

Plenary on Africa: Theme: Mission, Aid and Development in Africa: Going Beyond the Western Paradigm

Chair: Stan Chu Ilo

“Just give us the Money”: The Politics of Money and missions in East Africa

Mwenda Ntarangwi, PhD, Associate Professor of Anthropology, and African History at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Secretary General of the International Association of Christian Higher Education

A prominent Kenyan pastor who receives many international service/mission teams through his church once said that his biggest piece of advice to these, mostly North American, visitors is “please don’t say anything until the local people have spoken.” Why does he say this to them? Because, as he adds, “when the Americans speak, the conversation is over!” This presentation will explore the inherent power dynamics at play when Western missionaries/supporters provide monies and advice for projects in East Africa. It will focus on different local responses to projects that are shaped by agendas brought by those funding them and the negotiations and languages that are crafted into such responses. Using case studies and scholarly sources I will attempt to name and critique not only unintended outcomes of programs written without local input and buy-in but also address the need for funding agencies to be faithful stewards in their resources without trumping local processes and sensibilities. Finally, I will bring this together by seeking to ask “is the overwhelming culture of evidence and outcomes based programming corrosive or corrective for missions?” and “shouldn’t we just entrust our recipients with the money we seek to give for supporting missions and let them decide what to do with it?”

Mission, money and inequality in the South African context:

Rev Edwin Arrison, General Secretary, Kairos Southern Africa

In this presentation I will argue that despite the unique inequality context of South Africa (it is, by the Gini-coefficient measure, the most unequal society in the world today) it is also a deeply religious society, with more than 80% of South Africa identifying themselves as Christians and that the culture of *ubuntu* reinforces the Christian beliefs of compassion and sharing thereby

strengthening the mission of the church. By using various sources, I will use the examples of the last three Anglican Archbishops of Cape Town, (Desmond Tutu, Njongonkulu Ndungane and Thabo Makgoba), who can also be described as the de facto ecumenical leaders in South Africa during the term of their office, to show how they have combined the Christian faith and *ubuntu* to demonstrate that human dignity is integral to the mission of the church.

I will argue that they derive the confidence to work for justice for the poorest in Southern Africa from their experience of bringing apartheid to an end in South Africa and helping to be midwives of the new democracy in South Africa and that their work demonstrates that the Church in South Africa recognizes that central to the mission of the church (the enhancement of human dignity of all and the breaking-in of the kingdom of God) is the closing of the gap between the richest and poorest in South Africa.

Mission as Partnership: Promoting a More Collaborative Social Mission between Western and African Faith-Based Organizations

By Stan Chu Ilo, PhD,

Director of theological field education, Assistant Professor of Religion, Education and World Christianity, University of St Michael's College, University of Toronto, Canada

The paper will attempt to show why development aid and international humanitarian activities particular Christian (Faith-Based Organizations-FBOs) mission projects from the West to Africa are failing Africans and frustrating the objectives of donors in the West. The paper will argue that such failures are because some of the projects are driven by secondary motives and also fail to tap into local initiatives and indigenous knowledge, entrepreneurship, and technology needed for sustainable development practices and partnership. I will further make a distinction between humanitarian aid and development initiatives in Africa, and the differences between the reactionary approach to crisis management in Africa, and pro-active development initiatives. I will argue that it is quite comforting and even superficially gratifying to hear of such platitudes from Western mission groups like 'helping Africa', 'going to Africa to help', 'providing this or that help for Africa.' However, these episodic interventionist acts by individual Christians, groups or denomination, and FBOs have one main drawback: they are unsustainable and are crisis response to meeting the needs of particular African groups, but they cannot guarantee human security in Africa.

The paper will propose that what Africa needs today is respectful and reciprocal collaboration between Western FBOs and their African partners in social innovation which prioritizes the assets of Africa, and builds on the vast and untapped innovative potentials of emerging African youth, entrepreneurs, and locally midwifed third sector agencies. The paper shows how religious groups in Africa, who are emerging as significant stake holders in the reconstruction of the broken social context in Africa can become effective social capitals in the human and cultural development of Africa through partnership and collaboration between local African groups and international organizations interested in promoting social innovation in Africa for guaranteeing human security. The paper will particularly draw some best practices in mission and partnership from Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, and Sudan.