

### 1) Introduction

The [Global Generosity Network](#) and the Lausanne Africa conducted a joint survey among African Christian leaders to understand the state of mission giving in Africa. This survey, the first in a series to be carried out as an integral part of the MATF development practice, was not intended to be scientific but rather an initial effort to get an overview of the current perceptions of African leaders on the subject of mission giving and need for the establishment of an indigenous African fund. Respondents to this first survey are mainly the Anglophone African participants who attended the 3rd Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town. A further survey will be conducted among the Francophone leaders as the next step in series of intended surveys to give cutting edge information and insight to guide mission funding in Africa. 63 leaders from 19 African countries responded to the survey.

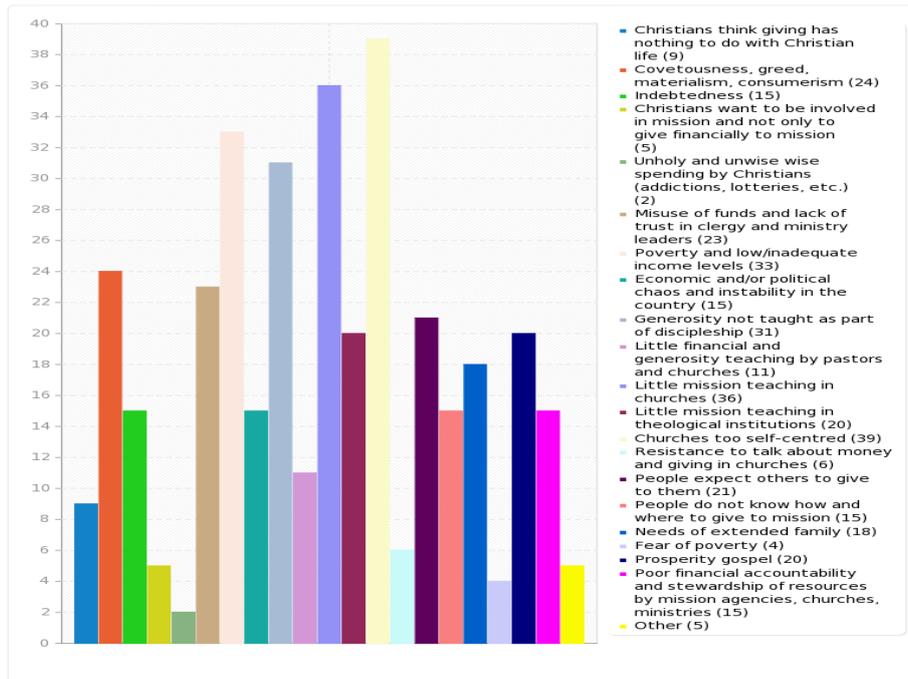
### 2) Results

#### 1. Giving in your country

- i. **Rate Christian financial giving in your country on each of the following**  
Mission giving in African countries seems to be fairly weak and much lower than giving to local churches. This low level of mission giving is a trend mentioned throughout the survey.
- ii. **How much do Christians in countries give financially to Christian causes (church, missions, ministries, people in need)?**  
44.45% of respondents indicated that Christians in their countries give 3% or less of their income to Christian causes although 14.28% of respondents indicated that Christians give 7% or more of their income.
- iii. **How much do Christians in your country give financially to mission?**  
61.90% of respondents mentioned that Christians give 3% or less of their giving to Christian causes to mission. This confirms the concern that Christians give a small percentage of their giving to mission.
- iv. **How much do churches in your country give financially to mission?**  
55.55% of respondents mentioned that churches give 3% or less of their income to mission. This is another confirmation that there could be a problem with the way churches engage in mission initiatives and spend their income. They also do not envision Christians to give more of their giving to mission.

