WHAT IS GOD’S DESIGN FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA?

WHEATON, Ill.—The church in Africa is growing rapidly. Some estimate that in the twentieth century alone, the number of Christians on the continent increased by over 300 million. Local churches have been forced to adapt to these trends, meeting in makeshift structures, classrooms, and even outdoors to accommodate increased numbers. The African church is known for its zeal, its sense of community, and its care for the society around it. And yet, the church in Africa faces unique weaknesses and challenges.

Conrad Mbewe, pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church in Zambia, knows and loves the African church. In *God’s Design for the Church: A Guide for African Pastors and Ministry Leaders* (Crossway, October 2020), he addresses some of the most pressing issues the church in Africa faces today, applying biblical principles in the context of African culture, in order to lead the church into greater depth and maturity.

“I have written as a son of the African soil who has seen the many ways in which the church in Africa is caught in a rut that deprives it of the capacity to rise beyond its current levels,” writes Mbewe. “I have written in a way that foreign missionaries and visiting international preachers cannot speak or write without being grossly misunderstood. In applying the biblical teachings in each chapter, I have scratched where it itches the most. I have done so with the prayer that readers may see where changes need to be made so that their churches would begin to function in a more biblical and, thus, a more God-glorifying way.”

With illustrations and application drawn from African culture, *God’s Design for the Church* answers twenty questions about specific areas of church life, such as the following:

- What is the church’s task in the world?
- What is the role of church members?
- What should happen during worship services?
- Does it matter what your church believes?
- How should your church relate to the state?

Femi B. Adeleye, director of Langham Preaching Africa, writes, “With biblical insight and down-to-earth illustrations, Mbewe takes us on an insider’s exploration of the nature, character, and challenges of the rapidly expanding church in Africa. His comprehensive but easy-to-read analysis confirms much..."
of what is visible and does not shy away from often hidden ‘hot potatoes,’ such as money matters, issues of discipline, and other trends that define, enhance, or undermine the life and witness of the church. His perspective has implications for the future of the body of Christ, not only in Africa but also other parts of the world.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Conrad Mbewe (PhD, University of Pretoria) is pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church in Lusaka, Zambia, and senior lecturer at the African Christian University. Conrad has authored over nine books as well as contributed to many volumes. He and his wife, Felistas, have three children and three foster children.

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