

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Realities, Opportunities, and Impact

Edited by

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Chapter 10

Reading and Leading- Challenges for African Christian Leaders

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AFRICAN CHRISTIANS AS READERS

As people of the Book, Christians often place a high value on reading. While in earlier eras elites in much of the world monopolized literacy in service of status and power, Christians have often been at the forefront of educating the masses for literacy. Protestants especially have placed a strong emphasis on allowing everyone to read the Bible and interpret it

competently. Wherever such Christians have been influential, this value has positively influenced education, literacy rates, the publishing of reading materials, and reading itself (Woodberry 2012, 249-51). And yet scholars have largely failed to study the reading patterns of global Christians and to consider what those patterns tell us about world Christianity. This chapter is intended as a first step toward researching and analyzing these patterns and considering how an understanding of these patterns might be helpful for those involved in writing, publishing, and disseminating Christian material today.

The three countries that were examined are majority Christian.¹ The World Christian Database reports adult literacy rates of 57 percent for the Central African Republic (CAR); 70 percent for Angola; and 72 percent for Kenya. While each country is multilingual, we carried out research in the official language of Angola (Portuguese), in both official languages of

¹ Angola, with a population of 14 million, is roughly 60 percent Roman Catholic and an additional 28 percent Protestant. The CAR, with 4.5 million, in its last census was half Protestant and 29 percent Roman Catholic. Kenya, with a population of 43 million, is roughly half Protestant and a quarter Roman Catholic.

Kenya (English and Swahili), and in French for the CAR.² The questionnaire was administered to Christians only, and largely targeted those who were literate and thus had more formal education than average, and those who were active in their churches.³ Nine percent of our respondents were pastors.

African communities, it is often said, need to cultivate a stronger reading culture (Chakava 1996, 34; Otiye 2011, Commeyras, and Mazile 2011). However, our survey results provide evidence that many African Christians read quite a bit. One-third of the respondents indicated they had read at least six books in the last year, with 60 percent of pastors reporting they had read at least six. This can be compared to Pew results showing that half of American adults had read five or fewer books in the previous year (Pew 2014). That is, while African Christians read books at lower rates than Americans do, the difference is less than one might expect. African pastors read books at higher rates than the adult US population as a whole.⁴ In our interviews many influential African leaders reported being avid readers, often pointing out the books in their offices or libraries and reporting plans to collect and read more. Pastor Rene Malepou, president of the Communauté des Églises Baptistes Indépendantes in the CAR, for example, pointed to the disorder among his office books as evidence of his frequent use of them. He reported that he regularly wakes up at midnight and reads till 4 a.m. Pastor Dinis Eurico of Angola, radio preacher and national president of the Igreja Evangelica Sinodal de Angola, reports reading the entire Bible each year. He reads a wide variety of books by African and American Christian writers, including books by Nigerian theologian Tokunboh Adeyemo and Ugandan Bishop Pesto Kivengere, both of whom he considers himself privileged to have met. Twenty-six-year-old Kenyan environmentalist Patrick Nyachogo reports that he reads a minimum of one book per month, mostly by African authors. Chinua Achebe's *Things*

Fall Apart is a favorite.

² While Sango also is an official language of the CAR and is widely spoken, French is the language of schooling, and thus the CAR Research team decided that French would serve for our purposes.

³ Fifteen percent of Kenyan respondents were pastors (13.2 percent) or denominational leaders (2.1 percent). In the CAR, 12.7 percent of respondents were either pastors (9 percent) or denominational leaders (3.7 percent). And just over

4.6 percent of Angolan respondents were either pastors (4.2 percent) or denominational leaders (0.4 percent).

⁴ Survey results also showed that more than half of the respondents indicated that they read the Bible daily, with three-quarters indicating they read the Bible at least once a week. By comparison, roughly 21 percent of self-identified Christians in the United States read the Bible daily and 50 percent at least weekly (Barna Group 2014, 11).

Various leaders reported reading in their area of expertise. For example, medical professor Nestor Mamadou Nali of the CAR reports that he reads technical literature related to his specialty as a professor of medicine but also reads on the topic of leadership. Civil engineer and business owner Evariste Dignito of the CAR reported reading primarily books on civil engineering but also the Bible, where he especially enjoys the historical books of Kings and Chronicles. Architect Edouard Nvouni (the CAR) reads technical literature in his field but also Christian literature more broadly and the Bible. Reading, he says, helps him develop intellectually. General Kianga of Kenya indicated that he likes to read about other African leaders like Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela. The forty-year-old Cosmas Maina, founding director of Teen's Watch, an organization serving at-risk drug and alcohol addicts as well as prostitutes, reads widely both on the Internet and elsewhere. He reports that he almost exclusively reads sources written by non-Africans because he cannot find African authors addressing the topics of drug addiction, community action, and harm reduction that are his focus.

Leading pastors often stressed the importance of broad reading to their ministries. For example, Assemblies of God Pastor Edward Munene of Kenya said, "I have a statement I love saying to myself, that if I am not learning, I am not growing. And if I am not growing then I am dying." He reports that he set himself a goal for 2013 of reading 130 books, a goal he achieved. Pastor Oscar Muriu of Nairobi Chapel said he regularly asks other pastors to recommend books he should be reading. He intentionally recruits pastoral interns who are university educated and "who have a love for books"-which he sees as a critical pastoral attribute in the modern urban world. His reading, he reports, is increasingly oriented toward books focusing on leadership, ministry, and the specific questions he needs to address in his preaching. Bishop Bosco of Kenya indicated that he reads as part of sermon preparation and listed as favorites Dag Heward-Mills

of Ghana, David Oyedepo of Nigeria, and John C. Maxwell of the United States.

Some African Christian leaders we interviewed highlighted the cost of books and stated that they thus preferred using a computer or cell phone to read resources on the Internet, often for free. Patrick Nyachogo points out, for example, that Joel Osteen's books are expensive, but that he is able regularly to read free short postings on Osteen's web page. In each country over 20 percent of respondents indicated that they read the news, articles, or books on their cell phone every day. And yet over half of respondents reported at least occasionally purchasing books at local Christian bookshops.⁵ In all three countries, African Christians read using a combination of print and electronic resources.

⁵ In Angola, 57.5 percent; in the CAR, 56.8 percent; and in Kenya, 72.1 percent.

