Journal of Translation 18:1 (2022): 111–139
https://doi.org/10.54395/JOT-8N8TC
ISSN 1558-7282
journaloftranslation.org

At Home in All Languages and Cultures
Bible Translation and World Christianity in the Twenty-First Century

MICHEL KENMOGNE
Executive Director, SIL International
michel_kenmogne@sil.org

Abstract: Bible translation enables the advance of what Lamin Sanneh (2007a) calls a "World Christianity," a global religion which aims to be at home in every context. As such, Bible translation empowers and yet relativises all languages and cultures, thereby furthering an equality in dignity among the speakers of all the languages of the world. In this paper, we ask: To what extent does the current and blossoming Bible translation movement contribute to the growth and maturing of a World Christianity? In other words, in what ways do current engagements in Bible translation further or hinder the reality of Christianity as a religion that aims to be at home in all languages and cultures? To approach this question, we will use the framework proposed by Andrew Walls (1997), which claims that the process of the transmission and reception of Christianity is multi-generational, involving at least three stages. We will aim to discern the stage at which the current Bible translation movement operates in the twenty-first century, identify some of the critical issues that affect the reception of the gospel, and suggest implications for Bible translation practice that would effectively further the rise of a World Christianity.

1 Introduction

In 2007, Lamin Sanneh gave a conference on "Bible Translation and the Birth of Christianity as a World religion." Contrasting the significance of the impact of Bible translation with the missionary expansion of Islam, he stated: "Well, Christians take this business for granted, but have they thought about the implication of what they are doing?" (2007a:1). His abundant scholarly body of

work[1] has allowed everyone to appraise Bible translation beyond its "nuts and bolts" in order to discern its fundamental meaning and value. Indeed, translation remains a vulnerable activity with high risks when considered from the viewpoint of the process of the faithful transmission of the message from one language and culture to another. However, Bible translation preserves the essence of Christianity as a religion without a fixed language, culture, or location. It empowers and yet relativises all languages and cultures, thereby furthering an equality in dignity among the speakers of all the languages of the world. As such, it is the "primary, critical, leavening, or catalytic action in the spread of the Christian faith" (Gitau 2020:3). In other words, Bible translation enables the advance of what Sanneh calls a "World Christianity." By this, he refers to Christianity as a global religion which aims to be at home in every context. Therefore, "World Christianity" is the inter-discipline that explores the processes of the transmission, reception, conversion, and appropriation of the Gospel all over the world.

At the biennial Bible Translation Conference in Dallas, Texas, we seek to consider the impact of Bible translation and question our assumptions, strategies, and practices.[2] In line with Sanneh's main contribution relative to the processes of the reception of the gospel, we will consider in this paper some searching questions: **To what extent does our current and blossoming Bible translation movement contribute to the growth and maturing of a World Christianity? In other words, in what ways do our current engagements in Bible translation further or hinder the reality of Christianity as a religion that aims to be at home in all contexts of the world?**

To approach this question, we will use the framework proposed by Walls (1997), which claims that the process of the transmission and reception of Christianity is multigenerational, involving at least three stages.[3] I will aim to discern the stage at which the current Bible translation movement operates in the twenty-first century, identify some of the critical issues that affect the reception of the Gospel, and suggest implications for Bible translation practice that would effectively further the rise of a World Christianity.

[1] The following three books are of special interest: *Translating the Message* (1989), *Whose Religion is Christianity?* (2003), and *Disciples of All Nations* (2007).

[2] This paper is a revised version of the author's Lamin Sanneh Lecture at the Bible Translation Conference, Dallas, TX, 16 October 2021.

[3] A summary of this framework can also be found in Bediako (2000:80–81).

2 The cross-cultural process of the transmission and reception of the Gospel

In his book, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, Andrew Walls examines the process of the transmission and reception of the Gospel across the cultures throughout Church history. He identifies two opposing tendencies that are inherent to the Gospel. The first one, **the indigenising principle**, holds that each person should be at home within their own culture as a Christian because God accepts each of us "as we are" and the "Christian mind will continue to be influenced by what was in it before" (Walls 1996:7). Bible translation is critical to achieve this principle because it allows the languages that capture the sociocultural experience of a people to become the receptacle and vehicle of God's message. Thus, Bible translation creates the appropriate conditions for people to enter into an effective dialogue within their specific cultural identity. Sanneh notes that failure to appropriately achieve this principle would cause new believers to be like "stags in borrowed fields, not sheep in their own meadow" (2007b:7). On the other hand, **the pilgrim principle** calls the Christian to resist any attempts to domesticate the faith within a particular culture and "warns him that to be faithful to Christ will put him out of step with his society" (Walls 1996:8). Sanneh (2007b:4) sums up these two principles in the following question: "How can Christianity maintain its commitment to culture, insofar as culture embodies faith in a concrete way, while avoiding the sort of cultural idolatry that fuses claims and exclusive national ideals? How is cultural commitment compatible with religious openness?"

As he studied the missionary movement throughout Christian history, Walls observed that these principles apply through three generational stages—**missionary**, **convert**, and **refiguration**—to achieve effective reception and appropriation of Christianity. For example, he depicts Hellenistic conversion as follows: in the missionary stage, Paul introduces the concepts of the Gospel that discard Judaic elements and wear Hellenistic garments for the first time. Later on (convert stage), the Greeks themselves grapple with their Christian and Hellenistic identities in order to discern how to believe and live. The next generation (refiguration) redirects the Hellenistic intellectual heritage to achieve ownership of the Gospel and then takes it beyond their own culture. Today we can observe that several aspects of the Hellenistic worldview (i.e., dualism of body and soul) and various socio-political concepts (*ekklesia*, *euangelion*, *kurios*, etc.) were loaded with new meanings and redirected to guide the way we understand the Gospel today. As Sanneh notes, the failure to achieve effective conversion results in mere proselytism. He describes and contrasts the two perspectives as follows (see 2007b:8–11):

	Proselytes	Converts
Leadership	Follow where others lead	Lead and go beyond what proselytes are permitted
Tenure	Temporary	Permanent
Posture	Outward looking	Outward and inward looking
Culture	Shun own culture	Engage own culture and redirect it to serve a new function

Throughout history, it has been evident that Bible translation and the processes of cultural appropriation of the Christian faith that it triggers are foundational to turning proselytes into converts. This process essentially happens during the "convert" and "refiguration" stages, as proselytes continue to operate "their social and personal patterns of life and thought, with Christianity [in its originating missionary state] challenging and upsetting pagan premises of those patterns" (Sanneh 2007b:9).

