

Hope for Africa and What the Christian Can Do by George Kinoti, International Bible Society, Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 1997. (76 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

INTRODUCTION

1. Reasons for Africa's Societal Problems

Why are we so blind to the wretchedness of the African people? There are several reasons. First, poverty, hunger, disease, and oppression are so commonplace in Africa that we accept them as a normal part of life. Second, the majority of the people have little or no education and so they are unable either to recognize their plight or to understand how economic and political systems function. Third, the more educated classes are either too busy trying to survive economically or too engrossed in their pursuit of power and wealth to care about their people. Fourth, religion, and most Africans are religious, enables many to evade reality. Christians (and Muslims) sometimes use their faith as a narcotic - to evade the pain, the ugliness, the difficulties, the concrete reality of the world in which we find ourselves. A fifth reason is a false sense of security which results from the numerous so-called development activities of foreign governments, foreign nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations. In spite of all these activities, or even because of them, Africa's condition is deteriorating, not improving. Today Africa is more dependent on Western "charity" than she has ever been and her dependency is growing fast. We are facing an unprecedented crisis. [Page iii]

2. Individual Africans Need to Understand Where the Problems and Solutions Are

I believe that the first important step towards resolution of the crisis is to make the extent and the causes of our problems as widely known as possible in Africa. Africans must not leave our problems to the politicians, economists, administrators and other experts. We all need to understand the problems and where the solutions lie. We all can and must do so. And we then must play our part, and encourage or require others to play theirs, in finding solutions. [Page iv]

3. African Christians Become Active Participants

I would like to challenge African Christians to play their part in the struggle to bring dignity, peace and prosperity to our people. I am convinced that if the African people

are to survive and to enjoy the spiritual, moral and material well-being which I believe God wills for them, African Christians must become active participants in the search for lasting solutions to the severe economic, political and social problems which face all of us, whether we are Christians or not. I believe that the Christian church has unique contributions to make to efforts to bring about justice, peace and prosperity. [Pages iv-v]

4. The Creator Dishonored

My intention is to challenge serious disciples of Jesus Christ to play their part in all aspects of national life in order to help make Africa a good place for all to live in. The distressing conditions prevailing in Africa oppress and disgrace all the African people. The wretchedness of the African people dishonours their Creator. Therefore every Christian has a moral responsibility to do their very best to correct the situation. [Page v]

5. Black Africa Must Work for Africa

African Christians must work for the peace and prosperity of Africa. Incidentally, by "Africa" I mean black Africa: North Africa belongs more to the Middle East than to Africa in culture, religion, politics and economics. [Page v]

Chapter 1. Christians must work for peace and prosperity in Africa

6. Shalom

Experts tell us that Christianity is growing faster in Africa than on any other continent. At the same time the people are rapidly becoming poorer and the moral and social fabrics of society are disintegrating fast. Christianity is clearly not making a significant difference to African nations. For example, the well-known East African revival had a real impact on the life of the church but not on the life of East African nations. Thus, although the revival started in Rwanda about sixty years ago, that country has known nothing but poverty and civil war since independence in 1962. The latest round of inter-tribal violence is truly horrific: between April and July 1994 an estimated five hundred thousand to a million Rwandans were butchered and 3 to 4 million others forced to flee to Zaire where they live in huge refugee camps under terrible conditions. The violence was triggered by the death of the President, Juvenal Habyarimana, in an aeroplane crash in which Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira and other passengers were also killed. Similarly Uganda, which had soon become the heart of the revival,

experienced for about two decades untold suffering under Milton Obote and Idi Amin. The Ugandan economy was shattered; torture, murder, civil war and displacement of people reached unimaginable levels. And all the while Uganda had one of the strongest churches in Africa.

Why should this be so? The main reason is that we in East Africa failed to apply the gospel to the whole of life, limiting it to spiritual life only. We read the scriptures selectively, placing emphasis on those that talked about salvation and neglecting those that talked about justice, peace and material wellbeing. We African Christians must correct the mistakes made by an earlier generation, seek to apply the whole of the Word of God to the whole of life and play an active part in bringing peace and prosperity to Africa. [Pages 1-2]

7. Work for Peace and Dignity

All of us, Christians and people of other faiths alike, have a duty to work for the peace and prosperity of the nation in which God has placed us. We are responsible for our lives and the wellbeing of our society. God has in a very real sense placed our destiny in our hands. He has given us the natural resources, the energy, the intelligence and the moral capacity we require to build a society in which everyone can live in peace and dignity. But we need to work. [Pages 4-5]

8. Care for the Poor, Sick, the Prisoner, and the Stranger

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus He expresses His deep concern for the poor.⁶The parable highlights the main consequences of poverty - chronic hunger, disease, and dehumanization. It also exposes the immorality of economic injustice and of indifference to the suffering of the poor. On the day of judgment He will reward those who cared about the poor, the sick, the stranger and the prisoner and He will severely punish those who were indifferent to the sufferings of other people.⁷ [Page 6]

9. Christianity Cares about People

Another example is Saint James who insists that true Christianity is down to earth, concerned with people's material needs and their dignity as human beings. He forbids class distinctions and strongly warns rich oppressors.⁸ His teaching is very balanced. "Religion that God accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world", he says.⁹ Paul, the great apostle of God's saving grace, is concerned about political and

economic life, too. He urges Christians to work for good governance by praying for the authorities ¹⁰ and by obeying legitimate authority. ¹¹ He defines the basic functions of government - maintenance of peace and justice for the good of all. ¹² He repeatedly emphasizes the importance of doing one's work well. He exhorts Christians to ensure that they are self-reliant by working hard just as he himself did. ¹³ And he did some relief work and strongly encouraged generosity towards those in need.¹⁴ [Pages 6-7]

