

THE BMA'S MINISTRY HISTORY IN AFRICA

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Africa is known as “the dark continent,” so titled by author Henry Stanley not because of its inhabitants or socioeconomic status, but because of the mystery it remains for Europeans and Westerners. Let’s be honest, for many in the West the closest we have come to Africa is Disney’s *The Lion King*. However, before we discount that as juvenile and of no value, let’s look at some of the real lessons it teaches about Africa. The opening scene of the rising sun accompanied by the Zulu chant that is translated in the famous song, “Circle of Life” captures our attention quickly. The animals on the Savannah are at full attention as Mufasa the King presents his newborn son Simba on Pride Rock. The Circle of Life is the thrust of the movie. In the positive it represents the ways things “should” be and the respect that is required for authority, family, caring for others, and seeing ourselves as part of the big picture...not being the big picture. In the negative (not seen in the movie) it no doubt also can lead to an extreme reverence for and worship of nature. The movie does not portray God; instead, it depicts the spirit-man (in this case a monkey) as in charge of the process. The more in-depth extremes of this would include ancestor worship, witchcraft, and various forms of animism.

Later in the movie, we are introduced to two of the most likeable characters in Timon and Pumbaa. They live by the mantra of Hakuna Matata...no worries. After a life-threatening experience, they are taken back to the Circle of Life. In the end, after Simba is misled, he also returns to living the Circle of Life. A summary of some of the lessons we know about African culture in contrast to Western culture would include the following: they are very group oriented while we are individualistic; there is a great respect for “oughtness,” the way things should be, while we celebrate self-identity; Africans tend to be relational while we are achievement oriented; and they value the event and the experience while we are governed by strict adherence to time.

When did the gospel first go to Africa? Remember, young Jesus and His family fled to Egypt. Simon of Cyrene carried the cross of Jesus. Cyrene is modern-day Libya. On the Day of Pentecost there were people from Egypt and Cyrene present. Philip led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ. Believers from Cyprus and Cyrene first preached the gospel to the gentiles in Antioch of Syria. Throughout the first centuries of Christianity, northern Africa was a fertile ground for Christianity.

Overall, the worldwide missionary movement in Africa lagged a little behind the movement in Asia; but once it got going it has been a harvest field for the gospel. In the past 50 years of missions there has been what is called the “Great Missions Shift.” Fifty years ago, the majority of followers of Christ lived in Western Europe and North America. Today the majority live in Africa, Asia, and South America. In the modern era, the Moravians were the first to send missionaries to Africa. They were followed soon by



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the London Missionary Society and missionary Robert Moffat. Moffat's son-in-law David Livingstone, Mary Slessor, David Grenfell, and William Shepphard were among well-known early missionaries to Africa.

Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) Global Missions' first works in Africa were through the Portuguese speaking countries. Pastor Manuel Ramos in the Cape Verde Islands was the first BMA missionary in Africa in the early 1950's. Soon thereafter, Pastor Antonio Duarte from Lisbon, Portugal was sent by the Portuguese association to Angola, Africa. He enjoyed a very fruitful ministry until the start of a 30-year civil war that ended the ministry.

The BMA presence in Africa increased greatly in the late 80's and 90's with the connection between missionary Ray Loven in Ghana. That ministry developed more with the ministries of BMA missionaries John and Margaret Lindsay, Paul and Kerri Huermann, Dale and Celia Broom, and numerous ChangeMaker missionaries. Also, BMA missionaries in the Middle East began establishing works in northern Africa in places such as Egypt, Sudan, and Morocco. The newest BMA missionaries in Africa are Joshua and Megan Phiri in Zambia.

Two noteworthy partners in African missions are Water for Christ and Evangelistic International Ministries (EIM). Water for Christ, under the direction of founder Tim Tyler has worked diligently to dig water wells in Ghana and other places, as well as invest in the overall ministry. EIM,

under the direction of founder Rocky Goodwin and continued ministry through his son Mike Goodwin, has invested through pastor training and their Shepherd Bag ministry. EIM has had a great impact through their pastor training in Tanzania and helped to lead in the establishment of the BMA of Tanzania.

BMA Global Missions currently ministers in the following African countries: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon (through the ministry of BMA missionary Mike Poirier), Cape Verde, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Morocco, Mozambique (through the churches of the BMA of Costa Rica), Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia.

In this issue of *mission:world*, you will hear stories from ChangeMaker missionaries from Tanzania, Ghana, Cape Verde, Nigeria, Zambia, and Mozambique. Please continue to pray that the impact of BMA churches through BMA Global Missions will grow exponentially on the continent of Africa.

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John 3:16 in three languages of Africa:

Deus amá mundo de tal manera q Ele dá sé únig
fidg pa'qu tud gent ta acreditá ná-El qu ta ben
moré mas és tem vida eterna.

