

Re-thinking Mission, Missions and Money: A Focus on the Baptist Church in Central Africa¹

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Abstract

The African church has the highest increase in numbers compared to the west, and yet it is the least contributor to world missions. This paper analyses the issue of disparity in funding mission practices between the African church and its mother church, the western church. It then explores reasons behind the African church's struggles to support missions, and identifies opportunities for world missions to which the eastern Congolese church is exposed. A critical analysis of different arguments and reports from different authors was used to draw the main conclusions and therefore identify the central reason for the disparity and provide recommendations to the two churches. The paper suggests how scholars and the church should re-think mission, missions and money in eastern Congo.

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1. Introduction

During a tour to visit churches of the Baptist Church in Central Africa with a short-term intern from outside Africa, Nehemiah, the youth leader noticed that the children asked for sweets and biscuits from the missionary. John shook his head and told the kids, 'I don't have money.' The children then laughed and told him 'Muzungu masikini' meaning 'poor white man'.

In addition to existing universally-accepted principles concerning the distribution of wealth, the fact that the church in the West has to continue supporting the church in Africa seems to be worth considering. Both Westerners and Africans assume that the West is wealthy and Africa is poor in terms of financial resources. The question of how the so-called 'imbalance in the relative wealth of evangeliser missionaries and those among whom they work distorts the transmission of the gospel' (Bonk 2006,xi) is not as relevant in today's context where each African country experiences its own particular context (Wheeler 1989:1), and especially in Eastern Congo where the local wars affect the church's mission and the evangeliser is not necessarily from the west or wealthier compared to the one being evangelised. But what is relevant in that context, and the issue being addressed in this paper, is to question and analyse disparity in financial mission practices between the African church and the Western church.

In 1989, the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society (CBFMS) had 568 missionaries overseas and declared an income of \$1,420,000 to support overseas missions (eds Roberts and Siewert 1989:54–6). In 2004 the same missionary society had 558 missionaries overseas and declared an income of \$19,155,068 for overseas missions (Bonk 2006:9); whereas the church in Africa, with the fastest growth rate, has no significant statistics to provide in terms of overseas missionaries, as the Western Church had maintained the practice of funding missions in the Global South.

The West however, has become a field for re-evangelization and Africa is expected² (by the global church) to give back to the West by sending missionaries and supporting them with African money. The need is even acknowledged by Western Christians who 'recognise that they are both the agents and the objects of mission; that those, the evangelisers also need to be evangelised...' (Scherer 1999:15). Unfortunately the African church is still receiving support from the same West. It is curious that the same African church has access to resources; in the Baptist church in Central Africa, for example, members hold themselves responsible for funding local church buildings.

² It is said that 'There are more evangelicals in Africa than in all of North America and Europe combined' (see Center for Mission Mobilization. *XPLORE*. USA: CMM Press, 2015, 11.)

It is contradictory that the church in Africa, the fastest growing church, struggles to support missions while it has riches. Looking at the contrast and what is called imbalance in wealth distribution between the West and Africa, the issue of the disparity of wealth between the West and Africa being the reason why the African church is still depending financially on the West is not convincing. Another reason, stronger than the imbalance in wealth distribution, needs to be identified, and concrete steps taken to involve the African church in general, and the Baptist Church in Central Africa (CBCA) in particular, in an exercise of re-thinking mission, missions and money in its particular context. The CBCA is the first to have benefitted from the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society's support in Congo during the period of the Second World War II.

Using the case of the CBCA this paper argues that the church in Africa has sufficient funds to mobilise and support its own mission and contribute toward the funding of World Missions, but it struggles to do so for a variety of reasons according to the author's opinion: (1) lack of a clear understanding of the missional nature of scripture, having only captured its evangelical dimension; (2) a heritage from the missionaries that did not allow their gospel to adequately address material realities; (3) continued dependence upon the West, predicated upon a false binary of African poverty and Western opulence; and (4) lack of mission strategy due to a lack of/or a poor curriculum of theological education of church leaders/ missionaries.

2. Misunderstanding of Mission and Missions

My early childhood was spent in Manguredjipa, in the north part of North Kivu province in the DRC. My father was very committed in the life of the Baptist church, especially in evangelism and the music team. He had migrated from his native area to that part of Eastern Congo and had been involved in the planting of the church in Mataba. I grew up with indigenous children who were from the 'Piri' and the 'Wapakombe' ethnic groups. One of the challenges of evangelism that our parents were facing was that the Wapiri were not identifying with Christianity. They would habitually tell their common slogan to evangelists, saying, 'After you killed your Jesus in Butembo,³ then you come here to tell us that he died for us.' There is a misunderstanding of mission and missions.