As we consider the Bible translation movement in the twenty-first century in the light of this framework, it is appropriate to question the season or stage in which we currently operate. By doing so, we would best discern the practices that would further the possibility for each person to feel at home with Christianity, irrespective of their sociocultural or linguistic setting. From all observation, two centuries of the modern missionary movement have almost led to the completion of the first stage. The end of colonial rule in many parts of the world around the 1970s constitutes an approximative landmark. The assumptions, strategies, and systems that have undergirded the practice of Bible translation have been inspired by the impacts of the missionary phase of Bible translation. However, as we now operate in a mostly post-missionary era in Bible translation, the issues of the "convert" and "refiguration" stages of Walls' framework should be shaping our agenda and practices. Before exploring what that might entail, let us first consider the impact of the missionary stage.

3 The impact of missionary Bible translation

The impact of missionary Bible translation has been the main object of Sanneh's academic exploration.[4] Using Africa as a reference point, we observe that Bible

[4] His seminal book entitled *Translating the Message* (1989) built on thorough field research and provided a compelling statement of the impact of missionary translations. It put to rest the wave of criticism of Western mission that had laid doubts on mission, and stimulated Bible agencies and translators who found the impetus to proceed with conviction.

translation plays an irreplaceable role in the process of the transmission and reception of the Gospel.

It is commonly recognised that the gospel reached Africa through four phases. In hindsight, it can be observed that the sustainability of any of those phases depended heavily on the place and role of vernacular translation therein.

3.1 First phase

In the first century, Mark took the gospel into Northern Africa where early Christian communities were started. From there the Gospel soon spread into Egypt and Ethiopia through the action of Jewish believers. Over the following centuries, the important apostolic work in the Northern African Church gave rise to prominent theologians who became Church Fathers (Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine). However, as Philip Jenkins has documented, despite its robust theological activity, this Church did not engage the vernacular. As a result, Christians lacked the foundation and roots that would enable them to resist the Muslim invasion in the seventh century. Conversely, the Ge'ez and Coptic communities in Egypt that embraced the vernacular developed the capacity to preserve their Christian heritage and withstand the Vandal conquest in the fifth century and the Islamic jihad in the seventh century.[5]

3.2 Second phase

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Portuguese explorers took the Gospel into the coastal regions of the continent. They established hospitals and schools, and whole villages and kingdoms declared themselves Christian. But they gave no attention to the vernacular languages and Bible translation. By the eighteenth century, there was no visible sign of a Christian presence in the region, and even the symbols of the Christian faith that were still present had lost their meaning among the communities.[6]

---

[5] "Partly the Egyptian Church retained such a mass following because of its enthusiastic adoption of the native Coptic language. At least, the Gospels and Psalter were already available in Coptic by around 300. Elsewhere in North Africa, the church's insistence on speaking Latin meant that it never evangelized far beyond the cities, so that Christianity did not long survive the Muslim Conquests. But Egypt offered a different picture" (Jenkins 2011:25).

[6] Sanneh writes that "French missionaries discovered one such village north of the river Zaire, in 1773, its identity proclaimed by a great cross. Without regular priesthood...such communities in time lapsed from their Christian faith" (2007b:102). "When the famed Scottish missionary David Livingstone reached Angola in 1854 on his

3.3 Third phase

The ongoing movement of the Christian faith in sub-Saharan Africa owes itself to the modern mission movement that began in the nineteenth century. As a later outcome of the Reformation that was birthed from the translation of God's Word into European languages, this movement emphasized Bible translation into vernacular languages as its main foundation. It has ushered in the **fourth phase**: **the current vibrant Bible translation movement**. (I will return to this later.)

3.4 Evaluating the impact of missionary translations

Examining these four phases of the evangelisation of Africa, what stands out is that the first two phases could not be sustained, whereas the third phase continues to mature into the fourth. What accounts for this difference is Bible translation.

Sanneh has documented the impact of missionary translations as follows.

1. **Bible translation satisfies God's justice by furthering the dignity of all people as created in God's image.**
   The advent of Scriptures in the languages and cultures of people for the first time has meant a lot more than the mere availability of new information. It has primarily been viewed as affirmation that their languages qualify as recipients of the revelation of the Creator God. Language is such an intimate and pervasive reality that each individual language shapes and affects—for good or bad—all those whose identity and worldview have been formed within the categories of that language. Therefore, Westermann writes that "the most adequate exponent of the soul of a people is its language. By taking away a people's language, we cripple and destroy its soul and kill its mental individuality..." (Diedrich Westermann as quoted in Sanneh 2007b:178–179). Because language carries such significance for its native speakers, people have found in the translated Scriptures a basis for the recovery of their true identity that was damaged by the fall of mankind and its subsequent manifestations through various forms of discrimination. Sanneh observed that the advent of mother tongue Scriptures went a long way to allow people to recover their sense of dignity as human beings created in God's image. A local Christian holding a translated Gospel in his hands for the first time declared, "Here is a document which proves that we also are human beings: the first and only book in our language." Another in a different

trek across the continent, the only evidence of Jesuit and Capuchin churches he found was in ruins, and Christianity among Africans was reduced to a folk memory" (2007b:105).

context affirmed, "Now we see that our friends in the foreign countries regard us as people worthwhile." Yet another said, "I know that in my body I am a very little man, but today as I see the whole Bible in my language, I feel as big as a mountain" (Sanneh 2007b:177).

2. **Bible translation preserves the essence of Christianity as a "translated" religion.**

   From his cultural experience and research, Sanneh discovered that Islam is a fixed religion with a fixed centre and a fixed language. In contrast to Islam, Christianity relies on the vulnerable activity of translation for its spread, expansion, and vitality. He went on to assert (2003:105–106) that: "The fact of Christianity being a translated, and translating, religion places God at the center of the universe of cultures, implying free coequality among cultures and a necessary relativizing of languages vis-à-vis the truth of God. No culture is so advanced and so superior that it can claim exclusive access or advantage to the truth of God, and none so marginal or inferior that it can be excluded...The vernacular was thereby given the kiss of life." The fact that translation is an inherent feature of the Gospel means that it repositions God's Word at the center of the created universe with its cultural and linguistic diversity, thereby elevating languages and cultures into missional categories. In the meantime, it reinforces the point that all people, created in God's image, are equal in dignity.