10. African Christians – A Vital Part

African Christians must work to make Africa a good place to live in and that they are an integral part of the African society. [Page 7]

11. Christians' Lives Are Involved with What Is Going On around Them

It is a terrible mistake for Christians to try to detach themselves, as many do, from the society they live in. The fortunes of Christians are tied up with those of their nations. If the nation prospers Christians prosper alongside non-Christians. Where there is peace everybody, whether a Christian or a follower of another religion, enjoys peace. Equally, famine, disease, corruption and oppression affect everybody regardless of their faith. In fact, sometimes Christians suffer more than non-Christians. Many Christians tend to forget this truth and to use their faith as an escape from the economic and political realities of their society. It is a costly mistake to make, costly to themselves and to their nations. An example is Uganda under Idi Amin, and another is South Africa under Afrikaner Nationalism. In both countries the church was numerically strong and if enough Christians had been true to their calling and played an active role in the affairs of their nations the people might have been spared the terrible repression and poverty for which those regimes became notorious. [Pages 7-8]

12. The Work of the Kingdom in Africa Requires Vast Resources

Western missionaries discharged their responsibility when they brought the gospel to Africa. Now it is our responsibility to spread it and to apply the Word of God to every aspect of the life of the African people. The work of the kingdom in Africa requires vast resources. Without them we cannot do an adequate job of evangelism, church building, theological training or Bible translation and distribution. Nor can we run the quality Christian schools and health facilities that our communities need so badly. The needs are so great that they can never be met adequately by gifts from abroad. And, of course, an enabling political and social environment facilitates Christian work. The miserable state of the African economy and bad governance are major hindrances to the growth of

Christianity. We must therefore do our part to bring about the economic development and good governance of our nations. [Pages 8-9]

13. Must Make a Contribution for Peace and Prosperity

It is wrong for Christians to sit back and let others do all the fighting and the hard work and then, when success has been achieved, to jump in and enjoy the fruit of others' blood and sweat. We must all make our contribution to the struggle for the peace and prosperity of Africa. Indeed, Christians ought to be in the forefront of the struggles. [Page 9]

14. Each Is Created in God's Image

[] Christians must work for peace and prosperity in Africa is to promote human dignity. Our faith teaches that every human being is created in the very image of God and shares with his Creator unique dignity and worth. Certain conditions, such as abject poverty, certain diseases, torture, gross social injustice, and chronic hunger, dehumanize people. They damage human personality and are an affront to human dignity. [Page 10]

15. Everywhere in Africa, the Same Story

Everywhere one looks in Africa it is the same sad story - Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Cameroon, Togo, Sudan, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya. Zaire, Angola. Of course Western nations played, and continue to play, a large part in creating the dehumanizing conditions prevalent in Africa today, but African leaders are in the final analysis responsible for these conditions. Instead of ending oppression, poverty, exploitation, ignorance and disease, independent Africa's rulers have multiplied these evils in their pursuit of power and wealth. [Page 10]

16. The African Church Must Step Up for the Solution

In many African countries the church encourages political, social and economic evils by her silence and sometimes by the complicity of some of her leaders. The African church must use her moral authority and political power more fully for the total well-being of the people. [Page 12]

17. Moral Standards Are Declining

Although Christianity is growing rapidly on the continent, morality is not: in fact, moral standards are declining just as rapidly. Some of the most corrupt members of

society are churchgoers. A few of the most despotic African rulers claim to be Christians, some even to be born again. Their purpose is no doubt to get the political support of naive Christians who are easily deceived. The moral task is formidable but the church has the essential equipment - the Word of God and the Spirit of Christ. With these means the church can transform Africa morally. In this way she can help to create a caring, morally healthy society, and an honest and responsible leadership. The church must preach morality, teach morality and insist on morality. She must insist on morality at every level - individual, family, community, national and between nations. Above all, the church must set an example in personal and public morality - among the clergy, among the laity, in the church leadership, in Christian schools and other Christian organizations. [Page 12]

18. Guard against Materialism

[] the church is uniquely placed to guard African societies against the danger of materialism and particularly the immorality which goes with it. We must work for material well-being, but we also need to guard society against the poverty of the spirit that can result from material prosperity and social development. Materialism is a big problem for the rich nations of the West and for Westernized Africans. We have learned from the empty and immoral lives of so many in the West that riches, education and culture alone do not satisfy. They do not satisfy because they do not meet man's deepest needs - the need for love, for meaning, for purpose, for God. It is the church's unique responsibility to ensure that people know and follow the Lord who truly satisfies. [Page 13]

19. Challenge African Christians to Assist Those in Need

There is the obvious Christian duty to assist those in need - the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick and the prisoner, to use the examples given by our Lord. I suppose that this is an important reason why there are many foreign Christian organizations doing relief and development work in Africa. Their obedience to God in this respect is a challenge to many of us African Christians who are in a position to help those in greater need. [Page 13]