The New Testament owes its existence to 'God's heart for the world and the efforts of God's people to spread the message of God's love' (Williams 2012:49). Joel F Williams argues that 'The Gospels

³ Butembo, with which our parents were being identified, is located 98km east of Manguredjipa and was considered as a civilised city.

present the mission of Jesus, God's Son, who came to provide salvation through his death and resurrection. He has sent his followers out on a mission to make disciples of all nations' (Williams 2012:66). It is clear that Jesus is presented not only as a sent missionary but also as the one sending missionaries who transferred the message to his followers so that they would go out and make disciples. When the gospel was first presented in Eastern Congo, it was presented as the 'Good news of the Lord Jesus', a Jesus who was killed for us by his people. And it might have been hard for the receivers to accept that they were concerned by that death and resurrection of a foreigner presented by foreigners from either the West or the regions that were first 'conquered' by the missionaries. On the other hand, missionaries presented the gospel as a shift from the Old Testament to the New Testament, while God's heart for the world does not start with the New Testament.

David Bosch (1991:11–55), in his book favours Joel F Williams' view. Bosch argues that there is a fundamental shift that the New Testament witnesses when compared to the Old Testament in terms of mission interpretation. The missionary character of Jesus' ministry and the early church, and the way three New Testament authors interpret mission are proof of the shift. If 'mission' is sending preachers to distant places, then I agree with Bosch (1991:17) that the Old Testament does not show Israel reaching to nations outside its geographical and cultural boundaries with its faith. However, the story of Jonah appears to even contradict Bosch's idea. Jonah's mission was a message of redemption to Nineveh, which is in the present-day Iraq which is outside Israel's geographical boundaries and culture. God used a Jewish messenger to the Gentiles who had a negative background and understanding of God's will. It is true that the Jews never converted the Gentiles, though called to bear witness to the nations as Genesis 12:1–3 gives the mandate, 'foreigners (gentiles) adopted the group obligations and became a full-fledged part of Israel.' (Goheen 2011:24) The Gentiles' move to become followers of Judaism, which appealed to them even though accompanied by the requirement to obey the Torah, is likely to be identified with today's missional practices. Today's church members do not live apostolically, they do not consider themselves as missionaries, they do not routinely introduce new believers to faith in Christ, and so on (cf. Minatrea 2004:184–195). During his ministry 'Jesus selected twelve disciples to be with him and he sent them to twelve tribes of Israel' (Bosch 1991:26) that were to receive the gospel and mission, and therefore became the proclamation of victory for all. Although it took time to acknowledge the Gentiles' participation,

the exiled Hellenistic Christian church of Antioch inaugurated a harmonised church of both Jews and Gentiles and the beginning of the worldwide mission in sending Paul and Barnabas to the nations.

The shift in mission is not very helpful in such contexts like that of Manguredjipa in Eastern Congo. Christopher J Wright counters views such as those of Bosch and Joel F Williams with the argument that 'Mission is what the Bible is all about' (Wright 2006:29). He defends his idea by saying that, 'In a missiological approach to the Bible, [it is not to say that], every sentence of the Bible talks about evangelism but with the term "Mission", we are thinking of the purpose for which the Bible exists, the God the Bible renders to us, the people whose identity and mission the Bible invites to share, the story the Bible tells about the whole world and its future.'(2006:31) The love of God has a story which needs to be told in its entirety to people who are being reached for Christ. In the case of Eastern Congo, people were told to repent for the past and for some of their cultural and behavioural practices which were helpful for life as an individual and as a community. If the pastor saw anyone preparing medicine from wild leaves, they were to be excommunicated from the assemblies of believers, because the gospel message was about forgetting the past and starting an alliance with the God of the New Testament. It is here where this church missed the point in the early days. All that you had was not sufficient as an input for the gospel to be spread. The West had the best things to offer, starting with the gospel, and therefore believers lost confidence in what they possessed as individuals and communities, and put hope in money which was being brought by the only missionaries, who were, in the case of Eastern Congo, government officials. Therefore, their possessions, that is, their values, solidarity, and material belongings which could have been developed towards a capitalised wealth and investment to elevate not only unity but African church contribution toward World Missions' funding were not empowered.

Today the church mission is being understood to have a double vocation, that is a cultural mandate and an evangelical vocation (cf. Beals 1988:3). Therefore, 'everything the church is sent in the world to do is mission' (1988:3) The CBCA, however, still holds the view of mission in its evangelical aspect only. It has a department of Mission and Evangelism and Life of the Church responsible for reaching out to people for Christ, at every church local level, through the evangelistic team called the 'evangelism commission'. A missionary is therefore not understood as every Christian 'learning and adapting to the culture around while remaining

biblically sound' (Stetzer 2006:19) but as either a white person from the West or a church member commissioned by the church to go and serve a particular purpose outside the church denomination coverage area. The understanding of who a missionary is, is thus limited to a restricted view of evangelism. Operating in settings such as Goma, where migrations due to wars in the region have forced into existence a cross-cultural community, the church has not been able to develop mission-minded and missional local churches which can be on-mission by being intentional and deliberate about reaching other people, and adopting the posture of a missionary church (2006:19). This situation therefore confirms that the church in Eastern Congo misunderstood the concept of mission, missions and a missionary.