FAVORITE AUTHORS OF AFRICAN CHRISTIANS

One of the items on our survey asked: "If you have a favorite author, what is his or her name?" While 3,614 respondents provided an answer to this question, many answers were illegible, incomplete (using only a first or last name), or referenced an author of a book of the Bible. Some provided the name of a Bible translator/translation (Louis Segond in the CAR, Joao Almeida in Angola). Furthermore, many names appeared only once or twice, proving difficult to identify. By limiting the analysis to author names showing up three or more times within a single country, we were able to determine the identity of each named author. This gave us a manageable and yet sufficiently large data set for analysis. The data in this chapter refers to eighty-eight names identified by Kenyan respondents as favorite authors, forty-four names by CAR respondents, and thirty names by those in Angola (see Appendix B, Q.93). At one end of the continuum are authors who received only three votes. At the other end we find 162 entries by Kenyans identifying Ben Carson, a retired African American neurosurgeon from Johns Hopkins, as their favorite author. Table 10- 1 provides the ranking of the top names in each country, beginning with names mentioned most frequently. (If two names are listed an equal number of times, they are given the same numerical ranking.)

Angolan favorite authors included the poet and first president of Angola

Antonio Agostinho Neto (#1); a psychiatrist (Augusto Cury #8); musicians such as Irma Sofia (#5); the poet Luis Vaz de Camoes (#23), as well as other literary figures; novelists; and pastors. CAR favorites included the fiction author Ahmadou Kourouma (#5); the film director and producer Ousmane Sembene (#8); ethnologist and writer Amadou Hampate Ba (#8); folklorist and poet Birago Diop (#33); along with other literary figures, novelists, and pastors. Kenyan favorite authors included a historian (Assa Okoth,

#32); a political scientist (Ali Mazrui, #56); a former politician (Miguna Miguna, #22); a former criminal (John Kiriamiti, #20); a theologian (John Mbiti, #26); and various other literary figures, novelists, and pastors.

In all three countries prominent literary figures whose works were not religious or Christian were also included in the top names given. Often these were authors from their own country. Thus, CAR respondents identified two local literary figures, Pierre Sammy Mackfoy (#1) and Etienne Goyemide (#2), as their favorite authors. Angola respondents identified two Angolan literary figures as their favorite authors, Antonio Agostinho Neto (#1), and the white Angolan writer "Pepetela"- Artur Carlos Mauricio Pestana dos Santos (#2). Slightly lower in the rankings Kenyans noted Kenyan literary figures Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (#3), Wallah Bin Wallah (#14), Ken Walibora (#17), Francis Imbuga (#30), Grace Ogot (#48), and Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye (#70). Kenyans also identified top African literary figures from other countries as favorites, including Nigerian Chinua Achebe (#4) and Tanzanian Said Ahmed Mohammed (#20). Respondents from the CAR identified leading literary authors from other African Francophone nations, such as Ahmadou Kourouma (#5) from Cote d'Ivoire, Camara Laye (#8) from Guinea, Amadou Hampate Ba (#8) from Mali, and Ousmane Sembene (#8) and Leopold Sedar Senghor (#12) from Senegal. Respondents from Angola mainly chose literary figures from Angola, including Oscar Ribas (#8) and Penelas Santana (#11), but also mentioned some from Brazil (Augusto Cury, #8) and Portugal (Luis Camoes, #23). Of course, literary figures from outside Africa also made their appearance in these lists: for Kenyan respondents, William Shakespeare (#19) and C. S. Lewis (#38); for respondents from the CAR, Albert Camus and Victor Hugo (tied for #14), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (#19), Emile Zola (#28), and Jean-Paul Sartre (#33). In all three countries novelists that we might not consider literary figures were mentioned as favorites: in Kenya, Sidney Sheldon (#15), John Grisham (#22), Francine Rivers (#32), Danielle Steele (#38), James Patterson (#41), Robert Ludlum (#58), Karen Kingsbury (#58), Dan Brown (#70), and J. K. Rowling (#70).

A surprisingly high percentage of favorite authors were ordained pastors and preachers, many of them megachurch pastors. In Kenya, favorite pastoral authors included Joel Osteen (#2), John C. Maxwell (#5), Joyce Meyer (#6), Rick Warren (#6), T. D. Jakes (#8), Ellen G. White (#8), Billy Graham (#25), Kenneth Haggo (#26), John Mason (#26), Benny Hinn (#32), Max Lucado (#32), Bill J. Ybels (#41), Mark Finley (#58), John Hagee (#58), John Piper (#58), Juanita Bynum (#70), and Robert Schuller (#70) from the United States. Favorites from Nigeria included David Oyedepo (#11) and Chris Oyakhilome (#32); from Ghana, Dag Heward-Mills (#12); from the Bahamas, Myles Munroe (#10); and from Great Britain, William Booth (#12), John Stott (#16), Derek Prince (#45), and Charles Spurgeon (#48). Kenyan pastors included John Mbiti (#26), Joe Kayo (#32), and Simon Mbevi (#48).

Angolans also identified pastors as favorite authors, including Angolans Augusto Chipesse (#14) and Joaquim Hatewa (#23), a Roman Catholic priest. Angolan favorite pastoral writers from the United States included John Maxwell (#3), Billy Graham (#8), Tim LaHaye (#13), Rick Warren (#14), Joyce Meyer (#17), Mike Murdock (#17), Jaime Kemp (#17), and Benny Hinn (#23). From Brazil, we find Silas Malafaia (#11), and from Great Britain, John Stott (#23).

CAR respondents identified favorite pastor-authors from France, Alfred Kuen (#6) and Henri Blocher (#22); from Switzerland, Jules Marcel Nicole (#22) and Rene Pache (#28); from Cameroon, Zacharias Tanee Fomum (#3); from the DRC, Paul Bunga Mpindi (#6); from the CAR, David Koudougouret (#33); from Nigeria, David Oyedepo (#14) and Emmanuel Eni (#33); from South Korea, David Yonggi Cho (#20); from China, Watchman Nee (#28); from Great Britain, John Stott (#14), Derek Prince (#22), and Charles Spurgeon (#33); and from the United States, Billy Graham (#4), Martin Luther King, Jr. (#14), Tommy Lee Osborn (#20), and Bill Bright (#33).

For authors who are ministers, one variable that sometimes affected who was considered a favorite author was denominational affiliation. Some leading ministerial authors (Billy Graham, T.D. Jakes, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Myles Munroe, Joel Osteen, John Stott, Rick Warren) are read widely across denominations. For others, there is a much closer tie to a particular church. Thus, in Angola all fourteen nominations of Luis Aires Samakumbi came from his own denomination Igreja Evangelica Congregacional de Angola. In the CAR, fourteen out of the fifteen nominations for Silas Ali came from his own denomination, Communauté des Eglises Apostoliques en Centrafrique. In Kenya, 74 percent of Ellen G. White's fifty votes came from fellow Seventh Day Adventists; 76 percent of Nancy Van Pelt's seventeen votes also came from fellow Seventh Day Adventists; and all thirty votes for William Booth came from members of his own Salvation Army. Similarly, in Kenya, Ghanaian Pastor Dag Heward-Mills and Nigerian pastors David Oyedepo and Chris Oyakhilome were cited largely, though not exclusively, by members of their own church associations (Redeemed Gospel Church, Winner's Chapel, and Christ Embassy).