20. We Need a Heart like Christ's

Compassion is an important motive for seeking to alleviate the suffering of poor people in Africa. We must follow the example of Christ who had compassion on the hungry and the sick. But we need to be genuinely compassionate. Often there is something

rather "clinical" or cold about Christian compassion. Compassion does not usually come to many of us naturally. Why aren't Christians, especially evangelical Christians, more often moved by the oppression and the suffering of fellow human beings? In South Africa and in the "Bible belt" of the United States Christianity not only lived with, but also provided a religious basis for two of the most racist societies in human history. I often wonder about Christian organizations that advertise and market their compassion. Christ's compassion was authentic, not contrived. We need a heart like His. [Pages 13-14]

21. Direct Efforts at the Root Causes of Poverty and Underdevelopment

I must, however, emphasize that it is the nations of Africa that must be the focus of our attention rather than the poorest people in those nations. What we must do is to end underdevelopment in all of Africa. Talk of empowering the poor or directing assistance to the poorest of the poor sounds good. But village development projects so beloved of non-governmental organizations are in the long run like pouring a little water into a badly leaking pail. This kind of effort alone will not take us far. We must deal with the problem of underdevelopment in a fundamental way, directing our efforts at the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment and at the national and continental levels. This means that we must be concerned with politics, economic policies and all the other factors that affect the nation as a whole. It means also that we must deal with the international economic system which plays such a major part in keeping Africa poor and powerless. It will mean asking questions and making demands that are as unwelcome to the West as they are to the few Africans who are rich and powerful. [Page 14]

Chapter 2. Africa is in great trouble and disgrace

22. Poverty Is the Most Pressing Problem

The African people are facing a severe economic, political and social crisis. I think everyone will agree that poverty is the most pressing of all Africa's many depressing problems. It is at the heart of all the important problems in Africa, be they social, spiritual or moral. [Page 15]

23. Poverty = Hunger

The first manifestation of poverty is hunger. One out of every three Africans does not get enough to eat. A study covering the period 1988-90 showed that some 168 million

Africans were the victims of chronic hunger.² This was an increase of 40 million people in just one decade. Tens of millions of African children suffer from malnutrition, which means retarded physical and mental development, disease, disability or death. [Pages 15-16]

24. Not Having Income to Meet Basic Needs

[] poverty means not having an adequate income to meet basic needs. Poor people cannot afford to feed, clothe or educate their children. Poverty imprisons people in ignorance, superstition and poverty. Lack of education makes it hard, if not impossible, to cope in the modern world. By 1987 55-60% of rural Africans were living below the poverty line²¹ and the rate of impoverishment is accelerating. [Page 16]

25. No Elections without Foreign Aid

The depth of our poverty and humiliation is indicated by the fact that most of our nations cannot conduct relatively small functions like elections or referendums without foreign aid. Even small conferences frequently depend on external funding. [Page 16]

26. Victims of Infectious Diseases

Developed countries have eliminated or controlled infectious diseases to a point where they are no longer a serious problem: cancer, heart disease and other non-infectious diseases are now the main health problems in the West. But in Africa millions of people are still the victims of many infectious diseases such as respiratory infections, malaria, river blindness, lymphatic filariasis, bilharzia, leprosy, sleeping sickness and kalazar. These diseases are so prevalent in Africa because of the poor living conditions and because we are too poor to pay for the necessary drugs and vaccines. Similarly, infectious diseases plague Africa's livestock and are a major reason for the prevalent protein malnutrition. Important infectious diseases of African livestock include trypanosomiasis, worm infections, East Coast fever and other diseases transmitted by ticks. [Page 17]

27. Poverty Is Responsible for Prejudice and Paternalism

Christians, of all people, must be deeply concerned about the dehumanizing effect of poverty. Widespread poverty and backwardness, not the black skin, are responsible for the prejudice and paternalism with which the black person is treated everywhere. They are also responsible for the inferiority complex that is so common in our race. A sense of inferiority is bad for our self-esteem and dignity. It is also bad for our material,

spiritual and intellectual development because it distorts our vision. It sees progress as copying the white man - his culture, his worldview, his lifestyle, even his names and hair colour. The result is often, as an Englishman remarked to me, a parody of European culture. This inferiority complex has been much exploited by the French and the Portuguese through their policy of assimilation. It is widely exploited by the manufacturers of skin-lightening creams and other cosmetics which enable a black man, and especially a black woman, to look less African and presumably more European. [Pages 18-19]

28. Poverty Means Injustice

[] poverty means injustice. It is unjust for a man to live in great luxury while his neighbor lives in abject poverty. It is unjust for a few Africans to live in great luxury while the majority of their countrymen are oppressed by hunger and disease. And it is unjust to have such a wide gap between the West and Africa, particularly when Africa has forcibly contributed so much to the West in terms of natural resources and labor. [Page 19]

29. Needing Economic Self-reliance

A much more radical treatment is required if Africa is to survive. The sooner every African sees this, the better our chances of survival. The sooner our friends, particularly Christian friends, see the absolute necessity of going beyond helping the poorest of the poor, the absolute necessity of changing the structures which are bleeding Africa dry, the better. What Africa requires is economic self-reliance. [Pages 19-20]

30. Poorly Developed Land and Capital

[] poorly developed factors of production - as economists call land, labor and capital contribute significantly to the poor economic performance. This situation encourages subsistence production, inhibits expansion of productive capacity and discourages specialization. African governments are largely responsible for the situation. They exercise too much control over the economy through poorly-managed state monopolies, protection of unproductive industries, and control of prices, foreign credit and foreign exchange. [Page 23]

