

THE AFRICAN CHURCH CATCHES THE BACK TO JERUSALEM VISION

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From *Lausanne World Pulse*

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*God first gave the vision to the Chinese Church to take the Gospel 'Back to Jerusalem' in the 1940s. Now, there is exciting news to report as Christians in other parts of the world have grabbed the same vision and are making plans to send thousands of missionaries and evangelists from their nations also back to Jerusalem, where the Gospel first started. The Korean churches share in this great call to complete the Great Commission, believers in Taiwan have launched what they call 'Taiwan to Jerusalem,' a growing movement in Mozambique and other parts of southern Africa are mobilizing workers to take Christ's love and power northward through Africa 'back to Jerusalem,' and now the strong and large Church in Nigeria, West Africa, has announced their intention to launch 'Operation Samaria' - to send 50,000 missionaries through the Islamic nations of North Africa, all the way back to Jerusalem! This path will take them through many of the most unevangelized places on the earth, such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Niger, Chad, Mali, Sudan, and Egypt. Isn't it wonderful to see how God is doing something mighty for His glory and kingdom in these last days? The following article by Timothy Olonade is from the *Lausanne World Pulse*:*

The Nigerian church is arguably the largest and most vibrant church in Africa and one of the most dynamic in the world. Nigeria is home to the largest 50,000-seat, single-service auditorium. It also hosted one of the largest events in human history where more than 2.5 million believers gathered in one location for a Christmas celebration. Despite the constant struggle with Islamic forces, Nigeria has a strong fervor and zeal for Christ.

Recently the Nigerian evangelical mission movement announced its plan to mobilize 50,000 Nigerians over the next 15 years for its Operation Samaria, which seeks to take the gospel through the North African Islamic nations back to Jerusalem. Aptly tagged Vision 50:15, the project seeks to include the entire North African [region] and Arabian Peninsula until the gospel gets back to where it came from - Jerusalem. More than 100 top missions leaders (representing 80 agencies, churches, and organizations) who are actively involved in recruiting, training, and sending missionaries from Nigeria affirmed this vision during the November 3, 2005 Nigeria Missions Executive Congress.

Vision 50:15 is indeed a bold step for the Nigerian church, which is currently dealing with its own Islamic, anti-Christian northern territory. However, there is unanimity in the church that the time has come to re-launch the gospel in this fashion. No other country in

Africa has survived the degree of religious upheavals that the Nigerian church has undergone. There is a palpable feeling that the Nigerian church is uniquely suited to fulfill this gigantic vision.

This project has been initiated by the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), which presently has some 95 member bodies with nearly 5,200 missionaries in 56 countries. The association has commissioned various committees, task forces, forums, and networks to help mobilize the church, augment missionary training, locate the fields, and put in place a strong missions base for the anticipated missionary breakthrough this vision anticipates. A study group has proposed there be at least 16 tracks used across the nation to lead various aspects of this ambitious vision to mobilize, train, and release 50,000 Nigerians in the next 15 years into fairly long-term cross-cultural ministries.

The period between 2006 and 2020 has been divided into five three-year phases. The first phase will focus on ownership development, spread of information, and vision education within and outside of Nigeria. Both the church and missions agencies are developing comprehensive, well-articulated plans to ensure the entire body unites to give the target nations the opportunity to hear the gospel.

Vision 50:15 provides the church a focal point for its effort to reach the 10/40 Window. As a local initiative it enables every person to do his or her part within the vineyard and also work together to realize the goal of 50,000 mobilized Nigerians by 2020. With this vision the multi-level efforts in mobilization, research, and training may now find a specific target. Currently, Nigerian missionaries are serving in 14 of the 38 countries covered by this vision!

Our prayer is that many people will be ushered into the kingdom as we make our way back to Jerusalem.

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