3. Disparities (Differences) in Fundraising Approaches

There has been a disparity in fundraising approaches between the Western church and the African church. Trying to address the issue of whether the flow of a large amount of money from the North to the South is still needed, Walber Buhmann (2006:xi-xiii) is positive about the flow of money due to the fact that the life of the church will always need money. However, his 'yes' is conditioned by 'the allocation of the fund to be done in the right proportions and with full knowledge that will not corrupt the evangelization process' (Buhmann 2006:xi). He argues that the 'transmission and enculturation of the gospel is affected by the imbalance in the relative missionaries and those among whom they work' (Buhmann 2006:xi). The fact is that the support is a one-way donation; the missionary establishes a church that will never follow the church-planting movement approach, and therefore will remain dependent on the sending church. The North should continue to support the South until the South is able to support missions in other regions. Some African churches are well equipped and can support missions, while some might need continued assistance. But both need empowerment on a rational use of money, a gift from God, and how to guard against dependency scenarios that perpetuate the myth of Africa as being poor. On the other hand, the North during the colonial era was not supporting missions in the South due to the availability of funds, but due to a vibrant fundraising system, and this needs to be understood and learned from by the African church.

3.1. Fundraising for missionary work in Africa

In many cases, missionaries were sent by Mission societies from the West. There were both denominational mission societies such

as the Church Missionary Society (Robert 1994:258) and interdenominational societies. The interdenominational mission societies were of two categories: those founded by councils of denominational churches such as the CBFMS (cf. Shelley 1981:37–47) and those founded by private and nondenominational missionaries such as the ‘faith mission’ called China Inland Mission founded by Hudson Taylor (Tuttle 2006:318). Each society was overseen by a mission board, which recruited missionaries and mobilised funding to support the mission work. The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention would receive \$19,000 annually to support over 100 missionaries serving almost 400 churches in 1860, and the Women’s Missionary Union of the same Convention would raise \$10,000 from fifty-seven young women to build the school for women in 1917. From this example, it is clear that both churches and individuals were donors to the task of supporting missionaries, and that mission boards were acting as channels to fund missionaries in the field with support. However, we have to note that there were wide variances among Western missions, with great disparity even in the support received by Western missionaries.

4 Robert, *Adoniram Judson Gordon 1836-1895*, 20.

Regular mission reports were motivators of new fundraising actions. Upon hearing from Adoniram J Gordon’s report of Congo that the new Baptists needed a chapel, the Claredon Street Church raised \$2,500 and sent a complete prefabricated chapel by steamship.⁴ Such cases lead one to think that missionary support was results-oriented, and that missionaries who were not writing home for any reason might have been obliged to quit the mission field or have been forgotten by their home churches and sending mission organizations.

The second category of funding missionaries was support from missionary families and friends. Missionaries would ask their families to either support their mission work fully or contribute a part of their upkeep in the field. Dae Young Ryu says that, ‘Some of these educated young men and women who went as missionaries were from comfortable middle-class [backgrounds]’ (Ryu 2001:93). It is reported that during the period of 1905–1909, 81 out of 135 new American missionaries who sailed for Korea were SVM volunteer families and became American missionaries in Korea (2001:97). But amongst the faith-based missions, such as Africa Inland Mission (AIM), the missionaries tended to come from rural regions, were poorer, and less educated. Dick Anderson (Anderson 1994:17–18) reveals for example that even the founder of AIM, Peter Cameron Scott, was from a poor family which ‘owned little of this world’s goods...’ but joined the mission work together with his

brother for the Congo mission 1889. Furthermore, the contribution of the spouse and parents of certain Western missionaries has been of great impact. Some missionary parents were contributing by taking care of the preschool grandchildren in their homes, and this allowed missionaries to be more effective in the most dangerous mission fields (Steffem and Douglas 2008:276). It is therefore assumed that parents were responsible for funding the needs of missionary children whose parents had no support from a well-settled organization.

The last category of missionaries to the South was that of ‘tent-makers’. Motivated by their missionary call many Christians were using their career to fulfil their missionary duties. Tony Wilmot, for example, a British businessman, initiated the student movement, the Pan-African Fellowship of Evangelical Students (PAFES), in African English-speaking countries during his business tour in Africa in 1958 (cf. *Groupes Bibliques Universitaires d’Afrique francophone* n.d.).

The case of Jacques André Vernaud, a Swiss citizen, who established the Assemblies of God in Congo, reveals the role of women in missions in the Congo. Jacques and Johanna Vernaud settled in Kinshasa, then Leopoldville, in 1965. The first years of Vernaud in Leopoldville were full of hardships. Cut off from the support of the Assemblies of God / France, the family had to rely on only one income, that from Mrs Vernaud who had to take a small job and worked as midwife at the General Hospital (Eglise La Borne n.d.). This allowed the church planter Jacques Vernaud to establish many churches, including the prestigious CEF-La Borne (Centre Evangelique Francophone—Francophone Evangelical Centre) in Kinshasa.

