

# A Word for the Global Church from Africa

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Last year, while in Thailand, I was particularly discouraged. I had a cold, had just flown 18 hours and was worn down. After adjusting, I began to do what I do at all conferences: connect with people—Often with people I know at some depth. But this time, there was a new brother. He had grown up in an African country and been sent as a global worker to a large country in Asia. He had been there for 3-4 years—it was his 2nd cross-cultural field of service, and likely his 5th or 6th language—having grown up in Africa.

Since the event was focused on his Asian country, I noticed this man talking with the others in their language with great expression. They listened carefully with interest! I asked another leader how his language was coming along. They said that while his vocabulary was basic, his grammar and pronunciation was excellent. He could tell stories in a way that engaged people. Those who spoke the language loved to listen to him and were honored that he spoke so well. And, that was true back in his own country—where he works with students near a university campus. Beyond language skills, I've found out that he is a man of insight with a passion to tell of Christ and his love.

Since then, I've tracked with him. He is now back in Africa for a home assignment and a break. But he is sharing vision and his burden for the

lost with the church back home. While there are more workers going out from Africa, it is rare to find them in Asia, so I'm sure he is in great demand as a speaker—if for no other reason than it is interesting to hear him.

But, in a prayer email he sent several weeks ago, he expressed great frustration with the level of vision from some of the churches in one area back in his home country. One night he couldn't sleep. So he woke a friend and went to the graves of workers who had pioneered the gospel and established churches in the area where he was. He wrote his burden and prayer — which reminded me of the way I and others who mobilize feel at times. Here is one paragraph from his plea:<sup>1</sup>

*“Today erecting Church buildings is the top agenda of almost every local church in [this people group]. Erecting [an] office building is the top agenda. Erecting ... [a] Memorial Building is the top agenda. But, the gospel, outreach, and sending missionaries to the unreached people groups is not the top agenda. They misunderstand me, they say [I am] against the church building. No, that is wrong! I believe we need more infrastructures in [my country]. But any project that kills the gospel [or] that consumes all the resources, I oppose it in the name of Jesus! When they came up with a mega church design, I thought they would finish that and turn their attention to the gospel work, but it did not happen. They came up with primary and secondary school project. I still hoped that when they finish that, they would turn their attention to the gospel work but it did not happen—they came*

*up with building shops and guesthouse and so on. Now I realize that there is no end for this. It is just killing the gospel in a very subtle way.”*

We all know that churches can build and focus on the spread of the gospel. But since the church is people, the physical things like buildings can also be a huge distraction. They certainly are not required by the Scripture.

As I pondered how to share his reflections, I got another email from him. He shared that while one meeting with the top church leaders was delayed, they do have a vision for the unreached. He has been invited to share with many churches and gatherings in June within various church groups. They want to send ten missionaries a year from these churches — 50 in the next five years.

I have gained great encouragement from this brother and his wife. Would you pray with me for them and the others like them who come from very humble means but are wholly committed to the task and uniquely gifted to contribute in ways that someone like me never could.

Perhaps you have a similar story? If so, please go to [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org) look up this issue and post your comments under this article. We'd love to hear from you. 

<sup>1</sup> I have his permission, but I have removed names and places for security and to give no offense. Remember, English is not his first language.