31. Economic Power Concentrated in Hands of Rulers

[] in many African countries, bad governance by civilian or military regimes has led to political instability or civil war, resulting in the collapse of the economy. The illegal

conversion of vital state organs into personal property or political tools has resulted in corruption, inefficiency and high cost for business transactions. In almost all African countries economic power is concentrated in the hands of the ruler. He uses it to buy or reward loyalty either financially or by appointment to lucrative positions in public institutions, regardless of the appointee's competence, and to deny economic opportunities to those he considers to be disloyal. In short, he converts public property and public institutions to his own use in a quest for political survival. Those in the system have many opportunities to enrich themselves and their relatives and tribesmen at the expense of the economy. [Page 24]

32. Many Socio-cultural Problems

[] there is a host of socio-cultural problems. They include: a poor work ethic, inability to adapt modern technology and management concepts, lack of incentives for creativity and entrepreneurship, economically crippling extended family responsibilities, preference for imported goods, and a natural tendency to think small whether at the individual or at the national level. [Page 24]

33. Slim Prospects to Change

Many knowledgeable people consider the prospects of Africa breaking out of the vicious circle of underdevelopment, poverty and dependency to be very slim, for three reasons. First, despite much talk and some token actions, such as the Lome Convention, Africa's foreign trade remains colonial, unchanged in content and in direction. The chances of significant changes in her trade relations are remote. Second, if she is to recover and get on the path of sustainable development, Africa requires a massive infusion of foreign aid. But she is unlikely to get this. Indeed, even the little aid she now receives is dwindling as Western interest focuses more on Eastern Europe. Third, Africa is increasingly unable to attract foreign investment because of political instability, deteriorating infrastructure, corruption, and low returns to investment. [Page 26]

34. Africa Needs Leaders with Integrity

Africa desperately needs a new type of leader. The experience of the last two or three years shows that changing from one political party to another or from military into civilian clothes does not change the nature or motives of African leaders. What we need is a different kind of leader, namely men and women of integrity, ability, and education who have a genuine concern for and commitment to the well-being of all their fellow

citizens. Such leaders do not arise spontaneously. They must be created through careful character formation and training of young people. I believe that the African churches have the potential to make crucial contributions to the creation of the leadership we so desperately need. [Page 31]

35. Africa's Future under Economic Control of West Is Bleak

I do not object to the conditions being attached to aid that are making life difficult for many African dictators. And I know that there are people of good will in the West. But the history of the relations between African and Western nations shows that exploitation of African resources, including the people themselves, is the primary motive behind much Western interest in Africa. This view is strengthened by the work of Graham Hancock who, in his recent book *Lords of poverty*³⁸, presents evidence to show that official aid, whether bilateral or multilateral, is quite frankly a cover for the economic and political exploitation of poor nations. And what comfortable lives aid officials derive from the aid business. The future of Africa under the political and economic control of the West is bleak indeed. This situation is deeply worrying. It shames every African, whether they are Christian or not and whether they are a leader or not. It ought to be intolerable to every African. [Pages 32-33]

Chapter 3. Causes of Africa's economic and social wretchedness

36. Difficult to Separate Cause and Effect of Africa's Problems

The causes of Africa's crisis are as many as they are complex. The many factors involved are so inter-linked that it is often not possible to tell what is cause and what is effect. That, of course, should not surprise us because ultimately the reasons for Africa's plight are to be found in human nature which is complex. Clearly self-centeredness, moral blindness, pride and other human weaknesses are fundamental causes of our problems. The picture is further complicated by the existence of much good will in the West which softens the effects of self-interest on Africa, giving the false impression that the main intention of Western activities in Africa is Africa's good. [pages 35-36]

37. Identification of Key Problems

[] to identify the key problems which must be solved. We need a comprehensive approach, an approach which tackles all the key factors, if we are to resolve the crisis facing us. We must avoid the piecemeal approach to which Africa has been subjected in

the past. The most important factors, I suggest, are government, the international economic system, population, education, science and technology, the physical environment, morality, management and culture .³⁹ [Page 36]

38. Embezzling a Huge Problem

[] those in authority embezzle funds directly from government ministries, the treasury and parastatal corporations. They steal public lands and other assets. In Kenya, these immoral activities are described as "eating". Men are ready to do anything, including killing others and causing civil war, to get into a position from where they can "eat". Thus the funds that should go into the provision of essential services and the capital that should be husbanded and invested in development are lost. [Page 38]

39. The West Strangles Africa

[] Africa's governance is rooted in its colonial past and it is sustained by neo-colonial structures. The West therefore takes a large share of the blame for the mess we are in. Through political and economic power, bribery, diplomacy, and indoctrination the West maintains a stranglehold on Africa. She uses a number of structures and agencies for this purpose. They include multinational corporations, aid agencies and international organizations namely, World Bank, IMF, the UN and UN agencies all of which are in effect agencies of the West. [Page 39]