The Baptist Church in Central Africa has had missionaries from both the first and the second category. Charles Erwin Hurlburt was a founder and general director of the AIM (cf. *Charles E. Hurlburt 1860 to 1936 Africa Inland Mission Kenya / Tanzania / Congo* n.d.). It is stated by CBCA: Département des Jeunes et Enfants (2013:44) that after he had had experience as AIM director following the death of Peter Cameron Scott in the 1890s, ‘he decided to evangelise the unreached Africa’ and therefore founded the Unevangelised Africa Mission (UAM), a family and private missionary organization. He put the Mission under the leadership of his son Paul Hurlbert. Little has been written about the UAM. The Baptist Church, by then UAM, was registered as a Domestic Nonprofit business incorporated in California, USA on March 10, 1928 with registration number C0127979 (cf. Unevangelised Africa Mission n.d.). So, the Baptist Church in

Central Africa, CBCA in short, is a Church born from the work of the UAM, a mission institution founded in America in 1927. History tells that, 'Later on, in 1946, the UAM handed over its mission field to the CBFMS (CBCA 2013:44). In 1957, CBFMS became "Mission Baptiste au Kivu (MBK)" (CBCA:44)'. Also, little is also known about 'the agreement with the UAM which made possible the entrance of CBFMS into the Congo'(CBCA:49). It is this particular agreement that determined the shift of the Baptist church from being funded by the Hurlburt family to being fully supported by Baptist churches from the USA. During its first four months CBFMS received \$42,000 from over 200 churches (CBCA:45), which may have been allocated to the only Mission work located in Eastern Congo.

3.2. African fundraising for sending African missionaries

The African believers were 'called "native" and considered as immature and therefore were voiceless in the church councils' (Baker 1926:402) during the Westerners' church leadership in Africa. And so, they had to rely on their mother churches for funding even after the missionaries withdrew, and therefore the idea of poverty of the Global South took root. It becomes something of a deep narrative believed on both sides of the Atlantic and perpetuated by Africans and Westerners alike. This has always made both sides unable to recognise, as Moffatt did, that Africans 'have become rich in a variety of acquirements, favoured above measure in the gifts of providence, unrivalled in commerce, preeminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and in all blessings of civil society' (Bonk 2006:3). Rather than using these riches as opportunities to send missionaries, many African churches have continued to believe in the power of the disparity of resource availability between the West and Africa. Consequently, these churches are not sending missionaries outside their settings. The few poorer missionaries in the West are seldom acknowledged as missionaries. Their status as African missionaries hinders them from gaining the trust of both their own churches and the Western churches. In most cases they are perceived as less than pastors, as poor, as uneducated, as adventurer migrants, and so on. Since they are not associated with any agency other than their sending churches and since their cross-cultural missionary endeavours are restricted by the bounds of their own countries...(Bonk 2006:15), rather than calling them national evangelists as Jonathan J Bonk does, I would say they are transplanted evangelists. They are limited to reaching out to their poor fellow- citizens in the Western countries. It is a big mistake that the church has made in underestimating its capacity to fund

missions fully. It is clear that before we can reshape the missional nature of the churches, we have to wrestle with the status of missionaries on the continent.

The case of the CBCA fits in the context described above. From its statistics set out below, this church appears to be doing well, as it is reported that,

The CBCA has more than 450,000 members (children included) in 404 parishes lead by 704 ordained pastors, 180 retired pastors and it cares for 130 widows of pastors. It runs 506 schools among which 18 nursery schools, 342 primary schools and 145 secondary schools in different domains. In the health sector, the CBCA runs 3 hospitals, 17 surgical medical centres, 41 health centres, 80 health stations, and 4 medical schools. To fight illiteracy, CBCA organises 135 training centres for the youth and adult people. Most of CBCA pastors are trained in 2 Bible schools and at ULPGL. CBCA has many socioeconomic development projects, 3 big HIV/AIDS centres with a coordinating office in Goma supported by our partners, and 1 demobilization centre for child soldiers.(Baptist Church in Central Africa, n.d.)

It is, however, curious to discover that with these statistics, the CBCA is still using foreign money both in its projects and to support its few outside missionaries. Through its partnership with the United Evangelical Mission (VEM), the church has sent missionary doctors into Tanzania and has currently a theologian pastoring a German church with a missionary status (cf. *Bulletin Bimensuel d'information de la Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique* 2013:3). I attended a farewell for an expert and his family who were being commissioned by the Church in Goma to a church in Equatorial Province in Congo as 'Missionary of the United Evangelical Mission'. The family will be paid by the VEM and not by the Mission department of the CBCA. Rather than calling it missionary-sending it is clear that it is likely to be job recruitment by VEM from CBCA. Thus no church member knows how the money to support missionaries from the church should be raised, and may therefore still believe that a missionary is paid from abroad when he or she is able to contribute for mission.

