

*Footprints*



## CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



## THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

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Footprints into Africa

## **THE CHURCH IN AFRICA**

### **Introduction**

The Lord Jesus before His ascension said;

*Acts 1: 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

### **I) North Africa**

After the day of Pentecost and Peter had preached his sermon, they took the gospel not to Europe, nor did they go to the rest of Asia. God wanted the gospel to go to Africa. So we read in Acts 8 of how God brought Philip and the treasurer of Ethiopia together. By God's grace the Ethiopian was converted, and he went back to his country in Africa, and the church began.

*Acts 8: 26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:*

*"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter  
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he opens not his mouth.*

*33 In his humiliation justice was denied him.*

*Who can describe his generation?*

*For his life is taken away from the earth."*

*34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*

There are two other important references to Africa:

*Acts 11: 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus.*

There were people from Cyrene

*Acts 18: 24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.*

He came from Alexandria. So God sent a missionary from Africa to preach the gospel in Corinth.

John Mark, the author of the second gospel, then went to Egypt, and started the work in Alexandria; and the church in Egypt began. A cobbler, Anianus, was converted under Mark, brought his family to Jesus, and the church began to grow. From Egypt the work then developed into Libya. And so by God's grace the gospel has been planted in Africa.

It was especially strong in Egypt, and they started a Theological school in Alexandria. Africa produced some of the greatest leaders in the early church; Augustine of Hippo, Tertullian, Athanasius, Cyprian, and others; all came out of Africa.

God had done an amazing work in Africa, so that by the year 600 North Africa was very strong Christian. At that time the Muslim movement swept across North Africa and the Middle-East, and very sadly the church was destroyed. Even today Islam is the main religion, and North Africa today, being part of the 10/40 Window is very hardened to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

After the Muslim invasions in the 7th century, there was very little missionary work across North Africa, until the year 1860 when some Roman Catholic missionaries went to Algeria, and into Tunisia. But the Protestant missionaries were slow to go.

The first was a man by the name of Edward Glenny, a wealthy business man from England, and he had a great longing for North Africa; and he sent missionaries to Libya, and into Morocco. One of those missionaries was a lady by the name of Lilian Trotter, and she started the first missionary society: the Algiers Missionary Band. That was followed by a missionary called John Anderson, who started the South Moroccan Band. But the work was difficult, and there were very few results.

In the early 1900's other missionary societies tried to work across North Africa: The Christian Brethren, The Southern Baptists; but they all found it very difficult. Later, with the World Wars and the emergence of radical Islamic movements, in many of the countries Christianity was banned. Most of the countries today across North Africa cannot go in as a missionary. Therefore North Africa today is part of the greatest needs for missionaries.

### **Conclusion**

God planned for the gospel to come first to Africa, it grew quickly, and it produced some of the greatest leaders. But, the church was swept away in the 7th century by the Muslims, and today work is very needed.

## **East Africa**

### **Introduction**

We have seen how the gospel reached into Ethiopia at a very early date;

*Acts 8: 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. 26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:*

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But, it took many years for the gospel to reach East Africa.

#### **I) Kenya**

Kenya used to be called British East Africa, and by the grace of God today, it is one of the most Christian countries in Africa.

Missionaries started there in 1844 when a German Lutheran Missionary, J.L. Kaph, was sent by the CMS. He started his work in Mombasa, and in 1846 he was joined by another missionary by the name of Johannes Rebmann. And the two of them reached inland from the coast, and more missionaries were sent by the CMS, because Kaph had to return home due to malaria.

In 1873 slavery was then abolished, and the CMS started a work in Zanzibar. God's gracious hand was on the early missionaries, and it grew quickly. In 1891 James Steward then went to Kenya, and worked mainly among the Kikuyu people. The work of these early missionaries was greatly blessed, and it grew quickly; so that by 1924, Kenya became a Christian nation.

Today all the missionary societies have handed over the leadership to the local people – and Kenya is a great success story.

#### **II) Tanzania**

Tanzania was established in 1964, as a result of the union of Tanganyika & Zanzibar. In 1864 Bishop Tozer moved the head-quarters of the Universities Mission away from Malawi to Zanzibar. As a result many missionaries flooded into Tanzania; mainly Lutheran and German missionaries. The largest church today is the Lutheran church.

#### **III) Uganda**

The man who opened up Uganda, was the explorer Henry M. Stanley. In 1875 he had a number of meetings with king Mutesa, of Uganda; and he was given permission to open up Uganda for missionaries. He sent a letter back to

America & England asking for missionaries; and a man named bishop James Huntington arrived – and sadly they killed him.

But, in 1878 God sent a man that laid the foundation for all the work in Uganda, Alexander McKay. He arrived, and for the next 20 years he laid the foundation for the gospel across Uganda. Today Uganda, by God's grace, is a very strong Christian country.