According to J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, a leading scholar of African Christianity, in some of these large, prosperity-oriented churches pastors regularly turn their sermons into books and expect all leaders in their church associations to read what they write while sometimes discouraging followers from reading the writings of others. In such settings reading is intertwined with a certain sort of spirituality and is a function of people's relationship with their spiritual leader, who is understood to mediate spirituality and success. What the top leader writes is sometimes treated as an "enchanted word." By reading this word, followers are "soaking in the anointing."⁶

Angola	CAR	Kenya
1. Antonio Agostinho Neto	1. Pierre Sammy Mackfoy	1. Ben Carson
2. Pepetela	2. Etienne Goyemide	2. Joel Osteen
3. John Maxwell	3. Zacharias Tanee Fomum	3. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o
4. Rebecca Brown	4. Billy Graham	4. Chinua Achebe
5. Irma Sofia	5. Ahmadou Kourouma	5. John C. Maxwell
6. Canguimbo Ananas	6. Alfred Kuen	6. Joyce Meyer
6. Luis "Aires" Samakumbi	6. Paul Mbunga Mpindi	6. Rick Warren
8. Augusto Cury	8. Amadou Hampate Ba	8. T. D. Jakes
8. Billy Graham	8. Camara Laye	8. Ellen G. White 10. Myles Munroe
8. Oscar Ribas 11. Silas Malafaia	8. Ousmane Sembene	11. David Oyedepo
11. Penelas Santana	11. Silas Ali	12. William Booth
13. Tim LaHaye	12. Leopold Sedar Senghor	12. Dag Heward-Mills
14. Augusto Chipesse	13. Aime Fernand David Cesaire	14. Wallah Bin Wallah
14. Rick Warren	14. Albert Camus	15. Sidney Sheldon
14. Wanhenga Xitu	14. Victor Hugo	16. John Stott
17. Bambila (Manuel Simao)	14. Martin Luther King	17. Nancy Van Pelt
17. Jaime Kemp	14. David Oyedepo	17. Ken Walibora
17. Fritz Laubach	14. John Stott	19. William Shake- speare
17. Lor Mbongo	19. Jean Jacques Rousseau	20. John Kiriamiti
17. Joyce Meyer	20. David Yonggi Cho	21. Said Ahmed Mo- hammed
17. Mike Murdock	20. Tommy Lee Osborn	

Table 10-1. Favorite Authors by Country

⁶ Personal communication, June 22, 2014.

National Language	Author's Nationality	Author's Language	Kenya Favs.	CAR Favs.	Angola Favs.
English	Bahamas	English	2.8%	-	-
	Canada	English	0.3%	-	-
	Ghana	English	2.0%	-	-
	Kenya	English/Swahili	19.2%	-	-
	Nigeria	English	9.7%	2.6%	-
	South Africa	English	0.2%	-	-
	Tanzania	English/Swahili	1.1%	-	-
	United Kingdom	English	6.8%	3.7%	1.1%
	USA	English	56.4%	11.6%	29.4%
	French	Cameroon	French	-	6.6%
Central African Republic		French	-	26%	-
Cote d'Ivoire		French	-	5.7%	-
Democratic Republic of Congo		French	0.5%	4.4%	1.4%
France		French	-	15.5%	-
Guinea		French	-	4.4%	-
Mali		French	-	3.8%	-
Martinique		French	-	3.6%	-
Senegal		French	-	6.8%	-
Switzerland		French	-	2.0%	-
Portuguese	Angola	Portuguese	-	-	57.4%

	Brazil	Portuguese	0.3%	-	8.2%
	Portug al	Portuguese	-	-	1.1%
Other	China	Chinese	0.3%	0.9%	-
	Germa ny	German	0.5%	0.7%	1.4%
	South Korea	Korean	-	1.5%	-

Table 10- 2. Percentages of Readers Naming Favorite Authors according to Origin

READING PATTERNS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

One of the most obvious observations from the data about book authors and their readers is that we are operating in a globalized world. Table 10- 2 provides information on the percentage of readers in each of the three countries (Angola, the CAR, Kenya) that identified a favorite author from specific countries of the world and shows the national languages of the authors' countries of origin.

The following observations are based on Table 10-2:

1. African Christians are reading and appreciating authors from all over the world. While a slight majority (57 percent) of Angolans have a favorite author who is Angolan, only 26 percent of respondents from the CAR identify a favorite author from the CAR and only 19 percent of Kenyans favor a Kenyan author.
2. Language affects global flows of influence through writing. Fully 98 percent of Kenyans identify a favorite author from a nation where English is the national language, although it should be noted that at some Kenyan favorite authors write in both English and Swahili (such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o). In the CAR 79 percent of respondents name an author from a nation where French is a national language, and in Angola, 67 percent name an author from a nation where Portuguese is the national language. English-speaking authors seem to have an advantage concerning the translation of their works, given that English books have been translated into Portuguese or French and read in Angola and the CAR more frequently than French-language or Portuguese-language authors are translated and read in English by Kenyans.
3. There is a significant presence of favorite authors from the United States across all countries; with 12 percent in the CAR, 29 percent in Angola, and 56 percent in Kenya.
4. There is a strong interest in writings by African authors. Fifty-nine percent of Angolans, 60 percent of respondents in the CAR, and 33 percent of Kenyans identify a favorite author who is African.

THE FOCUS OF BOOKS BY FAVORITE AUTHORS

If we examine the focus of books written by favorite authors, some of these are novels situated in African settings, such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Ousmane Sembene's *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* (God's bits of wood), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*. Others are novels written by non-Africans and without an African focus, such as John Galsworthy's *The Firm*, Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity*, and Sidney Sheldon's *Nothing Lasts Forever*.

Many of the favorite authors write books focused in practical ways on achieving financial success, such as Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* or Robert Kiyosaki's *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. In the rapidly changing socioeconomic order of our respondents, with radically new social patterns shaping mysterious new patterns of wealth and poverty, respondents clearly have a deep concern for understanding how to negotiate this world successfully. Of course, the accompanying strong interest in prosperity theology that some of the authors exemplify (T. D. Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen) raises important questions about whether people's appropriate concern for thriving in the modern world is informed and guided by theological wisdom that truly contributes to healthy human flourishing.