- Capeverdean Creole

'Sabou Ama adouna gai ibebe, Aini wo se tourou
go obou, ine woi wo le gawase ye, yamar' ka
omo sogo wo bemo ga:

- Burkina Faso

Pakuti Mlungu etemwesya ngako charo chino, ni
pechipa Mwana wake wovyalikwa yeka, kuti ali
wonse ommvwila yeve angataike, sembê awe na
moyo wosasila.

- Zambia (Nsenga)

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MINISTRY TO ORPHANS IN ZAMBIA

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Growing up in the rough neighborhood of Lusaka, Zambia, I (Joshua) didn't hear the gospel until I was 14 years old. Through an interesting course of events, a former friend and criminal who had found faith in God while in prison introduced me to my Lord and Savior. It took many years for God to really get ahold of my life. I am so grateful for His mercy and patience! When I accepted Christ as my Savior, He gave me the desire to share the gospel with the lost and those who have never experienced the Father's love.

When I was 25 years old, I attended a discipleship training school at Youth with A Mission (YWAM) and began working in an orphanage and school ministry near Livingstone, Zambia. Those were years of spiritual growth and mission development in remote villages. One day, God sent a ministry group to Love's Door. In that group was a young lady named Meagan. Growing up in Colorado, Meagan had been introduced to God at a young age and had put her faith in Him. She grew up in church and was part of many ministries involving children and youth. Finally, she chose to go on The World Race through Adventures in Missions. Our courtship began!

Three years later, we were married in Meagan's small hometown of Kiowa, Colorado. From there, we started our amazing journey to Zambia. (I almost said, "into the unknown" because so many things at that point were unknown! But we had already had a few confirmations that our way was being clearly plotted out for us by our God.) We didn't have any monthly supporters at that point. We only had Meagan's savings account and many, *many* unknowns!

With bright hopes and unrealistic visions of seeing a quick movement of God sweeping sinners into saints in just a few years, we dreamed of orphans being raised up to be the spiritual and national leaders of

tomorrow. We could see waves of young people coming from the West and having their lives radically altered by the power of God working through them for the least and the lost. We envisioned opportunities in other locations where we were partnering with other Africans to lead similar works. But in reality, the start was slow. Now, the words of the Psalmist came alive: *"It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them. You are my King and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob"* (Psalm 44:3-4).

In 2019 God intervened in a mighty way! Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) America adopted us as their missionaries to Zambia through the work of our pastor John Smith from Majestic View Church in Kiowa, Colorado. Now God has fulfilled His Word. He has been so faithful. Never a word has dropped to the ground and disappointed us. Never a promise has gone unfulfilled. Though we waited many times, yet He has remained true and faithful.

Through the support of BMA Missions and some individual churches, our needs have been met and many of our heart's desires have been provided.

Now we have two wells for drinking water and irrigation in our village of Mbangweta. We have a fully built church and no longer have to host church services out under a tree. The younger children are being blessed with God's favor; they have a preschool in their village. We have Bible study groups spreading like wildfire through many other villages. And now, God has blessed Meagan and I with our own child, Ashlyn! God is doing amazing things!

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TAILGATE TALKS with BLAKE MARTIN

BY: Holly Meriweather
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Blake Martin has a story to tell . . . and he does it from the tailgate of his pickup. It just makes sense to talk about Jesus in the environment where he is most comfortable – the family farm.

His videos are called Tailgate Talks, and each one comes from his heart, what God shows him about everyday life, particularly country life.

Blake was born and raised in central Arkansas then called to preach at the age of fourteen. Although his pastor and other mentors warned him of the difficulties of ministry, he traveled around for preaching and revival appointments with his parents, homeschooling him as he did so. At the age of eighteen, he began serving in churches first as a youth pastor then as lead pastor and other pastoral roles.

During those two decades he says, “I learned lessons the hard way about ministry. God took me to the woodshed many times.”

Since 2018, he has served as youth and worship pastor at Mount Pleasant in Plumerville, where his family’s farm is located and where he grew up. The farm is a special place, and he and his wife Sarai are now raising their daughter to love and appreciate it as well.

Not long after the pandemic began and churches shut down, he started filming daily devotional thoughts at the farm then sharing them with his congregation. Meant to encourage church members and keep them connected, the videos were a blessing to them during a difficult time. When Luis Ortega noticed the videos, he asked Blake if Lifeword could

partner with him and help produce his videos weekly,

Wearing his trademark overalls and sitting on the tailgate of his pickup truck, he tapes three-minute videos inspired by, “just thinkin”.

“The big idea,” Blake says, “is to connect with people, and the foundation of the message is communicating the gospel in a way that is real. Nothing more real than a guy in overalls in a field on a farm.”

Blake recently had an idea to take his videos on location in Texas, taping them from historic and tourist-y places, along with churches and ranches all over the state. With the help of one of his youth guys, Blake taped twenty or so episodes in less than a week from locations like the Branch Davidian Compound, the Bush Presidential Center, and Dallas Cowboys Stadium.

Dropping every Wednesday on Lifeword.org, Tailgate Talks Texas Tour episodes are currently airing on Lifeword.org.