Surprisingly, the war and poverty in eastern Congo is not a hindrance for church members to support the church mission. During the farewell and commissioning of missionaries I witnessed, another missionary was being sent as a church-planter in Maniema. He was not going to be supported by a foreign fund. No plan and support philosophy have been given to participants for his survival in Maniema. The *Bulletin Bimensuel d'information*

de la Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique (2013:3) states that during the service, members incidentally made 'a quick resource mobilization and gathered a hundred sheets, bags of cement as well as several other contributions that will allow the construction of the Temple of Kindu This therefore supports our argument that poverty in the South is not a reason that hinders the African church in supporting their missions.

4. Indigenous contributions towards mission work

It is true that 'the so-called "natives" were still immature in running church businesses'(Baker 1926:402). However, this is not a reason to exclude their voice in church councils. For example, while history tells that Paul Hurlbert led the team of delegates from Eastern Congo to the first missionary conference held in Stanley-Poll (Kinshasa), no native is said to have been part of such a strategic gathering. History seems to ignore a series of annual gatherings entitled 'the General Conference of Protestant Missions' from 1902 to 1911; this is due to the fact that natives were not part of such leadership gatherings. This may have caused their involvement in church-planting work without ensuring both continuity of possession and continuity of manner. The succession model used by missionaries was not in line with the biblical models of succession as far as church-planting was concerned because the 'ownership is maintained through succession ... and the object of succession is an institution' (Stepp 2005:193). Using the experience of Uganda, Louise Pirouet (1978:2) attributes the rapid expansion of the church to the 'catechists' who courageously took the gospel to other citizens from the city to the rural areas, while most of them survived in the field without any support. The missionaries' contribution toward indigenous preachers' work was more technical and social. Western missionaries gave them plans to reach the unreached, and had to train them on a crash basis to enable them to communicate the biblical message. Then they provided clothes to wear, food to eat, and a house to live in to preachers and communities (cf. Pirouet :12). This led to a disconnection between the gospel and the material needs of people. What was missing in the process was communicating the character of missions ownership, which consisted in teaching them how to fund and fundraise for missions locally and how to keep the funding system sustainable.

5. The colonial legacy of the view of the church on money

African Christians were not taught missionary support. Archibald G Baker says that, 'During the nineteenth century, mission theories were dominated by the conception of divine authority, revelation, and power. Therefore, the missionary spoke with the authority of the prophet and administered in the name of God' (Baker 1926:402). They taught their followers that ministry is about suffering in obedience to God. This explains the Anglican song entitled 'Go to the World! Go Struggle, Bless, and Pray' (Hiltz 2008:307). The pioneers of church-planting who served with the first missionary of UAM maintained through oral history that the missionary could send one of them to take a parcel from Kitsombiro to Katwa on foot while he would drive to the same destination believing that suffering was part of the training he gave the locals.

The missionaries concentrated their efforts on spiritual aspects of Christianity. There was no room for holistic mission. Missions contributed a lot to sustaining poverty in Congo. The speech of King Leopold II of Belgium to missionaries at Leopoldville on 12 January 1883 makes it clear that the missionary mandate from the coloniser country was 'to make every effort so that the blacks never become rich. To make them sing every day that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They taught Congolese that the 'reward' for church service will be received in heaven predicated on a special kind of eschatology. This explains why churches became unable to take care of their personnel even while experiencing growth in attendance as a result of church-planting efforts that followed the withdrawal of Westerners. The Congolese Kiswahili uses the word 'Mutume' (apostle) for the worker and 'Kitume'(apostolate) for the work which does not need payment. Another word used within the CBCA is the phrase 'Kazi ya kanisa' (work of the church) or 'Kazi ya Mungu' (work of God) and when it is used, every believer is aware that service is voluntary service.

The culture of volunteer ministry is one of the strong negative legacies from the missionaries, who were giving catechists food, clothes and housing for their work. The CBCA took it as a precious legacy and as the only payment or support a missionary deserved from the church denomination. In a discussion I had with one of the pastors of this church in Goma a few years ago, he revealed that the reason he resigned from pastoring a specific church in 2006 was that he was undermined by the church council, which considered him as not being spiritual as he tried to challenge the council to increase his salary which was fifty dollars, and could not

help him to take care of his family in the city. To a certain extent, this attitude came from the faith-based missions. Paul Hurlburt being a direct descendant of Charles Erwin Hurlburt, a co-founder of a faith-based mission, could not have run this church planted by him, and not promote among evangelists the concept of dependence on God for their well-being.

6. Theological education and the challenge to own missions financially

According to Manfred Waldemar Kohl, 'Pastors, missionaries, and evangelists put into practice what they learn, and pass on their experience to people in their churches, mission work, or outreach ministries' (Kohl 2005:10). Education provides intellectual preparedness and sharpens anyone for any specific task to which he/she is assigned in his/her specific culture and context in a dynamic way. Kohl opposes the slogan recalled by Fred Hiltz, 'Go to the World! Go Struggle, Bless, and Pray' (Hiltz 2008:307). This was written by Sylvia G Dunstan and 'appears in the mission section of Common Praise, a 1998 hymnal of the Anglican Church of Canada' (Hiltz:10), to capture 'the very essence of theological education for the future church, a future into which we are being drawn even now' (Hiltz:10). It is wrong to confuse missionary work with a ministry service full of struggles and challenges due to lack of missionary education; however, it is also wrong to agree that to be spiritual brings financial prosperity.

