



Re-imagining Africa

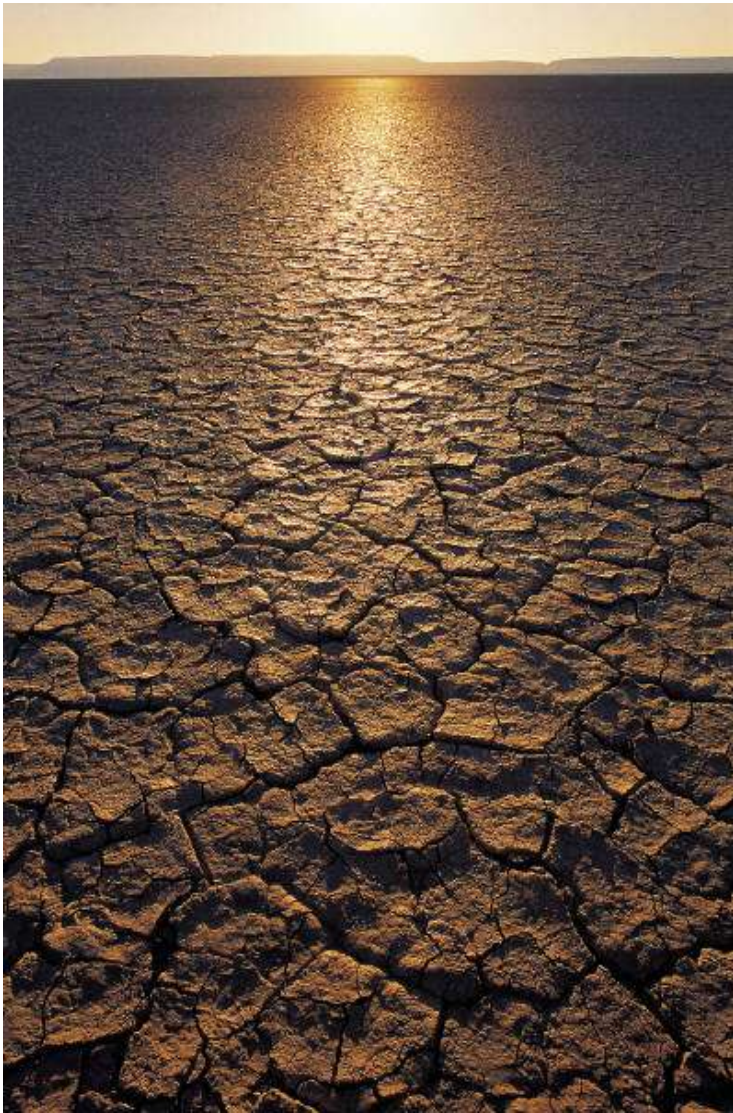
- Take a moment to look at the images and items on display at this station – how do they relate to how you, others, and the media perceive Africa?
- Take a sheet of paper, and on one side, draw a rough outline of the shape of the African continent. Now, write down any words or phrases that you thought of as you were looking at the items here. Consider any other labels, descriptions, or characteristics that people associate with Africa, and write a few of these down too.
- Take your piece of paper to a quiet space some distance away from the images and items you have just looked at and pray that:
 - God would help you see something more of the truth of Africa during this time of prayer
 - You would be open, in the stillness now, to receive anything God would bring to mind about how he sees Africa and its peoples
 - God would help you, Africans, and many others in the world, to have hope and faith for the transformation of the continent, and to work towards this however he leads.
- Fold up the piece of paper and take it with you on your ‘travels’ round the rest of the stations.