40. The Church Cannot Be Neutral in Politics

The church by her nature and work cannot be neutral with regard to politics. The African church continues to contribute substantially to bad governance. She does so mostly by default, through silence and inaction. Silence in effect means approval of the regime in power or of specific political actions. Failure to resist evil means accepting evil, with all the consequences. That, for example, was what happened in Uganda under Obote and Amin. A few courageous Christians leaders, notably Archbishop Janani Luwum and Bishop Festo Kivengere, did at some point confront the rulers .The archbishop was murdered and the bishop had to flee the country. However, it was too late for Uganda -the country was already in ruins. Something similar happened in South Africa when in 1955 the Afrikaner government took over mission schools which had provided at least 90% of African education. The churches were unhappy with the Bantu Education Act but they did not do much beyond making feeble protests. Only the Anglican diocese of Johannesburg, led by Bishop Ambrose Reeves, resisted the take-over. As Father Trevor Huddleston shows in his famous book, *Naught For Your*

Comfort, the publicly stated intention of the Act was to educate Africans for servitude. It was by far the most devastating apartheid law. Yet the churches allowed it to take effect. The church in many other African countries is equally guilty of supporting repression, corruption and other evils by her silence and inaction. This is especially true of evangelical Christians who thus continue to promote evil in many countries. In Kenya this problem is particularly evident in churches and parachurch organizations founded or funded by American evangelicals. [Pages 40-41]

41. History Shows Attempts of Industry

In the eighteenth century King Agaja Trudo of Dahomey thought the best way of stopping the slave trade was to industrialise West Africa with European help. Opuku Ware of Asante in the nineteenth century also tried to innovate industrially. In each case, Europe refused to help.⁴⁸ [Page 43]

42. Africa's Exploitation Began with Slavery

It is probably true, as some African scholars argue, that through the slave trade and colonialism, Europe deflected Africa from her development path.⁵⁰ Certainly the removal of tens of millions of able-bodied Africans to the Americas and Caribbean, the disorganization of African society and the plunder of natural resources had very serious economic consequences for Africa. The international economic system perpetuates, in more subtle ways, the exploitation of Africa which began with slavery and colonial subjugation. [Pages 44-45]

43. Help Maintain Fine Elements of African Culture

There are many fine elements in traditional African culture. These include strong family ties, generosity, and a strong community spirit. But many of them are breaking down due to urbanization and other modern forces. Christians need to find ways of helping their people preserve and strengthen them because they provide invaluable **support to individuals and give society essential cohesion.** [Page 46]

44. Africa Needs Time Management

There are, however, aspects of our culture that are major hindrances to progress. Take the African disregard for time, for example. The economic loss incurred by the continent on account of people, especially males, just idling about is incalculable. This failure to recognize time as a resource is an important reason for the gross inefficiency which characterizes African institutions, including Christian ones. Sadly, biblical

teaching about the importance of making the best use of time has not made much impression on Africans, not even on highly educated and committed Christians. Since Africans can no longer live in a world of their own choosing but are willy-nilly a part of a world busy competing for limited resources, it is vital that we wake up to the importance of proper management of time. There is simply no "African time"! Time is like a large river that flows inexorably to the sea. It waits for no one and the only way to benefit from it is to use it efficiently. [Pages 46-47]

45. Good Management Essential

Management is, simply, the skilful or efficient use of resources to provide the goods and services people require. Good management is essential if a nation is to satisfy the material, intellectual and spiritual needs of its citizens. [Page 48]

46. Place the Best People in Leadership

Africans must overcome personal, family, ethnic and denominational considerations in order to place the very best people available in leadership and managerial positions. [Page 49]

47. Must Be Committed, Hardworking, Honest, and Fair

A good manager requires a good basic education, managerial skills and experience. But these qualifications alone are not enough as Africa has learnt from bitter experience. In addition to having academic and professional qualifications, the manager must be committed, hardworking, creative, honest and fair. Good managers are required at every level of society from village to central government, from small private enterprises to large public institutions, from secular to religious institutions. [Page 49]

48. African Has an Ocean of Needs

Unquestionably education is crucial to economic and social development and it must receive top priority in any serious attempts to find lasting solutions to Africa's problems. Only education will give the people the understanding, knowledge, skills and confidence necessary for life in the modern world. In recognition of these facts African governments spend the lion's share of their budgets on education. However, the budgetary allocations are a drop in the ocean of needs. [Page 51]

49. The Church Must Once Again Be the Leader

If Africa is to have leaders of integrity, ability and a genuine concern for others, the church must once again become a leader in the educational field. First, Christians need to play a leading role in the formulation of national educational policy. They should do their best to ensure that students receive an education that develops the whole person - body, mind and soul. Second, the church needs to set up or revive model centers of educational excellence. Their primary aim would be to provide the best intellectual, moral and spiritual training possible with a view to supplying the nation with men and women of character, imagination, and education. The motto of a famous mission school in Kenya was "Strong to Serve". The mission of Christian centers should be to prepare men and women who are able to serve their country and their church as leaders. With careful planning, commitment and interdenominational collaboration, the African church is perfectly capable of running a number of such centers of excellence. [Page 54]

50. Every Human Being Has Basic Needs

Development ought to mean an improvement in the quality of life such that every human being has their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, health, education) met adequately, their dignity and self-esteem respected, their freedom honored, and their potentiality given full scope for realization. Such development is only possible if it has a strong moral basis. Moral failure is at the heart of the prevailing socio-economic crisis in Africa. Selfishness on the part of the rich Western nations and the ruling African elites is largely responsible for the crisis. Tribalism, corruption, dishonesty, laziness and embezzlement are widespread in African countries. They too contribute very significantly to the social and economic problems facing us. And they are serious obstacles to development. [Pages 54-55]