3. **Bible translation enables the reception of the Gospel, empowers local cultures and languages, and furthers the rise of a World Christianity.**

   Sanneh noted that the story of the modern missionary enterprise was told solely from the vantage point of the "foreign transmission" which emphasized the various processes that were organised, funded, and directed from the West (Westernisation). As such, the imperialist motives of the enterprise and attitudes of some missionaries led observers and concerned anthropologists to condemn the destructive impact of the mission on cultures. While Sanneh does not deny such motives in the mission agenda, he claims that any generalisation misrepresents the truth about thousands of genuine missionaries who withstood the colonial dominion to share the love of Christ around the world.[7] Looking at it from

[7] He writes that "many missionaries felt there simply was no other way to do business except to uphold the native cause, however begrudgingly, to the alarm of colonial officials but to the critical welcome of Africans" (2007b:181–182). He goes on to cite the examples

> the vantage point of the "local reception," Sanneh notes that missionaries and especially Bible translators contributed to the empowerment of local communities and cultures through the production of Scriptures, grammars, dictionaries, folktales, etc. (what he calls "vernacularisation"). Moreover, the ability of people to engage God's Word in the categories of their own languages and cultures triggered results that were not anticipated, even by the imperialists. As an example, Sanneh noted in Kenya that "the fact that the Gikuyu Bible contained stories of slavery and freedom, captivity and liberation, exile and homecoming, death and resurrection, made it a primer for the decolonisation campaign and a godsend for nationalist aspirations" (2007b:151).[8] Bible translation, therefore, has the intrinsic potential to subvert imperialist motives and re-establish God's purposes for mankind. As such, the missional and strategic foundation of Bible translation is firm.

However, the factors and realities that condition the impact of Bible translation continue to shift over time. As we continue to thread into the post-missionary Bible translation era, it is necessary to embrace double-loop learning (see Argyris and Schön 1974), for which I advocated at the BT conference in 2019 (see Kenmogne 2020:9). In other words, our responsibility is not just to evaluate our impact relative to the strategies and approaches that we deploy. We need to go a level deeper to consider the fundamental assumptions that we hold about how we position Bible translation and Scripture engagement to contribute to the emergence of Christianity as a world religion in the twenty-first century. Therefore, we need to appraise our context today in light of the key realities and issues that shape it.

---

of Livingstone standing for the Xhosa against the Hottentots in Southern Africa or Walter Miller denouncing colonial exploitation in Northern Nigeria.

[8] More specifically, the leader of the fight for Kenyan independence, Jomo Kenyatta, found inspiration from reading the story of Naboth's vineyard in the Gikuyu Bible. He withstood the British imperial dominion over his country, trusting that it was a just cause for which God was on his and the Kenyans' side.

4 The post-missionary era[9] in Bible translation: issues and realities

In 1999, John Watters considered the pace of Bible translation and noted that, all things being equal, it would still take about 150 years for all the language communities of the earth to have a Scripture translation. This shocking realisation led Wycliffe and SIL International to resolve to see "a Bible translation programme started in any language needing one by the year 2025" (Watters 1999). The impetus of this vision and the sense of urgency that it stimulated within the whole movement led the participants at the Lausanne Cape Town gathering in 2010 to resolve to eradicate Bible poverty. More recently, the Every Tribe Every Nation alliance has made a commitment towards the eradication of Bible poverty by adopting an All Access Goal[10] by the year 2033. Today, we observe an unprecedented movement of generosity[11] towards Bible translation and the fastest pace ever in the history of Bible translation.[12] We live in an exciting season in the history of mission, a season that is characterized by unprecedented speed and productivity in Bible translation. However, we also

[9] The concept of "post-missionary era" is used to reflect the shifts in the demographics of mission. However, it still assumes that Christians from various continents, nationalities, and cultural backgrounds work together in Bible translation as a collective expression of their participation in the *missio dei*.

[10] 95% of the global population will have access to a full Bible (languages with greater than 500,000 speakers); 99.96% of the global population will have access to a New Testament (languages with greater than 5,000 speakers and less than 500,000 speakers); 100% of the world's population will have access to at least some portion of Scripture (portion estimated as twenty-five chapters in languages with less than 5000 speakers). Access to a second translation will be available in the world's most strategic one hundred written languages, which is estimated to include critical revisions completed in twenty-six of these languages (Every Tribe Every Nation 2022).

[11] The illumiNations Foundation has allowed Bible agencies to form a common front to present the Bible translation needs to high-net-worth individuals. As a result, we have observed from one year to the next an increasing generosity towards Bible translation amounting to $40+ million donated or pledged to BT over a single event.

[12] In 1999, we realized that the current pace of translation meant a translation would not be started in every language that needed one until 2150. At that time, there were 2,601 languages with access to some Scripture or Scripture stories. By 2021, that number had grown to 3,495 languages with Scripture or Scripture-related products. Currently, active translation or preparatory work is underway in 2,899 languages, which means we are on pace to start all needed translations by 2034. Translation is still needed to begin in 1,892 languages, representing 145 million people (Liner 2021:10).

need to ensure that we achieve fruitfulness by ensuring that the speed of the production of Scriptures aligns with the speed of their local reception through effective engagement. By this, and in line with our topic, I mean that **our progress in translation should not only be a matter of statistics but should be equated with transformed and flourishing lives and communities that reflect the presence of Christ among them**. In order to appraise some of the realities and issues that inform our impact, let us briefly consider the shifts between the missionary and post-missionary eras in Bible translation.

4.1 Bible translation: missionary vs. post-missionary

In the following table, I provide a summary comparison of the key factors that inform the impact of translation and how these factors continue to shift in response to external realities around the world.

	Until 1970	**2000**	**2021**
	Missionary Phase	**Post-Missionary Phase**	
Status of Vernacular	Viable and vital	Neglected	Oppressed
Relation BT and Church	BT as a valid part of the Church	BT separate and alongside the Church	Re-envisioning the relationship of BT to the Church
BT Agenda and Corpus	Bibles in print Primers Catechisms Songbooks Grammars Dictionaries, etc.	Bibles in print Primers Catechisms Songbooks Grammars Dictionaries, etc.	Bibles (various formats) Customized response to other language and Scripture product needs
Agency Leadership in BT	Foreign missionary	Parachurch Bible agencies	Indigenous Bible agencies and churches with foreign support

Reviewing the impact of the missionary translations, Sanneh concluded, "the Christian impact overlapped almost exactly with the incidence of translation of Scripture into vernacular languages, almost everywhere..." (2007a:1). Yet I would like to note important shifts in the factors that undergird Bible translation when comparing the missionary and post-missionary eras. **This**

implies that, if our assumptions and practices remain unchecked, we cannot or should not expect translations to achieve the same impacts.

4.2 Post-missionary issues and impact

If Bible translation was indeed the catalyst of the current Church growth in the global South, we need to humbly question the impact of the thousands of translations that have been produced within the languages of the world over the past decades. Indeed, there is much to celebrate in terms of transformed lives and communities and churches experiencing spiritual renewal and growth. However, we must sincerely acknowledge that our impact is often anecdotal.

Observers of the Church in the Southern Hemisphere have noted—beyond the statistics—a number of paradoxes that raise a question mark on the deeper-level impact of our exuberant Bible translation activities. In the post-missionary era, the Church is plagued with a number of issues that point to the fact that the reception of the Gospel has not gone beyond the proselyte stage. In his book entitled *Beyond the Figures: Growing the Roots of Christianity in Africa* (2019), Paul Kimbi mentions some of the paradoxes in the Church of the Southern Hemisphere. In hindsight, those paradoxes question the extent to which the current Bible translation efforts are effectively furthering World Christianity.