Other favorite authors write motivational and self-help books. These include Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*; John Mason's *An Enemy Called Average*; Joyce Meyer's *New Day, New*

You; Pepe Minambo's *Inspired for Destiny*; Erick Opingo's *You Were Born to Be an Answer to Your Generation*; Joel Osteen's *Your Best Life Now: Seven Steps to Living Your Full Potential*; Robin Sharma's *The Greatness Guide*; and Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life*. Various favorite authors write books providing guidance on being an effective leader, such as Bill Hybels's *Courageous Leadership*; John Maxwell's *The Twenty-one Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*; and Myles Munroe's *Becoming a Leader*. Again, it makes sense that in a rapidly changing world, and in regions where Christianity's growth rate has outstripped its supply of mature leaders, and where many of our respondents are playing leadership roles in church and society, authors who write about leadership would prove attractive.

Again and again, in the books written by both religious and nonreligious writers, themes of power, success, and human flourishing make their appearance against the backdrop of struggles with painful childhoods, poverty, and the challenges of modern life. Exemplars of success against such a backdrop are particularly attractive—as with the top Kenyan favorite, Ben Carson. A high proportion of these authors, quite apart from their writing, are successful and/or famous in some arena of life. Some, such as the Nigerian prosperity pastors David Oyedepo of the Winner's Chapel and Chris Oyakhilome of Christ's Embassy, are extremely wealthy.⁸

Many favorite authors focus on women, such as Joyce Meyers' *The Confident Woman*, or T. D. Jakes's *Woman, Thou Art Seduced*. Others focus specifically on men, such as Myles Munroe's *Understanding the Purpose and Power of a Man*; and Simon Mbevi's *! Is Destiny*. Family dynamics are also often featured by favorite authors, such as James Dobson's *Dare to Discipline*; Steve Farrar's *It Man: How a Man Can Lead a Family*; or Stormie Omartian's *The Power of a Praying Wife*. Marriage shows up as a frequent theme with Nancy Van Pelt's *Highly Effective Marriage*. While 42 percent of our Kenyan respondents were female, only 12 percent of Kenyan respondents nominated a favorite author who was female, with 19 percent of women naming a female author and only 7 percent of male respondents doing so. Many favorite authors were nominated primarily by female respondents- Karen Kingsbury (91 percent), Francine Rivers (100 percent), Stormie Omartian (100 percent), Rebecca Brown (75 percent), and Joyce Meyer (71 percent). In these cases the gender of nominated authors correlated with the gender of the respondents.⁷ However, it was also true that women named authors, male or female, who write about realities for women, as favorites at high levels. Women provided none other than a small proportion of favorite author nominations for many of the male preachers- Benny Hinn (0 percent), Reinhard Bonnke (0 percent), John Piper (0 percent), John Stott (15 percent), John Maxwell (17 percent), Billy Graham (18 percent), Chris Oyakhilome (18 percent), Myles Munroe (24 percent). However, they constituted a high proportion of those nominating other male preachers: Joel Osteen (58 percent), Dag Heward-Mills (50 percent), Max Lucado (50 percent), T. D. Jakes (48 percent). At least some of those authors focus their writings on realities related to women. In our interviews with women leaders they often named female authors for whom they had an appreciation. For example, teacher and school chaplain Mrs. Nelly Owilla of Kenya listed four favorite authors, three are female, Margaret Ogolla, Grace Ogott, Carol Mandi, and Terresia Wa'irimu, along with three that are male, Reinhardt Bonnke, Joel Osteen, and Chinua Achebe.

FAVORITE CHRISTIAN AUTHORS

The prominence of influential preachers, especially megachurch pastors, among favorite authors bears special notice. For Angolans, this includes John Maxwell, Billy Graham, and Rick Warren; for CAR respondents, David Yonggi Cho and David Oyedepo; and for Kenyans, Joel Osteen, T. D. Jakes, Myles Munroe, Chris Oyakhilome, Robert Schuller, Rick Warren, and Dag Heward-Mills. Nearly one-third of CAR and Angolan respondents and half of Kenyans identified a preacher/pastor as their favorite author. Part of the reason for this is doubtless because these individuals' institutional base, sometimes in a large megachurch, and often with a television presence, positions them as successful and thus worth learning from. However, unlike seminary professors, who tend to teach and write in ways oriented toward academic criteria, highly successful pastors have achieved their positions by their ability to speak to large audiences. Furthermore, the very structure of the megachurch as a modern phenomenon involves a concentration of resources and access to large audiences. These factors give the megachurch pastor an ideal launching platform for publishing success.

In Kenya denominational affiliation was significantly related to whether the respondent's favorite author was African or not. Roman Catholics were nearly twice as likely to list a favorite author from Africa as from elsewhere. By contrast, Anglican, African Independent Church, and Pentecostal respondents were more than twice as likely to name a favorite author from outside Africa.

One notable finding from our research is that a significant proportion of respondents identified a favorite author who explicitly writes with a Christian voice/viewpoint. Thirty-eight percent of respondents in the CAR, 53 percent of Angolan respondents, and fully 65 percent of Kenyan respondents identified a favorite author whose writings are explicitly Christian. Angolan pastor Adelaide Catahna reports being particularly affected by *Women at the Top* by Diane Halpern and Fanny Cheung.

⁷ $\chi^2(1, N: 1465) = 47.33, p < .001$.

⁸ Oyedepo's net worth has been estimated at US\$150 million and Oyakhilome's at US\$30- \$50 million (Mfonobong Nsehe [contributor], "The Richest Pastors in Nigeria," *Forbes* June 7, 2011).

However, the authors they identify as favorites are much more likely to be Christian if they are American than if they are African. Kenyan respondents identified a favorite author from the United States- 88 percent of the time in Kenya, 94 percent of the time in the CAR, and 100 percent of the time in Angola - this author was explicitly Christian. However, when naming a favorite from their own country, they were only explicitly Christian 27 percent of the time in Angola, 3 percent of the time in the CAR, and 11 percent of the time in Kenya.

In our survey we found that African Christians read relatively few authors who are neither African nor Christian (9.7 percent). That is, our respondents do not widely read European and American authors who write in a secular voice. They identified a high percentage of their favorite authors as African (46 percent) and a high percentage as Christian (58.2 percent). However, the degree of overlap between the two was low, with relatively few respondents (9.5 percent) identifying favorite authors who were both African and Christian.