51. The Church to Fill the Moral Vacuum

Africa's moral capital has been severely eroded by urbanization and other forces originating in the West, including Christianity, colonial rule and secularism. The African church has a special responsibility to fill the growing moral vacuum with the glorious morality of the Bible, which being God-given, applies everywhere. The challenge is awesome. It calls for a church that will effectively transmit biblical values by both word and deed. It calls for a church that is more deeply reflective and more godly. It requires a church leadership that is better trained theologically, more broadly educated and more concerned to bring the light and the requirements of the gospel to

bear fully on every aspect of life - spiritual, social, economic, political, cultural, intellectual, moral. Africa requires the whole of the gospel, from Genesis to Revelation, not selections of it based on fallible human priorities. [Pages 55-56]

52. African to Be Self-reliant in Science and Technology

How can Africa become self-reliant in essential science and technology? First of all, Africans must recognize that they can become self-reliant. We must overcome the mystique that often surrounds science and the unstated belief that science is beyond African ability. The experience of the past thirty years shows clearly that given the opportunity, the African will make as good a scientist as anybody else. What Africans lack is not brains but essential equipment, materials and conducive working and living conditions. [Page 59]

53. Becoming Progressively Poor

In fact, Africa has become progressively poor since the early 1970s, as we have already seen. She has become less and less able to feed herself and increasingly dependent on food imports. Hunger has increased dramatically in many parts of Africa. Between 1974 and 1988 so called food aid to Africa increased by 294%⁵⁶, a clear indication of the magnitude of the problem. It is a fact of which every African, and particularly the educated, the rich and the powerful, should be deeply ashamed. [Page 62]

54. Improve Child Survival

The United Nations Fund for Population Activities, official aid agencies and NGOs are directly involved in population control. Other western agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund who hope to reduce fertility by improving child survival⁵⁷, are indirectly involved in population control. Most Africans do not like these Western-inspired and Western driven population control programs. For one thing, the programs are insensitive to African traditions. Secondly, they help to spread sexual immorality. The vigor with which population control programs and other Western agencies push contraceptives and sex education among children raises questions about their real motives. The AIDS epidemic has increased the number of contraceptive promoters who now include powerful Western radio broadcasts that can be heard clearly in the remotest African village. [Page 63]

55. Physical Environment Can Help

The physical environment is an important factor in the socio-economic crisis facing Africa. Large parts of the continent - the north and parts of eastern and southern Africa - are ecologically fragile, being subject to periodic droughts. But Africa need not be poor. The continent has adequate fertile, well-watered land, and mineral and other natural resources. Even the marginal lands could become productive with proper technology and management. [Page 64]

Chapter 4. Where do we begin?

56. Human Dignity, Prosperity, Health, Freedom, Justice, and Peace

The African people, and more particularly African Christians, must act to change Africa's condition. They must act to replace human degradation with human dignity, poverty and hunger with prosperity, disease with health, oppression with freedom, injustice with justice, conflict with peace. [Page67]

57. Reject the Status Quo

The untold suffering and indignity experienced by the African people are, indeed, contrary to God's purpose for them. We, and especially our educated young people, must reject the status quo - the wretched economic, social and political conditions in which we exist - and make an earnest quest for peace, prosperity and justice. [Pages 68-69]

58. Africa Can Have a Just, Civilized Society

[] God has endowed the continent with adequate natural resources (land, minerals, oil, forests, wildlife and waters). He has also endowed the Africans with the moral and intellectual capacities necessary for a just, civilized and prosperous society. Because of the poverty and underdevelopment of the African society there are people, including many Africans, who think that the black race must be intellectually inferior to the other races. But science, Scripture and experience all agree that all the peoples of the world are equal in their physical, intellectual, spiritual and moral endowments. The important differences between human races are basically cultural and historical. Isolated geographically, different peoples developed along different paths culturally, politically, economically and technologically, some getting further than others. [Page 69]

59. Rural Oriented Small Holder (ROSH)

People ask if there is any hope for Africa. Can she break out of the strong international economic prison in which she is now held? Yes, she can. There are no easy options, but there are options. For instance, take industrialization. Rural oriented small holder (ROSH) industrialization is an alternative strategy that Africa should seriously consider⁶⁰. Designed primarily to meet the needs of small farmers and the rural and peri-urban populations, ROSH industry can develop from production of simple farm implements and consumer goods (bicycles, sewing machines, fans) to the manufacture of more sophisticated machines (diesel engines, electric motors). This strategy will (a) improve skills and technology, (b) promote entrepreneurship, (c) take advantage of the abundant labor and land in rural and peri-urban areas, (d) minimize the need for foreign capital and technology, (e) increase food production, (f) produce basic manufactured goods, (g) ease the burden of balance-of-payments, and (h) promote an attitude of self-reliance in Africa. India and China have benefited greatly from this strategy. To succeed the ROSH industrialization strategy will require strong support from African governments in the form of capital, training and protection of ROSH products. [Page 70]