1. **Weak impact**
   "*One reason why it is considered that the Christian center of gravity has moved to the Southern hemisphere...is the numerical growth of Christianity in this part of the world. But is there a corresponding growth of Christian values, X-rayed improved communal life or family life?*" (Kimbi 2019:17).
   It is striking to note that the increase of churches and believers does not necessarily influence the level of corruption, ethnic strife, public morality, and other ills in society. Nominalism seems to be the mark of Christianity. The Church has become an additional institution within African communities, co-existing with pre-Christian religious institutions but having little engagement and interaction with them. Cultural anthropologists state that people are guided by several realities that shape their identity. The outer and visible dimension of a person is his or her behaviour. Less visible are the layers of the values, beliefs, and, ultimately, the worldview that fundamentally guide them. If the impact of the Church remains so weak, it certainly has something to do with the fact that discipleship has remained shallow, often addressing behavioural issues but not diving deep enough to engage values, beliefs, and worldviews. Ultimately, this is a Bible translation issue and, more specifically, a Scripture engagement problem in a "convert" stage of Christianity.

2. **Inadequate contextualisation**
   "*Could it be seen as a paradox to say that the center of gravity has moved down to Africa (or the global South) in garments (languages) from North/West?*" (Kimbi 2019:17).
   Christianity continues to expand in the global South and East as an exported product of the North and West. Jenkins (2011:42) notes that in Uganda, Catholics are referred to as *baFaransa* (the French) while Protestants are called *baIngerezza* (the English).[13] In the same way, in Muslim and other dominant religion contexts, it is hard to dissociate Christianity from some form of Western culture or ideology. This perception of Christianity reveals the absence or insufficient local theologizing that should result from the advent of the vernacular Scriptures to allow native people to engage their pre-Christian heritage, confront it where appropriate, and redirect it in light of Scriptures in order to further a cultural Christian identity. In hindsight, we observe that theological education in the global South is an extension of whatever is thought and taught in the North and West. Theological institutions have not given any serious consideration to biblical exegesis and mother tongue hermeneutics.[14]

These issues that plague the normal growth (in quantity and quality) of the Church in the Southern Hemisphere will not be solved without an appropriate framing of Bible translation to effectively address them. They challenge us all to renounce any form of complacency that might come from our ongoing exuberant achievements, and revisit our assumptions and practices to further a Christianity that is truly at home in all the sociocultural contexts of the world. On a more concrete note, the journey of the Francophone Initiative pictures the issues at stake, building on the realities of a specific context: Francophone Africa.

4.3 The Francophone Africa example

Around 2005, Bible agencies in Francophone Africa began a keen reflection on the impact of Bible translation in their region. This was done in light of the

[13] The use of these names does not only point to a historical situation, but reflects more a lack of contextualisation and local theologising that should further effective appropriation of Christianity.

[14] The Akrofi-Christaller Institute and Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana constitute the exception in this regard on the African continent.

reported growth of the Church in Africa by several historians of Christianity.[15] While they acknowledged a remarkable expansion of the Church, they also realised that this growth had little to do with the advent of translated Scriptures. Indeed, Bibles, and especially New Testaments, have been translated in several languages of the region. But truth be told, the scope of their use by individuals and churches was rather parochial or limited. Communities took pride in the availability of Scriptures in their languages, but these Scriptures often sat on the shelves. In response to this situation, SIL, United Bible Societies (UBS), Wycliffe, and the Regional Fellowship of Evangelical Students initiated a conversation on this reality with the administrative and thought leadership of the Church in the area. This included prominent Francophone theologians and theological educators. Since 2007, the group has held several consultations which have gradually unveiled the key issues that plague the impact of Bible translation in the region. In the meantime, the awareness of the issues has triggered the start of an indigenous response.

1. **The state of vernacular use in the Church in Francophone Africa**

   In the Declaration found in the proceedings of the first consultation held in 2007, Church leaders, theologians, and Bible translators acknowledged that the Church had undermined the use of the vernacular, favouring the use of French. They affirmed that theology always informs Bible translation, which in turn furthers the development of theology. Hence, they realised that Bible translation and vernacular use had been the catalyst of the sustainable growth of the Church throughout its entire history. Yet, Bible translation was not part of the curriculum of seminaries and theological institutions in Africa.

   As a result, theological educators invited Bible agencies to collaborate with them to reverse the situation by creating a course that would allow the introduction of Bible translation and vernacular use in seminaries and theological institutions. Acting in response to this request, Bible agencies (UBS, SIL, and Wycliffe) teamed up with the Council of Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa to develop a response in the form of an introductory course (Kenmogne 2009:219). Since the

[15] Jenkins speaks to the growth of the Church in Africa and the global South in his book *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (2002:2): "Over the past century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably Southward, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America." He goes on to mention "church growth in modern Africa, where the number of Christians increased, staggeringly, from 10 million in 1900 to 360 million by 2000," and then extrapolates that there will be 633 million Christians in Africa by 2025 (2002:3–4).

release of this book in 2009, seminars have been organised periodically to equip the faculty of theological institutions to become instructors of this new course. To date, about fifty-four theological institutions and Bible schools across Francophone Africa have been teaching this course, and the book is in its third reprint.

2. **The impact of theology on the faith of ordinary believers**
A second consultation was held in 2011 that pinpointed the core issue that hinders the effective appropriation of Christianity in Africa. It noted that academic theology and grassroots theology operate in parallel on the continent, without any interaction between them. The first is a mere calque of Western theology and fails to address the deeply felt and cultural issues of Africans.[16] As a result, Christians live with a fractured identity or "religious schizophrenia" (Walls, quoted by Coulibaly 2012:53). The grassroots theology develops among ordinary believers and often lacks adequate insights into Scriptures. Hence it often easily errs on the side of being more informed by African traditional religions. In a well-documented study, Rubin Pohor (2012) demonstrated that the majority of evangelical believers on the continent revert to pre-Christian religious solutions when confronted with life-threatening issues. This consultation raised awareness that the Christian faith will not mature on the continent without an appropriate engagement of the Bible with African cultural realities. This is needed to further a true conversion whereby people assume their Christian identity within their cultural heritage, honouring the latter as appropriate and adhering faithfully to Scriptures. It was agreed that the availability and effective use of Scriptures in the native languages is a non-negotiable prerequisite for this to happen.