THE NEED FOR AFRICAN CHRISTIAN WRITERS

If Tim Stafford is correct in his claim that the strength of a "national church is in direct proportion to the strength of its body of African Christian literature" (quoted in Jewell 2009), then this situation should be a matter of concern. Senegalese poet Birago Diop has argued that "truth depends not only on who listens but on who speaks" (cited in Julien 2014, 209). If we understand Diop as writing about subjective plausibility and relevance of truth, then the one who speaks (and writes) is as important as the one who listens (and reads). Readers are to grasp, appreciate, and meaningfully apply any articulated truth to their lives. Again and again, African Christian

lers that we interviewed signaled their unhappiness with the minimal availability of quality publications by African Christian authors. h leaders often mentioned both the breadth of their reading and their stated preference for African authors. For example, Dr. David idougueret of the CAR reads "African," "Asiatic," and "American" literature but reports being more attracted to books by "African ors because they express African realities." Denominational leader Rene Malepou calls on

⁹ In the CAR, when an author from a non-African country is named as favorite, 63 percent of the time the author is Christian, but when an author n an African nation is named, he or she is Christian only 22 percent of the time. In Angola, when an author from a non-African country is named as rite, 87 percent of the time the author is Christian, but when naming an author from an African nation, the author is explicitly Christian only 29 percent e time. In Kenya, when an author from a non-African country is named as favorite, 87 percent of the time the author is Christian, but when an author n an African nation is named, he or she is explicitly Christian only 21 percent of the time.

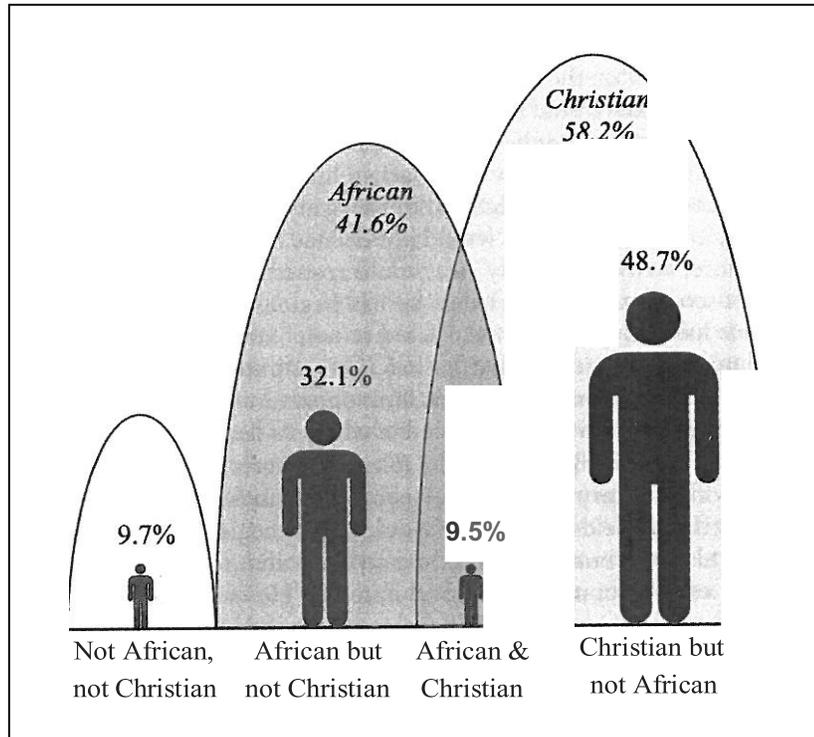


Figure 10-1. Identity of Authors that African Christians Say Are Their Favorites

African theologians to leave an inheritance, not of "old cars or houses," but of "books to read"-something he believes the African ch needs. The leading African organizations identified and studied in our survey sometimes stressed this value. For example, in the 2 Strategic Plan of the Angolan Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangelica no Lubango, the lack of availability of contextual literature is tified as a significant threat to healthy theological education. The stated solution was to "incentivize Angolan theologians to write bles and books"; to "promote a seminar on how to write books"; and to translate and publish writings focused on African contexts into tuguese for availability in Angola.

Many of the Christian leaders we interviewed indicated that others had encouraged them to write, believing that their stories ould be of interest or that their contextual wisdom would be more helpful than what was written by foreigners. Many had written ses or dissertations. Others (such as Alice Kirambi, executive director of Christian Partners Development Agency) had written posals or reports for donors. Some, such as Cosmas Maina, had prepared pamphlets to copy and hand out, or have posted their ing online. Several reported having unpublished

manuscripts in hand. However, relatively few had published, and what was published does not appear to have been widely circulated.

A fair number of the top leaders interviewed indicated a desire to write and had taken initial steps toward this end, but they also expressed a measure of uncertainty about how to proceed. Kenyan General Kianga reports that many people have approached him to write his memoirs, but he has not consented, although he is "thinking about it." He worries that he never kept a journal and thus would not be able to be precise or accurate. Furthermore, Kenya's Security Act would restrict what he could report. Bishop Bosco (Kenya) reports that he has begun work on five different books. He has people who have offered to help, and he has been collecting bibliographic materials, but he has not yet published. He feels time commitments and financial restraints limit opportunities. Ideally, he would like to gain a platform on television. He wants to devote the next decade and a half to writing. Bishop Maisha (Kenya) reports that he is preparing an office with a library featuring key people and authors God has used in Africa in different fields and that he would like to begin writing. He would like to tell his story but would also love to write about the experience and challenges of developing a successful ministry. He is currently finalizing plans for organizing and registering a magazine in Nairobi.

Pastor Oscar Muriu (Kenya) expressed the desire, in the "third season" of his life, to be a sage and available "to the younger generation but not necessarily face to face or physically, but more in the sense that I can write.... I can be available and accessible to them, but I'm not the one running around." However, he reports struggling with writing, with busyness, with feeling inadequate, with feeling that he thinks best by speaking in social settings (rather than isolating himself to write), and with wondering how he might work with others to get his ideas in print. Patrick Nyachogo, a twenty-six-year-old Kenyan environmentalist and business leader, has published online articles and is writing a "motivational book based on the biblical life of Joseph" oriented toward addressing the gap between getting a degree and getting one's first job. It was unclear whether he had a publisher lined up. Seminary professor Eunice Chiquete of Angola plans to write a book based on conversations with girls and focused on realities in the lives of girls and women. However, she is unsure who will publish it. Isaac Mutua, a forty-two-year-old Kenyan teaching sex education (and about HIV/AIDS) in Kenyan schools, received the highest number of nominations for the most influential non-clergy leader in Kenya. He had written up his sex-education materials and shared some of these with our research team, but clearly he had little idea how to go about exploring publishing possibilities.