#### **IV) The Revival**

God again in His grace, caused a revival, called the East African Revival, to spread right across EA. It started in the year 1929 in Rwanda; where an Anglican dr./missionary, Dr. Wilson, together with a young man, Blasio Kigozi, together they preached across Rwanda, to Kenya, to Tanzania, and across into the Democratic republic of Congo. They preached repentance and many were converted. It spread up to the Sudan, and to parts of Ethiopia. As a result of this revival, 10's of 1000's of people were brought into the Kingdom. It came with the Mau-Mau uprising in the 1950's & 1960's, mainly in Kenya; and there was a determined effort to kill all missionaries.

#### **Conclusion**

East Africa is a great mission success story. The early missionaries arrived, and laid down strong foundations; and with the revival East Africa is very strongly Christian today.

## **West Africa**

### **Introduction**

Under the section of West-Africa we will cover the area south of the Sahara, from Senegal to the DRC.

#### **I) Gambia**

A German Lutheran missionary by the name of Joahim Dannefeldt arrived in 1654 as a chaplain, and later the work spread from there to what is known as Ghana. As a result of the missionary work, the first local Ghanaian minister to be ordained was in 1765

#### **II) Sierra Leone**

In the late 1790's Sierra Leone became the home for the slaves who were freed from England, many of whom were Christians. And it remained an important centre for Christian missions throughout West Africa, with most of the missionary work done by CMS (Church Missionary Society).

#### **III) Liberia**

The Baptist missionaries went there in 1882, and started the missionary work. Together with Ghana, the work of the Basel Missionary Society (BMS), established a strong base.

#### **IV) Nigeria**

Anglican and Methodist missionaries arrived in 1841, and the work was strongly founded for that vast country. The most famous missionary was Mary Slessor, who carried on the work to Calabar. Today Nigeria has a very strong Christian foundation.

#### **V) Central African Republic (CAR)**

In 1900 the missionaries from the above countries extended into the CAR. During this time a local missionary society called the Qwa Iboe Society did amazing work, especial in Nigeria and CAR

#### **VI) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

As a result of the work of Stanley and Livingstone and C.T. Studd; on that foundation God has developed the work throughout the Congo. In the mid-1900 more missionaries went to the Congo than anywhere else, but in 1960 as Africa was becoming independent, there was an uprising in the Congo by some people called the 'Simbas', and they carried out strategies to get rid of all the missionaries in the 1960's. Today on that foundation 1000's and 1000's of people have turned to Christ; but the great need is for training and equipping.

#### **VII) Albert Schweitzer**

Perhaps the most well-known of all missionaries to West Africa is Albert Schweitzer. He was an amazing man; he had a doctorate in music, he was a doctor of philosophy, medicine, theology; but he gave them all up to come to West Africa, and he built a hospital, and sought to reach the local people for Christ. He served from 1913-1963 and poured out his life for West Africa.

In 1958 there was a movement to combine all the churches together, called the All-Africa Conference of Churches in Ibadan (in Ghana). The desire was for churches to work together.

### **Conclusion**

The gospel has taken root in West Africa through the amazing work of the missionaries. Today many of these countries are nominally Christian countries; and the great need remains to keep on training, equipping, and encouraging the local people to do the work.

## **Southern Africa**

### **Introduction**

Over the last 20 years there has been a remarkable miracle happening. Before missionaries would come to Africa, from England or the Americas, but now there is this turn-around, and Africa is now sending missionaries into the world.

Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in Mozambique and Zimbabwe in the 16th century; and following on from that Southern Africa has been wonderfully reached for Christ.

#### **I) South Africa**

The first missionary to come to South Africa was George Schmidt who arrived in the Cape. He was sent by the Moravians in 1720. The work of the Moravians spread, and the first missionary station was called Genadendal. It became the base for missionary work in the future.

Schmidt was then followed by Johannes van der Kemp, and John Philip. In 1806 the Anglicans sent Robert Grey to South Africa, and he planted churches all over South Africa. From Genadendal, Robert Moffatt then established a mission station in Kurumann. Robert Moffatt's daughter Mary Moffatt married David Livingstone, and he set off to the north.

The Dutch Reformed churches were very powerful for missions during these years. Especially Andrew Murrey.

#### **II) Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)**

Attention was then drawn to the countries north of South Africa, mainly through the travels of David Livingstone, and the LMS established a mission station in Inyati in 1859. The work again blossomed in Zimbabwe, and today most of the country has been reached for Christ.

#### **III) Malawi**

Again, it was the work of Livingstone who started the work in Malawi. He preached in England and asked for volunteers to come. As a result, the Universities Mission to Central Africa was born (UMCA), and the Scottish church sent out missionaries; but tragically Bishop Fredrick Charles Mckenzi died very soon after arriving.

Strong mission centres were established in Blantyre, and from there it reached across the country. So that today, Malawi is perhaps the most Christian country in South Africa.

#### **IV) Zambia**

The work in Zambia was begun by the missionary F. Collard who came from Lesotho; and he started in the Copper Belt. Soon he was followed by the LMS, and the CMS, and the Free-Methodists, so that today that Zambia also is a nominally Christian country.

#### **V) Mozambique**

It was mainly the Roman Catholic priests who went in the 16th century to Mozambique, so that even today, there is a very strong Roman Catholic presence. But later in the 1800's Protestant missionaries arrived, and preached the gospel. Mozambique is however mainly a nominally Socialistic and Communistic country today.