Voices for Christ

- Put on the headphones, press play, and close your eyes. Spend a few moments enjoying the sound of many voices swelling in praise.
- Now spend some time thanking God for, and praying blessing over:
 - The African continent's 504,104 million Christians* – that's a massive chorus of praise!
 - Their leaders, churches, Bible colleges, programmes, outreach and social justice work.
 - The emerging voices of African theologians, and for them to grow still more in insight, and impact, on the continent, and around the world, as they apply Biblical truth to their context.
 - Countries such as Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia where despite many difficulties, more than 80% of the population share Christian faith*.
- Keeping the headphones on to block out other background noise, press stop. Now pray for:
 - The persecuted church, particularly in northern Nigeria, and in Sudan.
 - God's protection on all Christians given the rise of more militant Islamist movements.
- Press play again. Use this final space of time at this station to pray for:
 - The church in Africa to grow and thrive – becoming even more effective in mission, and stronger in unity.

(*Operation World)

Walk with the world — Africa



Streams in the desert

‘Restore their fortunes Lord, like streams in the desert’ (based on Psalm 126:4)

- One of the biggest challenges facing large areas of the continent is over water. Water shortages, droughts, and unpredictable rainfall results in poor soil. And combined often with over-farming, unwise deforestation and climate change induced desertification, this soil is unable to provide the food needed or support livestock. This issue is going to become even more problematic if climate change, already affecting the region significantly, continues unchecked.
- Take a handful of sand in one hand, and let it flow through your hand, whilst you consider how it feels. Now do the same with the rich, moist soil.
- Pray for:
 - The progress of local organisations, including some of the partners of NGOs such as Christian Aid and Tearfund, who are making progress on conservation farming methods which enable poor communities to get incredible yields despite the condition of the soil.
 - Innovations and breakthroughs on new methods of water harvesting, irrigation, and soil regeneration.
 - Global legislation and action on climate change to speed up, to halt the devastating effects of desertification.
- Take a handful of sand again, and spend a few moments to pray for all those currently suffering the effects of drought or famine. Pray that God would ‘restore their fortunes, like streams in the desert’.

Africa on a shoe-string?

- Look through the labels on the string and use the statistics to build up a fuller picture of Africa's poverty, progress and potential.
- Allow the thoughts that come to mind to stimulate your own prayers for
 - Africa's people.
 - Africa's land and climate.
 - The actions of the global community, governments, NGOs and institutions like the IMF, World Bank.
- As you consider the labels hanging on the string, pray that God would help this continent in its precariousness. Pray for potential to be fulfilled, poverty ended and for worldwide "neighbours" to provide the support each African nation needs to progress.

Dancing on injustice

- Watch the film clip of traditional African dance. What feelings does the dance convey to you?
- African dancing is vibrant and famous for it – often full of joy and colour, and incredibly rhythmic.
- Dancing is an entirely appropriate response to injustice for Christians. There is need, suffering and pain in our world, but Jesus has already won the victory. We can celebrate that he has done everything necessary for good to triumph, and injustice to be defeated. And as we allow him to use our hands and feet to build his kingdom now, our movement literally crushes injustice under our feet. Hope, joy, love, peace are in our steps...
- Step onto the map and pray for everyone who dances on injustice in, and for, Africa, praying a special blessing on:
 - Those who cheerfully and passionately pray, campaign and give because they believe change is possible.
 - Those who have given their lives to work or volunteer for those in need in the continent.
- How could you dance upon injustice? Ask God to bring to mind anything you could do to be part of hope and freedom triumphing on the African continent... imagine you are dancing as you pray in response (or if you're very brave, actually dance!)

Home-grown hope

- Many people have an image of Africa that is barren – they imagine dry soil, hungry people, and no crops. The African continent does face significant challenges, but a wealth of produce is grown.
- Many people make their living from agriculture, and the warmth of the climate, and diverse regions, mean that a large number of different, and exotic, foods can be grown.
- Taste and see how good Africa's home-grown hope is!
- Thank God for the diversity of his creation evident on this continent.
- Pray for Africa's farmers, and for all who work in agricultural research to increase yields, or find out more about heat-resistant crops which could be the answer to feeding the continent in the face of climate change.
- Pray also for reforms in international trade laws which prevent farmers from being able to sell their produce in their local markets because the markets are flooded with cheap, subsidised imports.
- Many farmers export their products abroad, but are not only subject to unjust trade laws which make it harder to compete with subsidised products from elsewhere, they are also very vulnerable to changes in the fashion or demand for certain crops, especially when contracts with large multi-national companies are withdrawn. Pray for just trade and for consumers around the world to develop a greater awareness of the impact of their consumption.
- Africa is also rich in natural resources, including everything from oil to diamonds – not to mention the huge potential for solar power. In the past, Africa's natural wealth has often led to corruption and exploitation either by powerful natives, or foreign companies and governments – undoing the potential provided by such valuable commodities. Pray for an end to this, and the release of the continent's wealth for its wider population.