60. The Church Is God's Instrument for Self-reliance

The third reason why I believe the Africans can become a dignified and self-reliant people is that God has already planted the church in Africa as, I am convinced, His instrument for the transformation that our continent so desperately needs. We have the inspiring examples of Christian pioneers such as David Livingstone who, in his arduous and dangerous work of exploring Central and Southern Africa, was driven by the vision of a civilized, prosperous and Christian Africa. His vision looks like pure fantasy when we consider Africa as he knew it. Livingstone's Africa was characterized by tribal societies that were almost completely illiterate and highly superstitious; poverty and disease were widespread; the Arab slave trade was devastating large parts of the continent; there were hardly any roads and other infrastructure. By the way, Livingstone and other missionaries are frequently criticized for their "civilizing mission", but I think such criticism is misplaced. It is clear from the work and writings of men like Livingstone that what they desired was to spread the light of the gospel and the benefits of Western education and technology in Africa. [Page 72]

61. Christian NGOs Must Tackle the Root of Africa's Poverty and Underdevelopment

The activities of the numerous Western NGOs in Africa today reinforce Western governmental organizations and international agencies in sidelining African governments as far as economic and social development is concerned. African Christian NGOs must not be mere agents or copies of Western NGOs, nor must they be primarily the means of earning a living for the staff as seems to be the tendency now. Instead, they must tackle the root causes of Africa's poverty and under-development and seek to empower, or to require, African governments to play their role effectively, for there is no alternative to a competent and just government. [Pages 75-76]

62. Build Strong Nations Out of Various Ethnic Communities

Since independence most African ruling elites have followed the same policy of divide and-rule because it enables them (the politicians and bureaucrats) to acquire or retain positions of power they could otherwise not have. For instance, thirty years after independence, parts of Kenya are troubled seriously by so-called ethnic clashes, which are evidently the deliberate creation of weak politicians who depend on tribal loyalty for survival.⁶³ Africa cannot obviously revert to tribal societies. The only way forward is to create strong nations out of the various ethnic communities. Close economic and political collaboration among African nations is also vital for the advancement of the African people. All this calls for a very different kind of political leadership from that which African nations have experienced since independence. [Page 78]

63. Governments of the People, by the People, and for the People

First of all, African governments must become "governments of the people, by the people, for the people", to use Lincoln's famous definition of democracy. Only such a government is legitimate. The welfare of the people, not the welfare of the rulers, is the purpose of government as instituted by God. Experience shows that such a government is only possible if it is chosen by the people themselves. Secondly, African governments must become fully transparent and genuinely answerable to the people. Parliamentary democracy is the best system of governance so far devised by man and we need to adopt it whole-heartedly, not halfheartedly as we now do. Of course, it may need to be adapted to suit different circumstances, but the principle "government of the people, by the people, for the people" is not negotiable. Thirdly, African governments must become competent, efficient, just and free from corruption. And they, and the people as

a whole, must become disciplined, making rules and ensuring that they are kept strictly; setting goals and making sure they are achieved. [Pages 78-79]

64. Government Is Both a Divine and a Human Institution.

Christians have a crucial role to play in bringing about good governance in Africa. For this purpose, the first step that we must take is to ensure that we understand the nature and purpose of government. Government is both a divine and a human institution. The Bible teaches that it was ordained by God (Romans 13). Its purpose is to regulate human relations for the good of man whom God made a social being, that is, to live in society. It was for the same reason that God instituted marriage and the family. [Page 79]

65. Nothing New in the African Dictator

That government is a divine institution needs to be said to the Christians who tend to dismiss or to avoid politics, leaving it to the "world". That government is a human institution needs to be said to the Christians who, on the basis of Romans 13, see it in rather mystical terms. Such Christians regard rulers, whether good or bad, as God's appointees and therefore as sacred and as not accountable to those they rule. African despots and their minions rejoice in such mistaken notions. They assiduously court the support of Christians who are naive enough to believe that to question their policies or actions is to question God Himself. Right now Africa has a number of despots who claim to be staunch Christians, some even to be "born-again" Christians. Let us not be deceived. The institution of government was created by God but governments are formed and run by men. African despots do their best to convince their people that autocratic rule is the authentic African form of government. But there is nothing uniquely African about dictatorship. [Pages 79-80]

66. Need to Question Bad Governmental Practices

The Christian tradition that the church in Africa has inherited teaches that the Christian's duty with regard to the state consists of praying for the authorities, obeying them (even revering them) without asking any questions, and paying taxes. Clearly the New Testament teaches obedience, respect, prayer and tax-paying (e.g. Luke 16, Romans 13, 1 Tim 2, 1 Peter 2). The question is, why does the Bible teach these things? The answer is obviously that Christians have an obligation to ensure that there is good governance. That is quite clear from Paul's teaching in 1 Tim 2 and Romans 13. In those

passages the apostle explains both the functions of government and the benefits of good governance to the citizens, including Christian citizens. [Pages 82-83]

67. Cease to Be Spectators and Become Active

We can draw encouragement from the fact that some important changes in the world have been brought about by Christian men and women who were active politicians or social activists. Perhaps the most notable in recent history is William Wilberforce who for 45 years fought hard in the British parliament for the abolition of the African slave trade and the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire. Another was Abraham Lincoln, who as President of the United States, freed the African slaves in his country, an action which later cost him his life. A third example is Lord Shaftesbury who helped to free British children and women from terrible exploitation and inhuman treatment by factory owners who used them as cheap and expendable labor.