What is worse is that many missionary-sending churches and/or organizations believe in the struggle of missionaries on the ground as part of the training of the team. One of the weaknesses of Paul Hurlburt who planted the CBCA, was that, though he was very aggressive in sending indigenous believers to plant churches, he did not consider educating them before they were sent. Oral history transmitted from generations conveys that he was convinced a baptism class was enough to equip them for ministry. A day after his baptism, my late grandfather was sent to start a church, which he never succeeded in establishing due to a lack not only of theological education but also the fact that he had no education at all.

From the research data I conducted in Goma concerning missiological education in eastern Congo, the CBCA is still not able to send its missionaries and support their well-being. This is because of the poor educational background of its mission field pastors, a geographical disparity of theologians within the denomination; the theological curriculum used by the theological

institution which trained most theologians is not fit to prepare theologians who will face church-planting challenges in the region. The fourth reason and main cause of the first three is the lack of a mission strategy, even though the church has a structured department of Mission and Evangelism and Life of the Church.

Mission fields pastors' educational background

The CBCA has the so-called 'Shamba Mpya' areas targeted for new church plants. In the church process of expansion inside the country and abroad, Rwanda was the first foreign country to be reached, where four missionary stations are being established. Our interview with the secretary of the Department of Evangelism and Mission and Life of the Church and documentary analysis revealed that the church has a total of 25 church-planters in six different areas. According to the interviewee none of the 25 church-planters was sent by the church, but most of them, in the search for survival and daily bread, found themselves in areas where there was no church and decided to gather people under the banner of their mother church. In the case of Rwanda, Kamuha Musolo W'Ivuka quotes Muhindo Kasekwa (2008), who reveals in his survey of the records of the CBCA that, 'the local church that is being established in Rwanda consists of a group of Rwandan refugees returned home to Rwanda, where even their former churches were destroyed by the war, they were compelled to start a new church there as a sign of gratitude to the CBCA' (W'Isuka 2009:65).

Fourteen out of the twenty-five church-planters (56%) went to look for fertile farming land and opportunities, three (12%) have a background as businessmen, two others (8%) are carpenters, one person is a mason constructor (4%), and the others' background is unknown (20%). This suggests that church-planters survived without church support because they were able to support their livelihoods by using farming products, or cash-for-work jobs, or income generated by their business.

When it comes to their educational background, the most learned church-planters are those 15 (60%) with either two or four years of Bible school education. It is curious to realise that 60% of the church planters are ordained ministers and 40% are evangelists. Missionary and/or church-planter is a low-status position, perhaps equivalent to being an evangelist under a pastor, but more than a lay person. It seems that in the culture of the CBCA, once a church lay person gets Bible education, he or she is first called an evangelist who is to be mentored, then ordained as a fulltime pastor. So, church-planters are wrongly called evangelists.

The fact that church-planters took individual initiatives to plant churches which they run demonstrates that no strategy of church-planting exists, and explains why the department of Evangelism and Mission organised in 2010, ‘a one-month seminar to train the church-planters on church-planting and self-supporting’ (cf. The researcher’s interview with the secretary of the Department of Mission and Life of the Church, July 2012, in Goma at the head office of the Baptist Church in Central Africa). The report of the 33rd General Assembly of the CBCA held in Kikyó/Butembo supports our view that after 85 years of existence the CBCA has no mission strategy. The report says that,

Having realised that there are Christians who are planting churches in new mission fields without following any norm and even in neighboring countries without any financial ability, seeing that there are also chapels being planted without authorization from the church district or mother church, the General Assembly realises that there should be Mission strategies within CBCA (Mutahinga and Midiburo 2011:10).

When there are no mission strategies, the church will be unable to control the volunteers who have the burden to serve God wherever they go. It is the mission strategy that has to include the fundraising and funding strategies for missions. Neither does CBCA have strategies to fundraise for missions within the church, nor does it have a clear plan to support missions on a strategic and well-designed scale. Consequently, the church leaders complained of being overwhelmed by uncontrollable volunteer church-planters.

Concerning the geographical disparity of theologians in the Baptist Church in Central Africa, a recent evaluation (see Figure 1) revealed that 92 out of 506 (18.2%) pastors running stable churches within the CBCA have been to theological school and the rest have been to Bible school for either two or four years. It is good to note that this Bible school is equivalent to a secondary school with concentration on biblical studies. While the rural areas lack theologians, 67.3% of theologians are in the cities. For example, the ecclesiastic district of Busaghala has no theologian at all, and the district of Beni has the highest number of pastors from Bible schools.