3. **Christianity and cultural realities in Africa**
In light of the preceding consultation, the group decided in 2015 to consider the delicate issue of contextualisation. They acknowledged that a denial of pre-Christian heritage and an adherence to it equally hinders the ability of the Christian faith to be at home in a context. In response to that realisation, theologians, church leaders, and Bible translators decided to create a framework and suggest methods and examples of contextualisation that would allow everyone to navigate this delicate issue (Pohor and Kenmogne 2017). For the past six years, the issue has been the main concern of theological educators, church leaders, and Bible

[16] A leading theologian gave testimony of his inability to address the spiritual issues and questions of African believers, despite his exceptional credentials and his theological education ministry. See Pohor (2012:54).

translators. At the most recent consultation held in 2019, seminary students, theologians, and Bible translators shared their research and learnings on various topics within specific contexts.[17]

All in all, the Francophone Initiative journey has allowed Bible translation to move from a place of isolation and to enter the main concerns of the evangelical Church in Francophone Africa. In the meantime, the production of various books on relevant issues at an affordable cost allows the spread of ideas within seminaries, churches, and Bible agencies.

4.4 Some results of the Francophone Initiative

An extensive evaluation of the impact of the Francophone Initiative was carried out in 2021. While there is still much to accomplish, there is much to celebrate. The following three stories indicate that there is an ongoing process of ownership of the Christian faith on the continent, furthering a true World Christianity.

1. **A theologian turned into an independent Bible translator**
   Prof. Koulagna is a professor of biblical exegesis and a specialist of Hebrew and biblical philology. He was part of the Francophone Initiative journey from the start while he taught at and led the Lutheran Seminary in Cameroon (*L'Institut luthérien de théologie de Meiganga*). A few years ago, he moved to Morocco where he became the Dean of another theological institution. When he invited me for coffee recently during the conference of the Council of Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa, I expected an ordinary time of catching up with one another. Instead, he pulled out of his suitcase several books of the Bible that he had translated on his own into *Yąg Dii*, his mother tongue.[18] Lutheran Bible Translators missionaries completed a New Testament into this language and laid a good foundation for ongoing language work several years ago. On his own, Prof. Koulagna has translated most of the Old Testament books which he prints and ships to the Church in his community for their use. The restrictions of the ongoing pandemic on his ability to travel have only

[17] Ethnicity and African traditional religions constitute the two major issues that hinder the effective growth of the Church (see Kenmogne and Pohor 2021).

[18] Professor Jean Koulagna has translated the following works into his mother tongue, *Yąg Dii*: Psalms (1994; 2019); Luther's *Small Catechism with Explanation* (2011; 2018); Leviticus (2019); 1–2 Samuel (2020); 1-2 Kings (2020); Jeremiah and Lamentations (2020) and Ezekiel and Daniel (2021) (see https://almowafaqa.academia.edu/JeanKoulagna/Bible-translation and https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Koulagna).

increased his productivity. As he left the conference, he was headed to his native *Dii* community, where he spends his vacations teaching in the Church and promoting the use of his native language. From my observation, he and a few others are following the patterns of the church reformers who translated and used the Scriptures in their ministry because they were convinced that it is the way to establish lay people in the Christian faith. Prof. Koulagna made the following statements that reveal his deepest motivation: "Just as it is possible to evangelise without christianising, it is possible to dialogue with traditional religions without falling into paganism" (Kenmogne and Pohor 2021:105, author's translation). Prof. Koulagna finds in God's introduction of himself to Moses—"I am who I am" or "I will be what I will be"—the deepest rationale for translation. God does not have a set and fixed name, but he reveals himself to people as God—"*Dieu*," "*Zamba*," "*Nyambe*," etc.—depending on their languages. This entails God relying on Bible translation to make himself known to the peoples of the world.

2. **A new degree at the Shalom Evangelical School of Theology in Chad**[19] The seminary in Chad was part of the Francophone Initiative journey from the outset. Having taught the introductory course in Bible translation to several batches of students, they felt that they should make a deeper commitment to further the effective incarnation of the Gospel in their country. In 2016, they held a consultation with church denominations in Chad and advocated for the start of a new degree programme in Theology and African Languages. Unlike their traditional programmes that prepare people for pastoral ministry, this degree equips students for various ministries using their mother tongue: translation, preaching, counselling, literacy, teaching, etc. At the school's invitation, SIL staff in the region have contributed to the programmes by teaching literacy and linguistics courses. To date, the first batch of graduates is already in the field of ministry. They serve as ordinary pastors within their denominations with the added value that they are skilled to address the pre-Christian worldview issues for which their predecessors were ill-equipped. When I met the Dean of this seminary at the recent conference of the Council of Theological Institutions, he proudly informed me that two graduates of this programme had initiated the translation of the Old Testament in one of the Chadian languages,[20] under the auspices of the Church.

[19] In French, *Faculté de Theologie Evangelique Shalom* (FATES).

[20] The language called *Mango* had the New Testament completed a few years ago through the collaboration of Wycliffe and SIL in Chad.

3. **A champion of engagement with African culture and religions**

Augustin Ahoga is an Old Testament and Cultural Anthropology scholar. In 2020 at the South African Theological Seminary, he defended a history-making thesis that proposes a new framework for inter-religious dialogue (see Ahoga 2020). Years ago, Ahoga was stunned by the fragmentation of the various expressions of the Church within his ethnic group in Benin. The absence of dialogue and unity among them weakened their witness in a community where they were ill-equipped to engage and evangelise the adherents of the traditional *voodoo* religion. Reviewing the various methods and frameworks for inter-religious dialogue suggested by Western scholars, he did not find anything that was suitable for engaging the challenge of his own community.

Ahoga had been a participant in the Francophone Initiative from its start, and had strengthened his convictions about the use of mother tongue and translated Scripture in ministry. Hence, he took a full year to regain his confidence in the use of his own mother tongue (*Maxi*) and challenge the denomination to which he belongs to adopt the use of the vernacular for ministry among ethnic groups.

As Ahoga could not find any suitable framework to address the plight of the Church among his ethnic group, he began to explore an approach to dialogue based on "language" and "identity." Testing this approach within his ethnic community, the divided expressions of the Church identified a common foundation on these realities and went on to reduce the barriers that had kept them separate. Moreover, language and identity provided church denominations with a common ground upon which they could engage the *voodoo* adherents with the Gospel.

Beyond his own community, Ahoga has tested his approach in other contexts where he has observed its problem-solving efficiency and ability to further the advent of a Church that has a relevant witness in context. In a recent interview, Ahoga (2021) asserted the following: Jews who have acknowledged and followed Jesus Christ call themselves "Messianic Jews" because they do not dispose of their religious and cultural background. In the same way, he works for a day when "African Christians" will emerge who retain and use their relevant cultural values to live out their faith in Jesus Christ. Today, Ahoga's ministry is shaped by the strong convictions that he holds.

A. He carries out an itinerant theological teaching ministry in several countries including Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast, and Senegal. In all these seminaries, he shares his discoveries and prepares pastors-in-training for a ministry that will allow them to achieve effective

engagement of the Church with any sociocultural context where it serves.