Some key Christian leaders identified in our research have published articles and/or books. Professor Nestor Mamadou Nali of the CAR has published over a hundred medical reports. Mrs. Marie Paule Balezou of the CAR, a successful business woman, wrote a book that was widely circulated in the CAR, although subsequently it was withdrawn from circulation because of errors and needed corrections. Dr. Esther Mambo of Kenya has published many theological articles and a book focused on contemporary African realities. Simon Mbevi, founder and director of Transform Kenya, has published several books related to prayer, sexual purity, boys, and being a good father. Pastor Dinis Eurico published a book in Brazil and has several other completed manuscripts that have not yet been published. These, however, are the exceptions, not the rule.

Again and again key leaders expressed a desire for more writings by African Christian leaders, relevant for "daily use at home, school or church" (Mugambi 2013, 110). Several of the organizations we studied have formally stated the importance of improving the quantity and quality of African Christian writing. FOCUS Kenya, a nationwide student ministry, reported having recently begun a department of research and publication, and indicated it would like to become "a publisher like InterVarsity Press." However, resources for this are not yet available.

Thus our research demonstrates a gap. Even though a high proportion of African Christians named a favorite author who was African, and a large proportion of African Christians named a favorite author who was Christian, in our survey only a small percentage of African Christians named a favorite author who was both African and Christian. This merits careful consideration. What are the factors contributing to this?

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THESE PATTERNS

The first factor is the central role of the educational sector in book sales and book exposure. One influence on what Africans read, and thus on their selection of favorite authors, is quite naturally their national educational systems (Chakava 1996). In Kenya, for example, since 2004 the Kenya Institute of Education (now the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development) has specified approved books for Kenyan schools to assign, and many favorite authors come from this list of approved books. The books *Gifted Hands* and *Think Big* by Ben Carson are on this approved list, doubtless influencing Carson's selection as the #1 favorite author in Kenya. Four books by Kenyan Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (#3) are approved, one of which is in Swahili. Five of Nigerian Chinua Achebe's (#4) books are on the approved list; seven by Wally Bin Wally (#14), in Swahili; eleven by Ken Walibora (#17), ten of them in Swahili; one by William Shakespeare (#19), fourteen by Said Ahmed Mohammed (#20), all in Swahili; one by Francis Imbuga (#30); one by Elechi Amadi (#45); three by Kithaka Wa Mberia (#48); one by Ali Mazrui (#58), one by Shellomith Nderitu (#58), and four by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye (#70). A majority of assigned authors are African. Clearly, the fact that Kenyan schools are assigning these authors contributes to their economic success as authors and also exposes their work to a broad readership, thus influencing the likelihood of people selecting them as favorite authors. Younger respondents were significantly more likely to choose one of these education-endorsed authors than older respondents.¹⁰ Similarly, books assigned in Angolan government schools are authored by favorite author Antonio Agostinho Neto (#1), Pepetela (#2), Oscar Ribas (#8), and Wanhenga Xitu (#14). And books assigned in government schools of the CAR are authored by favorite authors Pierre Sammy Mackfof (#1), Etienne Goyemide (#2), Ahmadou Kourouma (#5), Camara Laye (#8), Amadou Hampate Ba (#8), Ousmane Sembene (#8), Leopold Sedar Senghor (#12), Aime Fernand David Césaire (#13), Albert Camus (#14), Victor Hugo (#14), and Jean Jacques Rousseau (#19).

Christian educational institutions do not function under a comparable list of approved authors. However, they do signal which authors are deemed important in other ways, such as by which books are stocked in theological libraries. So we examined the library holdings of five key Christian universities or theological institutions in Kenya (Africa International University, Daystar University, International Leadership University, Pan African University, and St. Paul's University) as a way of exploring the extent to which they stocked books by authors from our list. The following fifteen authors, in order, were the authors from our list with the largest presence in these libraries. All fifteen are Christian:¹¹

Table 10-3. Top Fifteen Favorite Authors Ranked by Library Presence

1. John Stott
2. Andrew Murray*
3. Billy Graham
4. James Dobson
5. C. S. Lewis
6. Charles Spurgeon
7. Tim LaHaye
8. John Piper
9. Watchman Nee
10. Philip Yancey
11. John Mbiti
12. Max Lucado
13. John C. Maxwell
14. Bill Hybels
15. Derek Prince

* While Andrew Murray was South African, we treat him in his era (1828-1917) for purposes of this chapter as part of a European world.

Mainstream evangelical European and American authors are featured centrally here. The only African Christian to make this top-fifteen list was John Mbiti (#11). Other favorite African Christian writers either were completely absent from these libraries (such as Joe Kayo, Chris Oyakhilome, David Oyedepo), or had a single book in one library (Dag Heward-Mills) or in two (Simon Mbevi). According to Phiri and Warner (2013, xxix), it is common across Africa for the libraries of theological institutions to be "full of donated books from the global north that address contextual theological questions from other contexts which the African church itself is not asking." Since the libraries of theological schools and Christian universities in Kenya, as elsewhere, are expensive to stock, and thus rely heavily on donations from non-African individuals and organizations (such as the Theological Book Network), it should not be surprising that the values of donors influence the acquisitions process with, in many cases, foreign authors themselves contributing their own books to the libraries. John Stott's Langham Trust contributes heavily to the libraries of theological institutions in Africa. Not surprisingly, his books show up in these libraries more frequently than any other authors from our list. Moreover, if donor values influence acquisitions, then it makes sense that library holdings would affect the authors who theological students and university-educated African Christians know.¹² When African pastors who have studied in such schools draw from and make reference to books they've read, it is to be expected that these are often books by Christian authors from outside Africa.

The primary way in which our respondents were exposed to African authors was through the national educational systems of Angola, the CAR, and Kenya, which had curricula that required and prioritized the reading of these authors. This requirement meant that books by these authors sold widely. It also gave people a chance to learn to appreciate them. One reason that respondents were less likely to choose favorite Christian authors who were African is because the curriculum and libraries of Christian educational institutions provide less prioritized support for African authors and less exposure to African authors than do national schools.

Because we were also interested in books being sold in Nairobi, we examined six Christian bookstores (two Keswick stores, one New Day, one Scripture Union, and two Wakestar stores), three nonreligious commercial book sellers (Nakumat, Uchumi Hyper, and Textbook Central Ltd¹³ and a large number of street vendors in order to determine the fifteen authors whose books are most present in each of these three categories of sales arenas (see Table 10-4).

Table 10-4 is interesting as much for what is absent as for what is featured. In positive terms, all three categories were dominated by the presence of Joyce Meyer, T. D. Jakes, Myles Munroe, and Joel Osteen- megachurch pastors and/or television personalities, all charismatic and/or Pentecostal, and all non-African. None of these four appeared in the top-fifteen list of library holdings. It is also worth noting that John Stott, the #1 author present in theological libraries, did not make any of the top-fifteen lists for booksellers. We did not find any of Stott's books for sale from street vendors.