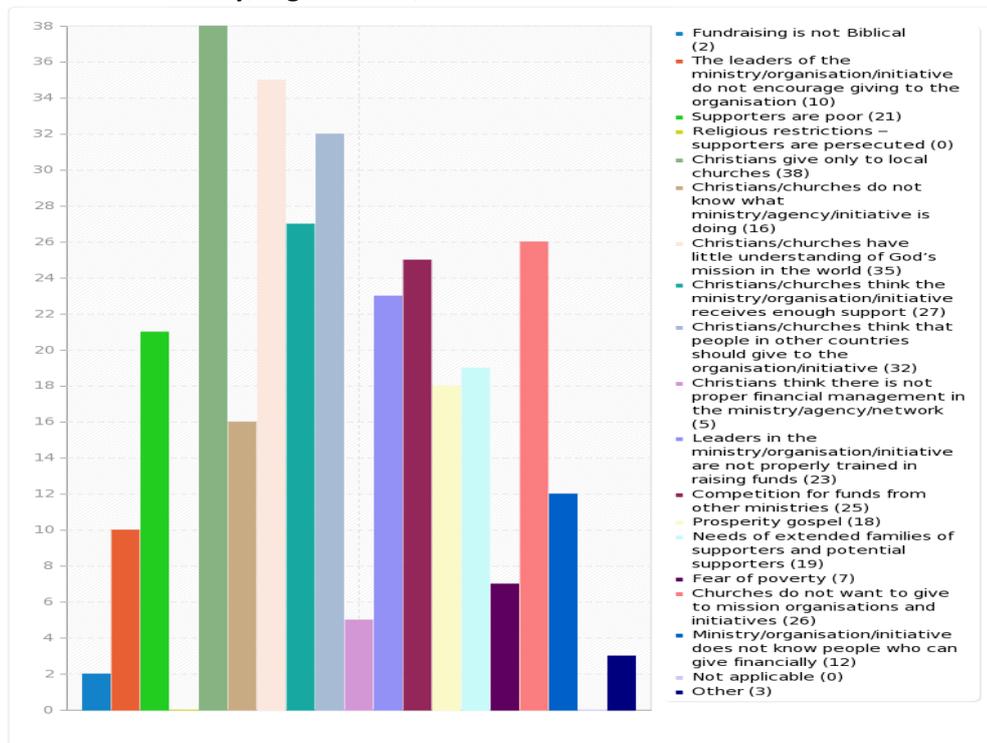
#### 2. Giving to mission initiatives

- i. **The most important obstacles to financial giving to mission initiatives in your country?**



The respondents clearly felt that the major obstacles to mission giving lie within churches that are too self-centred and do not teach enough about mission. Generosity is also not taught as part of discipleship and potentially more to encourage giving to the church. Mission awareness and envisioning in local churches are therefore critical in encouraging mission giving. It is significant that poverty and low income levels was mentioned by 33 or more than 50% of respondents. This is an issue that have to be addressed.

**ii. What are the most important obstacles to financial giving to your ministry/organisation/church's mission initiative?**



The reluctance of the local church to support mission is again reflected in this question. Christians give only to the local church and not to mission

initiatives. Churches have a little understanding of mission and therefore do not give to mission initiatives. What is also significant is that people think mission initiatives receive enough support and that people in other countries should give to the mission initiatives. That indicates a definite perception problem about mission ownership that have to be addressed.

**iii. How does your ministry/organisation/initiative raise funds?**

It seems as if the 'faith-based' approach is being used by most African mission initiatives to raise funds. They pray for funds, mention their financial needs in newsletters and speak in churches. But they do not make a greater effort to encourage giving by Christian businesses or use giving pledges to find support. It does not seem as if the mission initiatives do enough to provide mission education in churches that will result in mission giving. It is interesting that only 12 of the respondents indicated that they approach Western Christians for support. Dependency on outside resources for ministry in Africa might be less of a problem than what many say.

**3. Financial situation of your ministry/agency**

**i. What is the present financial situation of your ministry/organisation/initiative?**

16% of respondents mentioned that the financial position of their ministry is either very good or good, 35% said that it is bad or very bad while 43% indicated that they have just enough funding to survive. The financial situation of the ministries seem to be better than expected although from the comments it is clear that many are struggling. That is especially the case with missionary families working among unreached people groups.

