



Africa

Can a church planting effort start with an egg?

by Glenn Schwartz

I was privileged to participate in a seminar some time ago in Lomé, Togo. One of those in attendance from a neighboring country told the following story. He said that the church of which he is a part decided to launch a campaign to evangelize a number of villages in an area that they identified as needing a Gospel witness. They knew the cost would be high, so they drew up a budget. The amount they felt would be required in CFA francs was the equivalent of US\$100,000.

The one telling the story said he felt that was an unrealistic amount for a church of their size, so he told the other leaders that he did not believe such a goal could be reached. However, one of the other leaders suggested that they invite the members to give what they can. They said, "If someone can bring an egg, they should bring it. If they can bring a chicken, they should bring it. If they can bring a cow, they should bring it." After all, in 2 Corinthians 8:12 the Apostle Paul says the gift should be according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

The effort to raise funds was launched and to the surprise of many, the entire goal of US\$100,000 was reached with some to spare. In fact, they had enough over and above the goal to purchase a van for the project! The evangelistic outreach was

launched, and when it was completed, thirty-three new congregations were started!

Those who try to justify Western funding for cross-cultural church planting in places such as this most likely do not understand the power of local creativity and local resources. Westerners just don't think of beginning with an egg. How many times do we as outsiders rationalize that since we have the funds, we are obligated to give regardless of the impact on those we are trying to help. God blessed the efforts of those in this West African country, and they were rewarded with the blessing of a goal accomplished. Consider the harm that is done when local participation is overlooked or even spurned in favor of the outsiders need just to give. And that need to give—on the part of outsiders—is what results in donor-driven missiology, hardly the best kind. 🌐

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*For further information about the issues of sustainability see the World Mission Associates website www.wmausa.org. Also Glenn's book, *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*, is available on that web site. Special bulk pricing is available.*