In the Christian Bookstore list, Ghanaian megachurch pastor Dag Heward-Mills (#6) was the only African author in the top fifteen; Simon Mbevi was #30. No other African Christian authors from our list were present in any of the Christian bookstores. Among the commercial booksellers no African Christian author made the top fifteen, and Heward-Mills was the only African Christian author from our list that had even one book in one store. When it came to street vendors, while none of our African Christian authors showed up in the top fifteen, several did have publications being sold there (Heward-Mills, Kayo, Oyakhilome, Oyedepo).

In addition to placement in libraries and bookstores, visibility and publicity on radio and television also shape outcomes in terms of book exposure and reading. Consider the role of Christian television in Kenya. A perusal of the television channel Family TV shows that much of the programming is Christian. However, on examining the schedule for the week of May 19, 2014, we find that American religious personalities are central. Joel Osteen (#2) was featured Sunday at both 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., as well as Saturday at 1:30 p.m., and in the early morning on Monday and Friday. Joyce Meyer (#6) was featured at 10:30 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. T. D. Jakes (#8)

appeared at 12 noon on Saturday, at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, and early mornings the other weekdays. Billy Graham (#25) was featured at 5 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Benny Hinn (#32) was featured Monday through Friday at 3:30 p.m. Max Lucado (#32) appeared at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday. John Hagee (#58) appeared at 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday. Robert Schuller (#70) appeared on Sunday at 4 a.m. Not a single Kenyan religious personality appeared with a regular program, and only one other African personality, Nigerian megachurch pastor Chris Oyakhilome (#32), appeared on the schedule, on Monday at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday at 2 p.m.

Alternatively, one might consider radio, where some of the same authors have a pervasive presence. One radio station in Nairobi (Hope FM) features a book review program, where books by the following authors on our list from outside Africa have been reviewed: Reinhard Bonnke, Juanita Bynum, Ben Carson, Morris Cerrulo, Stephen Covey, James Dobson, Billy Graham, John Hagee, Bill Hybels, T. D. Jakes, C. S. Lewis, Max Lucado, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Myles Munroe, Stormie Omartian, Joel Osteen, Derek Prince, John Stott, Rick Warren, and Philip Yancey. According to a staff member of Hope FM, African authors Simon Mbevi and David Oyedepo from our list were also reviewed. However, the charges to the author or publisher for a one-hour book review are expensive.¹⁴ Such a cost is prohibitive for the ordinary African author.

¹⁰ $T(3706) = 7.79, P < .001$.

¹¹ We took the number of separate titles from each author in each library and added them together for a final number per author across the five libraries.

¹² At Africa International University (AIU) the campus bookstore had books by the following authors on our list: Charles Spurgeon- 15 titles; John Piper- 7 titles; John Scott - 5 titles; Bill Hybels-2 titles; John C. Maxwell- 2 titles; and Max Lucado and Andrew Murray- 1 title each. It would be interesting to examine the syllabi of such schools to see which authors from our list show up as assigned readings.

¹³ Nakumat and Uchumi are major department store chains (with thirty-four and twenty-eight branches, respectively) in Kenya, and each has a large book section.

¹⁴ If the author is present in the studio to talk about the book, it costs US\$330; if the book is discussed without the author present, it costs US\$200 (Kiriti Barine).

Table 10-4. Top Fifteen Favorite Authors Ranked by Bookstore Presence

Christian Bookstores	Other Commercial Book Sellers	Street Vendors	
1.	Joyce Meyer	1. Joyce Meyer	1. Joyce Meyer
2.	T. D. Jakes	2. T. D. Jakes	1. T. D. Jakes
3.	John C. Maxwell	3. Myles Munroe	1. Myles Munroe
4.	Myles Munroe	4. Joel Osteen	4. C. S. Lewis
5.	Karen Kingsbury	5. Robert H. Schuller	5. Tim LaHaye
6.	Dag Heward-Mills	6. Stormie Omartian	6. Robert H. Schuller
7.	Francine Rivers	7. John C. Maxwell	6. James Dobson
8.	James Dobson	8. Ben Carson	8. Benny Hinn
8. Joel Osteen	9. James Dobson	8. Karen Kingsbury	
10. Derek Prince	10. Rebecca Brown	8. John C. Maxwell	
10. Kenneth Hagin	10. Steve Farrar	8. Joel Osteen	
12.	John Mason	10. Billy Graham	12. Stormie Omartian

13. Max Lucado 10. Karen Kingsbury 12. Ben Carson
 13. Andrew Murray 10. John Mason 14. Billy Graham
 13. Stormie Omartian 10. Francine Rivers 15. Francine Rivers

If, then, we are to identify some of the key factors contributing to a situation where African writers have provided an extensive body of African literature that is not explicitly Christian, but that an otherwise vibrant African Christianity has not produced the literature that African Christians seemingly desire and need, the following would be core dynamics to keep in mind.

1. Publishing and marketing are expensive and require adequate economic underpinnings. Most African Christians live within socioeconomic settings that are quite different from those faced by Christians in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia. The current global financial market patterns related to Christian publishing work against the flourishing of African Christian authors. Intentional correctives are needed.

2. While a billion people live in Africa, a large potential market, these people are spread across an enormous geographical area and are divided by numerous political and language boundaries—with a significant proportion being functionally illiterate. Would-be authors from the CAR work within a geographically vast country with poor transportation infrastructure and with a small population of 4.5 million, many of whom are illiterate or speak different languages. Unlike American would-be authors with an open market of more than 300 million fellow Americans speaking a single language, authors in the CAR encounter linguistic, geographic, and political barriers, as well as demographic realities, that work against broad dissemination of their work. Angolan Christian would-be authors, with a market of 21 million fellow Angolans, are isolated by political boundaries and language from all near neighbors and exist in a country where publishing historically has been "largely under the control of state-controlled monopolies" (Zell 1995, 4). The Angolan Christian author has limited options: self-publish or publish in Brazil with an established publisher that has a limited presence in Angola. There are no Christian publishers in Angola. Even in Kenya there are few publishers, and they have limited distribution outside of Kenya. A high proportion of the African Christian authors in our lists have self-published, and they market in rather ad hoc and limited ways—few with wide distribution. Some write for publishers in the USA or Europe, but such books are commonly far too expensive for African individuals or institutions to afford, sometimes costing the equivalent of US\$100 or more. The system again works against an African Christian presence in print.