B. In his ministry, Ahoga has observed that oral communities learn and experience transformation when they can see and interact with new information rather than simply hear about it. As a result, he has changed his method of preaching. He has established drama groups that act the Scriptures in the vernacular language in place of reading the passage. Then his sermon is essentially interactive and becomes a conversation with the people. As a result, God's Word is able to enter the daily realities of people and invite their most sincere response.

C. Ahoga has recently created an interdisciplinary research laboratory[21] where several African theologians are teaming up with him to pursue strategies for effective ministry in context. Moreover, young researchers who are involved in post-degree programmes in universities are also welcome. The main prerequisite for admitting them is a good command of their own mother tongue and a commitment to interact with the Gospel and cultural realities in context.

In light of the Walls and Sanneh framework on the transmission and reception of the Gospel, it is obvious that the efforts of the Francophone Initiative aim to establish a local agency whereby people engage their own cultural realities to discern, chastise, confront, or affirm them as appropriate in order to further a true appropriation of the Gospel. In this way, they clearly exemplify the reality of the fact that world evangelisation is shifting from a "proselyte" to a "convert" stage to further the advent of Christianity as a world religion. Therefore, it is appropriate to reconsider our central question: to what extent does our current Bible translation movement further a World Christianity? In the concluding implications that follow, I sketch some of the perspectives that can guide our translation practices in this regard.

5 Implications for the translation practice in the twenty-first century

The perspectives that I suggest are motivated by a desire to see our ongoing exuberant Bible translation movement bear its intended fruit. **If Bible translation and engagement preserve the essence of Christianity and catalyse its ability to be at home in every context, how should our practices**

[21] In French, *Laboratoire interdisciplinaire de recherches endogènes* (LIRE).

maximise the likelihood of our desired impacts in a post-missionary era and "convert" stage of world evangelisation? The implications suggested here build upon the foundational assumptions that were laid out in my paper "Translation in the twenty-first century: Who needs Scripture?" (presented at the Bible Translation Conference 2019 and published as Kenmogne 2020). Moreover, they consider the shifts in the key factors that guided translation in the missionary era and invite us to reconsider how we respond to those changes. The following implications are considered from the perspective of my own background as a native speaker of a minority language, an observer of the Francophone Initiative development, and a leader in the global Bible translation movement. In retrospect, these implications should inform the orientation and training of those who participate in the various aspects of BT to enable appropriate practices in the current era of World Christianity.

We are indeed privileged to live in the era of the greatest, unprecedented acceleration of Bible translation in history. Technology and artificial intelligence give us the promise that this acceleration could scale exponentially higher in the near future. There is cause for rejoicing. In the meantime, we must seriously ask ourselves what the result of these translations will be. The Francophone Initiative experience, among other realities around the world, indicates that a translation product alone does not necessarily achieve the desired impact. Yet I assume that we are not just concerned about productivity but more so about fruitfulness. If we agree with Walls and Sanneh that the transformational impact that results from translation is a multigenerational and even multidimensional process, we should keenly discern how we engage the various factors that inform and shape Bible translation in this "convert" stage of world evangelisation.

5.1 Multilingualism and the shifting status of vernacular languages

The processes of colonisation (introducing foreign languages), nation-building (adopting official languages for government and education), and today's globalisation (with rising urbanisation, diaspora movements, and technological innovations) have the cumulative impact of shifting the status of the minority languages of the world. Multilingualism, translanguaging (mixing of different languages that gives rise to new varieties of language), and language loss become important realities that the Bible translation movement neglects to its own peril. A few decades ago, ethnic identity was naturally equated with the ability to speak or use one's native language. But such is no longer always the case. As I have indicated in Kenmogne (2020), our failure to address the issue of multilingualism and language loss might cause us to translate Bibles for communities that no longer exist, turning the plight of "Bible-less peoples" into that of "people-less Bibles."

In consultation with the Church and speech communities, multilingualism invites us to keenly 1) discern the Scripture needs of the community based on its multilingualism situation; 2) identify the appropriate Scripture formats (print, oral, audio-visual), modality (mono or bilingual), and scope (portions, New Testament, full Bibles); and 3) establish the mechanisms and strategies that will allow translation to improve the vitality and viability of the minority languages in the process.

In a recent joint endeavour, SIL, UBS, and Seed Company have developed a *Multilingualism Assessment Tool*[22] that can guide any church, agency, or community in undertaking a Bible translation with greater intentionality by addressing the issues above. The tool identifies four major types of multilingualism situations around the world today, provides simple guidance into the appropriate discernment of Scripture needs, and positions native speakers to be the primary decision makers. In a post-missionary context, where the primary agent of Bible translation is the native speaker, many have concluded that language issues become irrelevant in translation because native speakers have the intuitive and implicit knowledge of their language. The truth of the matter is that linguistics and language issues remain important, although they change in nature. The question is not primarily about how much analytical description of the language should precede or inform Bible translation. Instead, the question is: What kind of linguistics do native speakers need in order to effectively translate Scriptures and maintain ongoing use of their languages?

5.2 Bible translation and the Church

Two centuries of modern missions have resulted in a worldwide presence and exceptional growth of the Church in the Southern Hemisphere. While Bible translation catalysed evangelisation in the early days of this mission, Bible translation and the Church have not walked hand-in-hand, especially after the independence of many churches initiated by Western mission agencies. The Church has spread around the world using foreign languages (colonial or other regional languages of wider communication). Therefore, there is a gap between the presence of the Church and the ability to engage people in the languages that are most meaningful to them. Let me highlight three issues for our consideration relative to the relationship of Bible translation and the Church.

[22] The Multilingualism Assessment Tool considers four types of multilingualism situations: basic, shifting, shifted, and complex. It provides guidance on how to identify them and draw the implications for Scripture translation. It is soon to be published on the website https://emdc.info.

1. **Unchecked assumptions regarding the Church**
   As I contrast the Francophone Initiative experience with most of the discourse that is prevalent within the Bible translation movement, there is a need to check our assumptions about the Church. In several parts of the Southern Hemisphere, Bible translation has not been perceived as part of the responsibilities of the Church denominations. However, there is an ongoing assumption that Church planting agencies and churches themselves have the vision and the capacity to carry out translation. Indeed, there are examples of denominations that have taken responsibility for Bible translation in a number of countries around the world. However, no keen participant can deny the amount of support and equipping through capacity building that they have needed.[23] I applaud such moves and suggest that we reconsider how we seek to restore the role of the Church in Bible translation.
2. **Restoring the role of the Church in Bible translation**
   In response to the growing potential of the Church to both participate in and lead in Bible translation, several voices have risen to advocate for the shift of the leadership from Bible agencies to denominations and Church planting agencies. The Francophone Initiative, the Last Command Initiative in India, and other ongoing endeavours in Indonesia provide enough evidence that the Church's recognition of its responsibility and its participation has obvious benefits. It harnesses the potential of the Church to contribute to translation and changes the nature of the relationship with agencies without suppressing it. However, in the process, polarities have been introduced to the Bible translation movement that might—in the longer term—be of disservice to the entire