During the Bible study session at Goma-Ville parish on 20 July 2012, the talk with the former President and Legal representative of the CBCA revealed that ‘theologians are very selective in terms of the geographic areas of service and always decline the appointments of the church when it comes to the rural areas.’ This

Pastor's level of education by district (Poste)

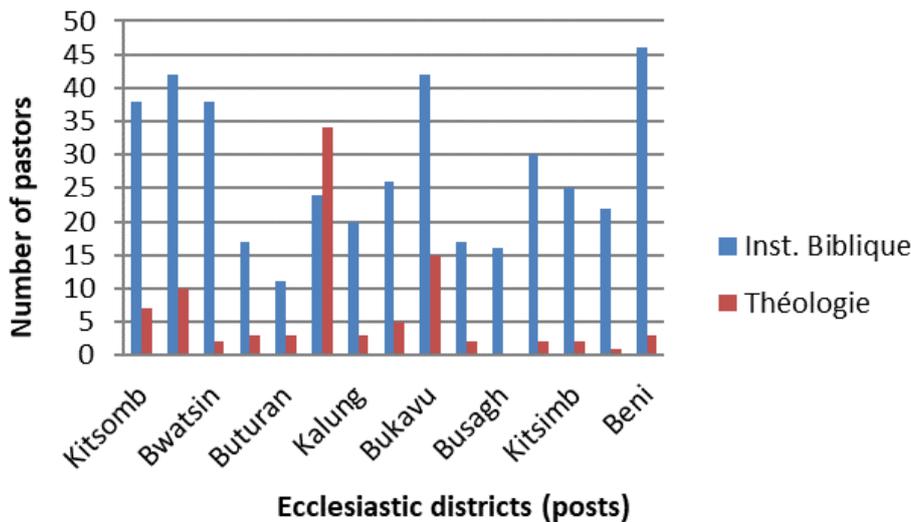


Figure 1: Pastor's level of education by district ('Poste')

Source: taken from a leaflet entitled 'Effectifs des Pasteurs de la CBCA' written in 2011, available in the Department of Evangelism, Mission and Life of the Church of CBCA at Goma.

situation is very risky for the future of the church in the rural areas. It is true that the availability of those called 'Biblistes' in the rural areas in today's context is a proof of their commitment. However, these pastors still are limited, and to leave them at the frontline where a sound doctrine is needed to be taught is a dangerous decision for the church. In addition, to have 67.3% of theologians in the cities is a waste of resources. The idea of continuing theological education or refresher courses being held for pastors is part of the solution.

The report of the President and Legal Representative of the Baptist Church in Central Africa (CBCA) to the 33rd General Assembly reveals that 'in the next ten years 40% of CBCA pastors are going to retire' (CBCA 2011:10) while the number of students in theological school and Bible schools has decreased. This situation is a catastrophic one, and the church is likely to lack ministers and therefore leadership from the younger generation, which is not interested in theological education. It is true that the General Assembly recommended that 'the vocational groups be initiated ... and the local church initiates the 'Local scholarship' to support theological students', and that 'the Church districts create income-generating activities for Pastors' families ... to attract young people to pastoral service.' From this decision it appears that the issue of money is affecting all the recruited servants of the

church to the extent that local church pastors' family members are frustrated by the financial motivation of their spouse or father (pastors are men). When the senior pastor does not receive good treatment from the church it is hard, if not impossible, for him to plan and mobilise the church he is leading to give funds for missions.

Theological curriculum of ULPGL (Free University of the Great Lakes Countries) compared to the Great Lakes' context and needs

The fact that, 'Church workers who hold a university level education have been educated within the theological faculties of the four main universities, among which is ULPGL in Goma, which belong mainly to CBCA ...' (W'Isuka 2009:114) made us analyse the curriculum of ULPGL where most of the CBCA theologians have been trained.

The *Prospectus 2006-2007* (Mutahinga and W'Isuka (eds) 2006:10–13) shows the faculty of theology at the Free University of the Great Lakes Countries (ULPGL) as having a five years BTh programme with a course called Practical Theology in addition to Philosophy, Systematic Theology and Biblical Languages. The course on Anthropology and Sociology appears among the appendices' disciplines. It is clear that this curriculum is likely to prepare local church administrators and philosophers and not church-planters or any other missionaries to be sent to the frontline for strategic missions.

An interview done in Goma in July, with Paul Kamuha Musolo W'Isuka who is the Mission course lecturer revealed that 'The five years BTh programme offers only a single two-credit/hours course of Missiology, which cannot prepare students for Missions.' Furthermore, he revealed in his thesis that 'the entire university library has only five missiology books out of the 8,000 volumes, including reviews and journals' (Wisuka 2009:114).