3. Publishing is a competitive arena, where those with a greater presence on television and radio are better positioned with major publishers (that provide high-quality editing and printing along with reasonable prices and good market placement). They also have a stronger financial base, which is a distinct advantage. While it is not true that each book sold by an American author precludes a book being sold by an African author, it is true that if a Nairobi television station fills its airtime with American authors, those slots of time are necessarily not available for African authors. Moreover, most African authors are not in a position to compete on a financially level playing field. It is worth considering possible ways in which the very success of Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, T. D. Jakes, and Myles Munroe—all of whom build off impressive platforms—compete

with and inhibit the flourishing of African Christian authors. Like these others, John Stott has achieved significant global success. However, unlike them, through Langham Partnerships he has leveraged his success into strong support for African Christian writers.

4. Christian missionaries historically distributed publications that were subsidized or free. The functionality of the publications was sometimes more important than their quality. Similarly, international Christian publishers often shipped their unsold books to African venues to be given away or sold at reduced rates. Given such patterns, authors were understood to be making a gratuitous spiritual contribution through writing. They were not expected to make an actual living by writing excellent books

that would sell in a competitive market. One result is that African Christian expectations about Christian publishing sometimes work at cross purposes to the cultural habits, competencies, and values needed for writing success in the modern world. For example, older patterns—where Christian books were subsidized or free—have created cultural expectations that make it hard to ask buyers to pay full value for a Christian book. Moreover, publishers report that many African Christian leaders are reluctant to market and sell their books actively, feeling that this is not spiritual.

5. Book distribution in Africa is a problem (Chakava 1996, 2007). Most books by African authors are published locally, seldom marketed across their own country, much less beyond, and rarely see a second printing. Of the twenty-three Anglophone countries in Africa, only four have fairly adequate wholesale book distributors—Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. In those countries bookshop owners can acquire their stock locally. Since most English-language titles come from other countries, in the other nineteen countries local booksellers need to import most of the books they sell—a daunting task. To complicate matters further, it is often difficult if not impossible to import books from neighboring African countries (because of border tensions, weak or nonexistent infrastructure, import duties, and bribes being extorted at customs). Thus, it is often far easier to acquire books from the United States or Great Britain.¹⁵

¹⁵ Most of the information in this paragraph can be attributed to Edward Elliott of Oasis International.

IMPLICATIONS AND WHAT IS NEEDED

Jesse Mugambi, a long-time publisher and theologian writes:

How can Africa's elite chart the future of this continent when its education is based on policies and ideas intended for other cultures? How can Africa's youth develop new insights to solve problems in the context of its own culture, while it is exposed only to literature coming from other cultures? The time has come for Africa's elite to contribute toward shaping the future of this continent through publication of the knowledge and experience accumulated at home and abroad. (Mugambi 2013, 1102)

The problem Mugambi points to is particularly true for the African Christian church. African writers have produced a significant body of high-quality literature that other Africans are familiar with and appreciate, but for the most part this literature is not Christian. On the other hand, African Christians have not produced a sizeable parallel body of high-quality explicitly Christian literature. The result is that African Christians read favorite African authors, and they read favorite Christian authors, but the number who name a favorite author who is both African and Christian is very small. And yet, as our analysis above suggests, change will happen only if the broader structural factors are understood, and if a wide variety of Christian stakeholders, both inside Africa and around the world, come to the following recognitions and commitments:

1. Writing and reading, and not merely orality, are important in the contemporary world for the strength of the African church.

2. A reading culture must be supported and fostered. This requires publication of context-appropriate children's books that foster pleasure in reading. It requires efforts to promote reading in homes, schools, and churches, with libraries encouraged for each (Chakava 1996). Book clubs and other initiatives intended to foster reading and its enjoyment as well as to encourage wider reading as a part of spirituality should be promoted (Chakava 1996; Hedstrom 2013).

3. The flourishing of African Christian writers is essential to the long-term strength of the African church in addressing the realities that African Christians need help with. Deep commitments on the part of diverse stakeholders are necessary to help bring about such an outcome.

4. Christian publishing and book distribution in Africa must be strengthened and prioritized, as is being attempted by Oasis International or by Hippo Books, in partnership with Langham Trust. There are lessons to be learned from the successes of secular publishers in Africa such as Longmans (Davis 2015) or Heinemann, as exemplified in Bejjic's (2015) fascinating exposition of the way in which

Heinemann contributed to the writing success of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Again, Henry Chakava's (1996) outstanding book *Publishing in Africa* is filled with practical, real-world experience from a successful Kenyan editor and publisher (see also Chakava 2007; Mlambo 2007; Zell 2013). There is a need "to circulate books from one African region to other regions" (Phiri and Werner 2013, xxix). Electronic publishing and print on demand should be put to use.

5. A culture of writing must be fostered. This should include writing contests; public celebrations of writing success by African Christians; and writing courses in seminaries, universities, and Bible schools. One of the reasons for the proliferation of Francophone African writers was a long-term "history of prize culture for [French-language] African literature, " that created "significant structures of recognition and reception in the literary field" (Bush and Cucournau 2015). Similarly, in Kenya, the "Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature established in 1972 contributed to a burst of creativity" (Chakava 1996, 36), although the prize later died for lack of funding. Successful African Christian writers should be celebrated. Their books should be read and discussed by reading groups, assigned in course syllabi, purchased for libraries, and marketed across the continent as well as worldwide (Phiri and Werner 2013, xxix).

6. The identification, coaching, and training of Christian writers in Africa must be strengthened and expanded. This is already being done to a certain extent, for example, by Kirimi Barine of Publishing Institute of Africa through Media Associates International, and by David Waweru of Word Alive Publishers. However, much more is needed.

7. A wide variety of support for writers (royalties or royalty advances, sabbaticals, coaching, editing support, writing groups, writing partnerships) should be expanded from current levels. Among the leaders we studied, Esther Mombo exemplifies a pattern of high-quality and sustained writing. Moreover, The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians is credited with having provided this support structure for her—support for engaging contextual realities theologically in high-quality writing (Phiri 2009).

8. Research about Christian reading and writing must be prioritized. Such research must examine the interests and needs of readers, and it must underpin strategic initiatives and planning related to writing and publishing.

9. Finally, it is important that we carefully examine the extent to which, and the ways in which, European and American Christians who attempt to engage Africa may contribute to neocolonial and unhealthy patterns that inadvertently work against the flourishing of African Christian literature. The time has come to prioritize the value of African Christian leaders contributing to shaping the future of African Christianity through the publication of knowledge and experience accumulated at home and abroad. How to help this happen should be of interest to a broad range of concerned parties.

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