[23] In 2017, a pastor of a church denomination in an urban setting in Madagascar noted the weak engagement of believers with God's Word in the official language. Having taken linguistic courses in the university earlier on, he decided to find out if the use of the mother tongues of church adherents would make a difference. Although the denomination was multilingual, he decided to translate Scripture passages every Sunday into each of the languages present. Very soon, he noted a new enthusiasm in church participation and engagement with God's Word. He went on to invite SIL to assist him to create full translations into the various languages spoken by the members of the congregation. They recruited dozens of speakers per language who received training in translation principles, and then went on to draft the NT, each in their own language. Over the first year, each of the four teams completed a full draft of the NT. Since then, SIL has been doing quality checking with them. In the process, the congregation has identified degree holders in theology and linguistics who understudy the translation consultants in order to lead the next translations.

cause. Concepts of "church-driven," "church-centric," "church vs. agency-led" inadvertently position Bible agencies and churches in a power play which is counterproductive in a *missio dei* economy.

3. **Acknowledge the reality of unchurched Bible translation contexts**
In light of the growth of the Church around the world, the default strategies and frameworks for Bible translation in the twenty-first century assume the participation of some local expression of the Church. While this is appropriate, we should not lose sight of the significant remaining contexts around the world where no known or visible witness of some expression of the Church is present. In 2019, Ted Bergman and Maik Gibson (personal communication) identified five main areas of concentration of such communities. Using EGIDS level 6b and above, coupled with Joshua Project criteria,[24] they identified more than three hundred communities (including about fifty Sign Language communities) that are still unreached. The following table shows their distribution.

Areas of concentration of unchurched communities	Number of languages
South Asia (India, Afghanistan, Pakistan...)	130
China	59
Indonesia	58
Sahel Region	66
South-East Asia	39
Total	**352**

We can note that these unchurched communities are located in regions of the world where other religions are dominant and access is politically constrained and restricted. Therefore, the prevailing strategies that assume the leading role of a local expression of the Church will not necessarily prove effective in these contexts. Instead, they will require cross-cultural and creative pioneering engagements that allow Bible translation alongside church planting to lay a solid foundation for the ongoing and multigenerational transformation of the communities.

[24] They judged a community to have no church if the number for Christian adherents is less than twenty-one. Note that this arbitrary number is simply a cut-off point for the purposes of counting. Put differently, there is no biblical or missiological basis for setting it.

5.3 The corpus and purpose of Bible translation

Bible translation happens increasingly in contexts where people already have communicative access to Scriptures. Yet, the orientation of Bible translation often aims to simply introduce the concepts of Christianity, as in a pioneering context. As argued in Kenmogne 2020, it is my view that Bible translation serves the purposes of evangelism in the regions of the world that are still unchurched or without a Gospel witness. However, where a Church is already established, Bible translation should essentially aim to further spiritual maturity, theological formation, and identity affirmation. Recalling Walls' framework, these translations are happening in a "convert" stage where "proselytes" are seeking to resolve the issues of their cultural and Christian identities in order to mature as believers. Are our translations carried out with such an expectation in mind? Do our translation outcomes or products allow their end users to address such needs?

As a speaker of a minority language who first received the Gospel in a foreign language, it has been my experience that I need the mother tongue Scriptures to find the categories that allow me to engage the pre-Christian beliefs, values, and worldview that shaped me in my upbringing. In this way, translation assists me in my discipling process as I seek to mature as a believer and gain the ability to discern my Christian faith and cultural identity so as to achieve harmony. However, it has also been my experience that, often, the translated Scriptures available in my mother tongue do not help me much in this endeavour.[25] Bible agencies seem to take a minimalist approach relative to the deliverables of their work. The translation process is indeed a major theological enterprise during which translators explore concepts and reflect on the worldview, beliefs, values, and customs of the people. The outcomes of such an important work are seldom documented, yet it is of primary essence to the native speaker who already has communicative access to God's Word in a different language. In fact, such information would help to achieve the purpose of translation in this "convert" season where proselytes are seeking effective appropriation of the Gospel. A Ghanaian theologian who explores mother tongue

[25] In a paper where I explored a traditional and religious institution that has hindered the growth of the Church in my homeland, I realised that the Ghomala' New Testament offered a concept that could equip the Church to find ways to engage this institution and reorient it to serve God's Kingdom. Yet the completed translation presented to me as a user offers little assistance in negotiating the application of Scripture to challenging cultural realities (see Kenmogne 2021).

hermeneutics[26] once expressed to me a similar disappointment with the vernacular translations. He wondered where the translators document the theological decisions they make when choosing how to express concepts during the translation process. Exploring Scripture in my own mother tongue, I have been convinced that for the translations to advance effective discipleship and theological formation, we should reconsider the corpus of the deliverables of a Bible translation to include, besides the Scripture translation, a documentation of key theological decisions made regarding issues that have worldview and cultural implications. This requirement has significant implications on the translation process itself, construing it as a theological exercise that effectively engages the language and the culture to accurately convey God's Word.

5.4 The status of the Bible translator

In a recent paper on the "Centring the Local," Jay Matenga writes:

> I am lobbying for a return to indigeneity and a discarding of contextualisation in its impositional and cognitively-bound form. The gospel is not a set of cognitive concepts that are translated into another culture from the outside by expatriate missionaries. It is a narrative of God's faithfulness emerging out of the experience and ways of knowing of those who come to know Christ within a particular context. It is first and foremost a spiritual relationship that grows, guided by Scripture. By labelling it indigenous, I am joining a long line of so-called "Majority World" theologians arguing for a recentering of the local experience and localised interpretation of that experience in-Christ (Matenga 2021).

In response to the rise of the Global Church, the Bible translation movement strives to find ways to achieve effective local agency in Bible translation in each context around the world. The adoption of the Common Framework as its modus operandi by the Every Tribe Every Nation alliance indicates a keen desire to see people from the receptor community play a leading role in the translation process. There is much to celebrate in this regard. However, there is still a long way to go, as Matenga goes on to write:

[26] Theologian Tetteh Laryea delights in theologizing in the *Ga* language of Ghana. He laments over the fact that Bible translations lack helpful hints that can assist people like him or other mother tongue speakers who deeply desire to reflect upon the Scriptures in their sociocultural context. His book *Yesu Homoyo Nuntso* [Jesus, Lord of Homowo] (Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana: Regnum Africa, 2004) is an excellent exploration of Christology in the *Ga* language, with only an epilogue in English.

> Centring the local is not about empowering them. To empower, you give power to. It is not yours, as an outsider, to give. Rather than empower, we need to take our power out of the equation to create space for local initiatives to emerge (2021).