It is clear that alumni from this theological faculty will not be ready to be sent far from the city for missionary service, because they are neither ready for missions nor prepared for it. And when they are pastoring churches already planted they are likely not to insert missions in the church budget plan. Missionary work is seen as a lower-status profession, with limited legitimacy and lower (or no) funds. So, only amateurs and Bible schools' alumni are ready to take the risk and plant churches without the support of the Department in charge which is led by theologians supposed to plan and implement the non-existing mission strategy. During a church seminar I ran on 'missions' in Goma in September 2013, I asked

what percentage of the church budget missions and evangelism takes. The pastor responded that there is no budget planned for that, because even the evangelism commission does not submit a budget for their department. Money and missions are not going together in churches within the Baptist Church in Central Africa.

7. Conclusion

The imbalance in wealth distribution between the West and Africa is not the reason why, though it is the fastest growing church in the world, the African Church and particularly that in Eastern Congo, is still a minor contributor to the universal church, and struggles to fund missions.

Rather than mission being known in its holistic character, the CBCA has a serious misunderstanding, and views mission in its evangelical dimension only. The misunderstanding started way back at the beginning of the church, caused by missionaries who presented the gospel as good news of Jesus from a foreign people to Congolese, which required a shift from their past, their history.

From the time of the arrival of Western missionaries up to the present, mission is not understood as 'everything the church is sent in the world to do' (Wright 2006:29) but rather is believed to be evangelism carried out by a very particular team within a local church overseen by the department called 'Mission and Evangelism and Life of the Church'. Furthermore, the missionary has first been understood as being from the West, then as any church-planter sent to distant places to spread the gospel and as someone with an inferior status to pastors, rather than being understood as every Christian 'learning and adapting to the culture around while remaining biblically sound' (Wright 2006:31). For that reason the church has not been on missions, neither has it been able to plant mission-minded churches in the challenging context of war and ethnicity. Therefore, this paper calling for a holistic approach to mission advocates that 'mission' should be contextualised in Eastern Congo.

Accepting that the church in the West continues to support the African church based on the principle of the imbalance of wealth distribution between Africa and the West, this is 'distorting the transmission and enculturation of the Gospel,' (Bonk 2006:xi) and does not encourage a church-planting movement to be a reality by planting self-supportive, self-governing, self-propagating, and self-theologizing churches. Therefore, the allocation of funds to the African church 'is to be done with full knowledge that that avoids corrupting the cross-cultural dimension of mission

work' (Bonk :xi). This is only possible when the mother church transfers its missional nature, character and identity to the daughter church rather than creating dependencies. It is important that dependency should be avoided in mission work. Is the continuation of funds from the West related only to the perceived wealth disparity, or is it more a matter of controlling the theology and ideology of mission by the West? Mission boards in the West/North also need to rethink their theologies, cultural perceptions and strategies concerning mission, in dialogue with churches from the South. Further, the daughter church needs to learn from the mother church and be able to evaluate possibilities for it to give back as it continues the process of church-planting.

The CBCA, in Eastern Congo, has not yet been able to fund missions because it has no experience and has not been initiated into fundraising and funding missions. The Western missionaries had various approaches to mobilise support from individuals and families, and churches and boards of missionary societies, or self-support through 'tent-making'. They neither transferred skills in fundraising and funding missions to African believers who they considered immature, nor did they involve them in the business of the leadership of the running of missions.

The Western missionaries only taught suffering and evangelism to the church and created therefore a new culture of free work for church ministry. This mindset has affected the view that family members of ministers hold concerning church ministry, to the extent that the Baptist Church is going to suffer a shortage of forty percent of its pastoral staff workers in the next ten years, if the youth continue to refuse to join in theological education.

Our research conducted in Goma identified that the CBCA has not had any mission strategy for the last eighty-five years. Its Department of Mission and Evangelism and Life of the Church trains its pastoral force in a selected university founded by the church. The theological curriculum which is followed is not suited to preparing theologians who will face the missionary and financial challenges of church planting in the region and beyond. Consequently there are serious disparities of workers within the church as far as skills go; theologians take leadership of churches already planted, and the strategic mission field is left to church-planters with a poor educational background and to volunteer lay Christians. Therefore, the fact that the Church lacks a mission strategy is the reason why it is still unable to send missionaries and fund them after eighty-five years of fruitful ministry, the few

sent missionaries still being funded from the West. The local believers have not yet owned the church fully.

Throughout this article we have argued that poverty in the South is not a reason hindering African churches from supporting missions and thus making them dependent forever on support from the assumed wealthy West. The true reason is that the CBCA in Eastern Congo has not been taught how to raise funds and support missions. Pastors wait for their eternal rewards as they struggle to serve, while when the church leadership cannot locally fund a project it relies on the West rather than exploiting available potential sources hidden by the lack of local fundraising. The problem is the poverty of mind of the church in viewing mission, missions, and money; this hinders the church from contributing to the universal church in a way proportionate to its size and recent growth, and also stops mission being perceived as a ministry vocation within the church.

It is therefore imperative to re-think fundraising for mission and funding mission strategies. A new direction towards missions is highly recommended with the emphasis on every local church developing a mission strategy aimed at planting missional churches based on its holistic mandate.

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