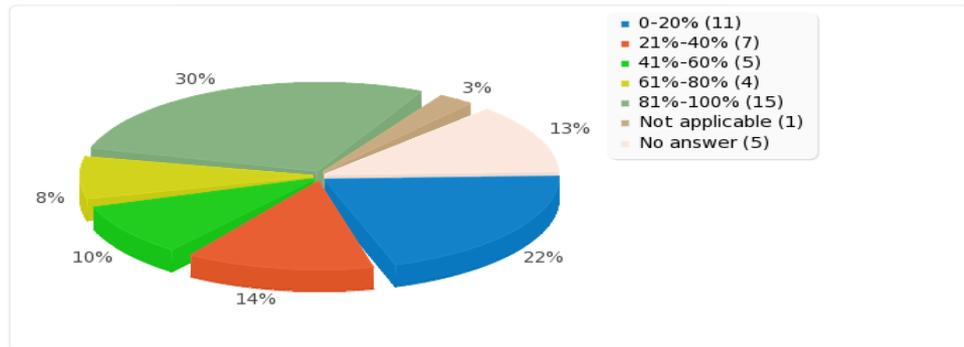
**ii. What do you expect will be the financial situation of your ministry/organisation/initiative in 5 years?**

56% of respondents expect that the future financial position of their ministry will be good or very good, 26% expect they will have enough funds to at least survive and only 4% expect that their financial situation will be bad or very bad. However, many initiatives still expect pressure to support workers even if they might have enough support for projects. Others are looking at income generating initiatives to find more support. Respondents also believe that if stewardship, generosity, giving and mission teaching is being taught in local churches, giving to mission will increase.

**iii. In your understanding what is the present financial situation of mission initiatives in your country?**

Respondents believe that their own ministries are in a better financial position than other mission initiatives in their countries! 62% of respondents indicated that the financial position of mission initiatives in their countries is either bad or very bad and only 4% believe that it is good. It could show that many mission initiatives in Africa struggle to survive on fairly meagre income. Respondents mentioned that there are various reasons for this challenging situation: a) decreased support from West, b) ownership of initiatives, c) understanding of mission as a Western concept, d) a view that there is no need for mission anymore, e) wealthy Christians emigrating, and f) conflict and poverty.

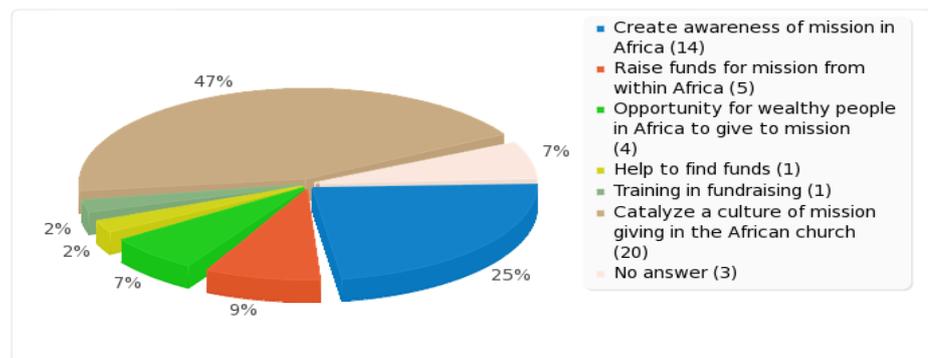
**iv. What is the percentage of your ministry budget that you receive from within Africa?**



38% of respondents mentioned that they receive most of their income (61%-100%) from within Africa. That is more than the 36% who indicated that they receive 40% or less of their income from within Africa. From this response it is clear that dependency on outside resources could be less of a problem than might have been otherwise expected. Even though some initiatives are heavily dependent on Western funds, and despite the poverty of Christian most mission funds come from Africa itself.

#### 4. Support for the Missions Africa Trust Fund (MATF)

##### i. Most important service the MATF can provide to mission initiatives in Africa?



This was perhaps the biggest surprise from the whole survey. 47% of respondents said the most important service the MATF can provide is to catalyze a culture of mission giving in Africa and 25% to create awareness of mission on the continent. No one mentioned raising outside support for mission or the distribution of funds to mission initiatives as being important. The focus of the MATF therefore should be on cultivating a mission giving culture and not necessarily a specific fund. Respondents feel that if the MATF could help to raise awareness of mission giving in Africa, they will be able to raise more funds themselves.

