

Editorial

The continent of Africa is changing the face of the Christian world. Some of the largest churches in Europe have Ghanaian and Nigerian pastors. Nigerian Pentecostalism has changed how church is done in that country and has an appeal that draws members from many other denominations to their weekly prayer services.

The Christian religion in Africa grew from 8.75 million in 1900 to 355 million in 2000 and reached 450 million by the beginning of 2010. Seventh-day Adventists were late in arriving on the continent, but the last decade has seen phenomenal growth with over five million Adventists on the continent by the end of 2008.

However, in spite of the impressive growth and the emergence of new and varied forms of Christianity, in many ways Christianity in Africa is still a sleeping giant. What would happen if those countries where there are more than 100,000 Adventists would begin to recruit, train, and send missionaries to the 10/40 Window? What would happen if most of the church entities in Africa attained conference status in the next few years? What would happen if Africa reduced the number of members per ordained pastor from 1,500 to 500?

Pardon Mwansa's article on self-reliance and Jon Dybdahl's article on doing theology should challenge the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa to awake and take its rightful place on the stage of world mission and action. The dynamic vitality of African Adventism must be shared.

African leaders must also accept that they are now the ones who will shape and form the way the church deals with the challenges of the continent. Church leaders in Africa can no longer blame the missionaries of the past for the problems the church faces. Instead, Adventism in Africa must take the initiative to provide biblical answers to the unique problems and challenges of the continent.

This issue of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* with its focus on Africa lists missiological lessons and the challenges facing the church in that part of the world, but the church in other parts face similar challenges so the lessons and observations should find wide application.

Bruce L. Bauer, editor