The ministry of Bible translation is going indigenous in the Southern Hemisphere, but its resourcing is still largely found in the global North. From observation, the dynamics of the interaction between the various players does not create enough space for global South scholars to release their full potential in this ministry. We need more and more theological and church leaders who can effectively embrace Bible translation as part of their pastoral or theological ministry to the Church. For this, we will need to revisit some of our ongoing practices. This includes: 1) all those participating in the *missio dei* through Bible translation—whether in resourcing, or in technical or implementation roles—need to give away their power and set their focus on the goal; 2) unlock Bible translation as an exclusive and specialised field and consider creative ways that allow cooperation with all initiatives in translation that spark from various places;[27] and 3) clearly frame Bible translation as a theological enterprise to advance evangelism, discipleship, theological formation, and identity affirmation.

With these changes we would increase the likelihood of Christianity being at home in most contexts around the world because people are truly flourishing, meaning they are restored in their dignity as individuals and communities, and in their relationships with God, with their fellow human beings, and with God's creation.

6 Conclusion

The fast-globalising world of the twenty-first century tends to lock the whole of humanity into an "imagined" (Anderson 2006) and artificial community that reduces cultural and linguistic diversity. In light of the prevailing trends, we need to recapture the deepest *raison-d'être* of Bible translation if we want to maintain our motivation and relevance. Sanneh reminds us that Bible translation is the irreplaceable ingredient that preserves the essence of Christianity as a religion without a fixed language or cultural centre, which seeks to be at home in any and in every sociocultural context. Therefore, as we pursue Bible translation in a period that has been preceded by two centuries of Western modern mission, our

[27] Specialists and trained experts in BT are indeed in high demand in the emerging and crowded field of participants in BT. Their expertise coupled with soft and relational skills that allow appropriate engagement will maximise their impact when they see their main contribution as facilitators rather than primary implementers.

duty is to revisit our assumptions and practices to ensure that they enable and support the recipients of the Gospel around the world in their processes to confront, adapt, affirm, and reorient their pre-Christian cultural norms to allow for a true appropriation of Christianity. This will give meaning to our efforts and further the glory of God as individuals, communities, and nations flourish because they have achieved full reconciliation with God, with themselves, with others, and with God's creation.

References

Ahoga, Augustin. 2020. Vers un modèle africain de dialogue inter-religieux: Cas de Vodun Xɛbyoso et de l'Église Assemblées de Dieu dans la région maxi au Bénin. In Robert Falconer (ed.), *SATS PhD compendium: A collection of doctoral thesis summaries*, 1:492–520. Sandton: South African Theological Seminary. https://sats.ac.za/compendium/phd-compendium-volume-1-2020/.

Ahoga, Augustin. 2021. Extrémisme religieux en Afrique : pour Augustin Ahoga « il faut à nouveau évangéliser les Africains ». *lafree.ch. 29 April 2021*. https://lafree.ch/info/monde/extremisme-religieux-en-afrique-pour-augustin-ahoga-il-faut-a-nouveau-evangeliser-les-africains.

Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Revised edition. London and New York: Verso.

Argyris, Chris, and Donald Schön. 1974. *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bediako, Kwame. 2000. *Jesus in Africa: The Christian gospel in African history and experience*. Yaoundé, Cameroon: Éditions Clé, and Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana: Regnum Africa.

Coulibaly, Issiaka. 2012. L'impact de la théologie sur la vie chrétienne en Afrique: État des lieux, problèmes et opportunités. In Rubin Pohor and Michel Kenmogne (eds), *Théologie et vie chrétienne en Afrique*. Yaoundé, Cameroun: ADG Éditions, and Cotonou, Bénin: Éditions PBA. https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/74405.

Every Tribe Every Nation. 2022. Who we are: Defining the goal. Accessed 31 March, 2022. https://eten.bible/who-we-are/.

Gitau, Wanjiru M. 2020. The legacy of Lamin Sanneh: Colonial missionary impact, world Christianity, and Muslim-Christian dialogue. *Lausanne Global Analysis* 9(3).

Jenkins, Philip. 2002. *The next Christendom: The coming of global Christianity*. First edition. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Philip. 2011. *The next Christendom: The coming of global Christianity*. Third edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kenmogne, Michel. 2009. *La traduction de la Bible et l'Église: Enjeux et défis pour l'Afrique francophone*. (*Bible translation and the church: Issues and challenges for francophone Africa*.) Yaoundé: Éditions Clé, and Nairobi: Wycliffe International.

Kenmogne, Michel. 2020. Translation in the twenty-first century: Who needs Scripture? *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 45(4):1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939320930250.

Kenmogne, Michel. 2021. L'Église et l'institution successorale chez les Ghomala' de l'Ouest Cameroun. In Michel Kenmogne and Rubin Pohor (eds), *Vivre l'évangile en contexte*, 121–35. Abidjan: Initiative Francophone; Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone.

Kenmogne, Michel, and Rubin Pohor, eds. 2021. *Vivre l'évangile en contexte*. Abidjan: Initiative Francophone; Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone.

Kimbi, Paul. 2019. *Beyond the figures: Growing the roots of Christianity in Africa*. Yaoundé, Cameroon: CABTAL Publishing Services.

Liner, Christy. 2021. All access goals forecasting (Progress.Bible). Progress.Bible analysis presented for the ETEN Steering Committee, July 2021. https://progress.bible/data/.

Matenga, Jay. 2021. Centring the local: The Indigenous future of missions. Presentation prepared for Wycliffe Global Alliance/SIL Asia Pacific "Together in Christ 2021" Conference, 19 January, 2021. https://jaymatenga.com/pdfs/MatengaJ_CentringLocal.pdf and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7f3qHQcLIPU.

Pohor, Rubin. 2012. Le vécu de la conversion en milieu évangélique: questions et problemes. In Rubin Pohor and Michel Kenmogne (eds.), *Théologie et vie chrétienne en Afrique*. Yaoundé; Cotonou: ADG Éditions; Éditions PBA. https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/74405.

Pohor, Rubin, and Michel Kenmogne, eds. 2017. *Le christianisme et les réalités culturelles africaines*. Abidjan: Initiative Francophone; Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone. https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/74416.

Sanneh, Lamin. 2003. *Whose religion is Christianity? The gospel beyond the west*. Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Sanneh, Lamin. 2007a. Bible translation and the birth of Christianity as a world religion. Paper presented at Andrew Walls Lectures, Horsleys Green, UK (Wycliffe International, European Training Programme).

Sanneh, Lamin. 2007b. *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of world Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walls, Andrew F. 1996. *The missionary movement in Christian history: Studies in the transmission of faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Walls, Andrew F. 1997. Old Athens and new Jerusalem: Some signposts for Christian scholarship in the early history of mission studies. *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 21(4): 146–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/239693939702100401.

Watters, John R. 1999. Vision 2025: A vision for the family of organizations of WBTI and SIL International. Unpublished ms.