##### ii. Most important initiatives the MATF should fund?

By far the majority of respondents mentioned that the MATF should focus supporting outreach to unreached people groups, youth, theological education and urban mission. Christian social action such as poverty alleviation received much less support and giving to conferences and events only 5 respondents. An underlying focus throughout the survey is the need to investment in income generating initiatives.

##### iii. Would you be willing to give financially to the MATF?

73% of respondents indicated that they are willing to give to the MATF.

##### iv. Would your organisation/church be willing to give financially to the MATF?

This was perhaps an unfair question since many churches and ministries are struggling themselves. Still, it is very encouraging that 40% indicated that their churches and ministries could support the MATF.

**v. Would you be willing to encourage giving to the MATF?**

With 79% of respondents indicating that they will encourage giving to the MATF, it is clear that a pooled African mission giving fund, focusing on the most important issues could be of great value to mission initiatives.

**vi. Would you be willing to help establish the MATF in your country?**

67% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to establish the MATF in their countries.

**5. Comments from respondents**

There were very good comments from respondents. Here are just a few:

- i. "Prosperity" churches have proven that there is money in Africa. We now need to see a valid stewardship and giving culture develop in churches that are Biblical and with a passion to reach the unreached'
- ii. 'most churches do not consider missions as important as building church structures and hosting big conference events which is where most of the money goes to'
- iii. 'we need to find a workable model combining personal support raising, bi-vocational careers, big donor giving and Christian investment opportunities.'
- iv. 'Launching of MATF as a fund agency is crucial. It is important to launch it to give it a national presence by clearly stating its objectives, membership, funding request procedures, etc.'
- v. 'It is very hard for organisations that would benefit from the giving to teach giving and stewardship in churches without the suspicion that they are just doing it for their own benefit.'
- vi. 'Once the African Church has a culture of thinking beyond their denomination and the benefit supporting a mission initiative accrued to them, half of our work is done when the African church has a paradigm shift.'
- vii. 'The Church in Africa is only searching for a means to use the God given resources for the work of the kingdom, we are not poor'
- viii. 'I believe catalyzing a culture of missional giving and re-orientating about the theology of giving rather than prosperity gospel will really help the church in Africa.'

**3) Recommendations**

1. The MATF leaders should develop a neutral space and platform to:
  - i. create awareness of and training in stewardship, generosity, mission giving and fund mobilization especially in local churches;
  - ii. develop contextualised African mission giving resources;
  - iii. launch a pooled mission giving and distribution fund that could also leverage funding from outside Africa. The focus of the fund should be on funding ministry among unreached people groups, developing younger leaders, theological education (and perhaps specifically mission education) and urban ministry; and
  - iv. launch a mission focused business investment fund.
2. The quality of operations and management will be crucial in the MATF success
3. Include respected local church and denominational leaders in the MATF Leadership Group to engage the church in Africa more effectively
4. Keep the MATF African with African church, business and ministry ownership
5. Develop a network of mission giving ministries and expand the reach of these ministries

6. Country teams seem to be essential in the success of the MATF. These teams could organise think-tanks, consultations, summits, raise funds, etc
7. Consider innovative ideas such as giving co-operatives, conferences as giving platforms, etc

#### **4) Conclusion**

There seems to be widespread support for the concept of an African mission giving initiative and fund. Many respondents commented about the importance of the MATF as African mission giving initiative. Somebody said 'I truly like the idea of the MATF, I hope this can be promoted to all sectors of the church: including Seminaries and other Church Based Organizations'. Another remarked that the MATF could provide a platform for ministries to encourage giving. The challenge would be to change the focus from church-focused giving to Kingdom-focused giving in churches. However, prayer would be a key as one responded correctly emphasised. It would be good to have a further consultation process in different countries while establishing the MATF continentally.

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