The challenge, then, is for African Christians to cease to be spectators and to become active in that difficult but vital field, governance. Africa desperately needs to become organized. She badly needs the lead of true Christians. [Pages 85-86]

68. The Bible Is Our Only Reliable Standard

[] true Christianity is biblical Christianity. That is not to deny that the Christian's personal experience and church tradition have some value: it is to say that the Bible is the only source of true Christianity and the only reliable standard by which we must measure our beliefs and our conduct. [Page 86]

69. Concerned with Godly Things

True biblical Christianity is God-centered. The Bible begins with God, God creating the heavens and the earth and it ends with God, God creating a new heaven and a new earth. Man's principal responsibilities are to know God, "whom to know is eternal life"⁶⁹, to be like Him "you shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy",⁷⁰ and to worship Him. To be like God also means to be concerned with the things that concern Him, which include peace, material wellbeing, justice, health, morality, marriage and family life, and the care of all His creation. This, I believe, was the Christianity the apostle Paul had in mind when he described the gospel he had presented to the Ephesians as "the whole will of God. [Page 87]

70. Africa Needs the Whole Will of God

Africa badly needs the whole will of God. We must avoid selective, superficial or incomplete use of the Word of God like the plague. Selective use of Scripture whether by liberals, evangelicals or "fundamentalists", accounts for the inadequacy of Christianity in the real world of Africa today. Selective use of the Word of God is responsible for the dissension, rivalry, heresies and cults that mar the name of the church and weaken her witness. [Pages 87-88]

71. The Church Trains "Lay" Leaders

The church should, similarly, saturate the world, with theologically trained, spiritually minded, "lay" Christians. Then we can expect Christianity to have a real impact on the world. Then we can expect Christians to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, for then they will be able to penetrate the world and so influence to it. [Page 89]

72. Become the Church of Jesus Christ

I must admit that the church in Africa is far from being what she ought to be. The first challenge therefore is that the church must become genuinely the church of Jesus Christ. The church of Jesus, the church which He desires and which He died for, is "a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless"
.72

73. Develop Christian Character and Attitudes

If the church is to be an effective agent for changing Africa she herself must first be thoroughly transformed. Christianity must be seen much more in the character, attitudes and behavior of those who claim to be Christians than in their words as is often the case now. Pastors and other church leaders have a special responsibility to develop Christian character and attitudes in those they lead. They must do so by example, teaching and insistence on strict discipline. This will not earn them popularity. It may be costly to them in terms of financial, moral or political support. But it is their plain duty to God, to their flock and to society to insist on Christian morality in the church, in the state and in society. [Pages 90-91]

74. Present Day Christianity Keeps Black People Docile

From the slave days to the present day Christianity is seemingly very useful in keeping black people docile. According to the late Malcolm X's line of thought⁵, the white

Christian teaches black Americans to wait patiently for a future heaven while he himself enjoys his heaven here on this earth. [Page 94]

75. The Christian God is a God of Justice, Righteousness and Kindness

The African people everywhere urgently need to know that the Christian God is a God of justice, righteousness and kindness. African Christians need to make this God known through proclamation, by their own lives, and by active participation in the political, social and economic life of their nations. White Christians, too, need to know the God of justice, righteousness and kindness. The past exploitation of the black people by the white people, the unjust EuroAmerican world economic system, racism, and the white man's domination of the world (including the world church) erode the credibility of a white Christianity which either participates in these evils or turns a blind eye to them, but in any case benefits from them. [Pages 94-95]

76. Overcome Apathy, Laziness or a Sense of Hopelessness and Act for the Total Well-being of the African people

The future of Africa depends to a very large extent on the contributions of the church in Africa. The church has the moral duty to help bring peace, prosperity, justice and righteousness to the most wretched people on earth. In order to play her part effectively the church must, first, become truly the church of Jesus Christ, faithful to His teaching, empowered by His Spirit and fully reflecting His holiness. Secondly, the church must be authentically African. Thirdly, African Christians must fully identify with Africa and play an active role in every aspect of social, economic and political life. And they must participate at every level of the development process: from development of economic and political theory to formulation and implementation of policy; from debate to activism; from the highest levels of the national government to village leadership. Each of us must overcome apathy, laziness or a sense of hopelessness and act for the total well-being of the African people and for the glory of God. [Pages 95-96]

Notes

1. Revelation 3: 17

Luke 16:19-31

Matthew 25 :31-46

James 2:1-7,5:1-6 9. James 1 :27

10 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Romans 13: 1-6 12. Romans 13:3-4

13.1 Thessalonians 4:11-12,2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 14.2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9

21. Food and Agricultural Organization, *Rome State of Food and Agriculture*, 1991, p. 43.
- Hancock, Graham. *Lords of Poverty*. London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1991.
39. For fuller discussion of these factors see the AISRED symposium cited under reference number 31 above.
48. Mazrui, Ali A. *The Africans*. London: BBC Publications, 1986, p.165.
50. Odhiambo, Thomas R. (ed). *Hope Born Out of Despair: Managing the African Crisis*. Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1988, chapter 3.
56. World Bank. *World Development Report 1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp 184-5
57. Jolly, R. *UNICEF policy and perspectives: child survival, population growth, environment and development*. Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (1993), vol. 87 Supplement I, pp 32-35.
60. See S. Olofin in the AISRED symposium cited under reference number 31.
63. National Council of Churches of Kenya. *Task force Report on Tribal Clashes*. Presented at an NCKK symposium held at Limuru on 11 June 1992.
- John 17:3
- Leviticus 19:2
- Acts 20:27-31. Stott, John. *Issues Facing Christians Today*. Chapter 7. 72. Ephesians 5:25-27
75. *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (with the assistance of Alex Haley), London: Penguin Books, 1968.