the proliferation of small arms.

d. Direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate entities of the General Assembly Council to urge the U.S. government to ratify the Land Mines Treaty.

e. Direct the Stated Clerk and appropriate entities of the General Assembly Council to urge the U.S. government to ensure that no oil, diamonds, or other natural resources and commodities are used to fund conflicts around Africa and the world, and also to ensure that such items and commodities so used are prohibited from entering U.S. markets.

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