In the news today...

- Read one or two of the stories displayed, and cast your mind back to any other news stories you have heard recently about the continent, related-issues, or specific African countries.
- Offer up these situations to God. Remember that he is still sovereign. Ask for his mercy, guidance, peace, comfort and forgiveness for all who are affected. Offer his thanks for all who are standing up for truth, or providing comfort, and especially for any who are doing so in his name.
- Take a moment to consider how many stories get overlooked by the news. Thank God that he sees everything that is happening across the continent – thank him for all the good news, and surrender all the bad to his love and power.
- Ask God to prompt your heart if there is anything you should be doing in response to news stories. Or are there specific issues that he has laid on your heart, prompting you to act?

History scars

- Imperialism and colonialism drew unnatural divisions and borders on Africa that do not correspond to the many different tribes and ethnic groups living there.
- There are 2,500* different ethnic groups in Africa and more than 3,000 different languages being spoken – and these divisions of people and language bear little if any resemblance to the more than 50 countries and islands that have been created from the continent.
- Spend a few moments rubbing out one or more of the boundary lines on the map, and using this symbolic act to help you focus your prayers for peace and reconciliation between different tribes, particularly in current or recent trouble spots such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Pray also for healing for the continent from past exploitation, and an end to current exploitation through a new colonialism which continues to oppress the continent. Especially pray for an end to unfavourable trade practices which continue to take advantage of many African nations' markets and produce.
- Write a short, summary prayer on a space not covered by a line on the map.

(* Operation World)

Follow my leader

- Leadership in Africa (at many levels of society) is a big issue – and none so much at governmental level. There are a number of reasons contributing to this:
 - Most countries in Africa have only been independent (following colonial rule) for a relatively short time, and so are in essence, young countries.
 - Related to the above, in some African states, corruption and bad governance are prevalent.
 - Life expectancy in many African nations is low, and in some, significant portions of the adult generation are missing due to war and or HIV/AIDS – therefore it is harder for experience to be built up, and passed on.
- Stand in front of each leader displayed, and pray for them and their country in turn. Pray for God’s wisdom, truth, justice and mercy to inform their decision making, and for the people that follow them to grow in freedom and respect.
- Step back from these specific leaders and find a quiet space to kneel. Now pray for leadership as a whole. Ask God to have mercy and raise up godly leaders, and to turn the hearts of these leaders to their people and vice versa.

Shoes too big to fill

- Take a copy of the story provided, and stand in the 'shoes' provided.
- Read the story and imagine what life has been like for those featured in it – pray for them, and all whose circumstances are similar to theirs.
- Worldwide around 16 million children have been orphaned by AIDS – 92.5% of these children (as many as double the population of London) live in Sub-Saharan Africa, in countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia.*
- The loss of a significant part of the adult generation has a huge impact on the next one – particularly for those children who have to step up to care for younger brothers and sisters – sometimes heading up entire families.
- Step outside the feet and look back at them. Although the problem seems huge, many organisations are doing excellent work to support these orphans, and to step into the roles of missing adults. And, whilst still at pandemic levels, infection rates of HIV in younger people are dropping significantly.
- Praise God that no problem is ever too big to bring to him, and ask him to continue to help infection rates to fall, and organisations to meet the needs of orphans.

(*www.avert.org)

Taking new countries to heart

- Take out the outline of Africa that you drew, wrote on, and have been carrying around with you since station 1, 'Re-imagining Africa'. Look back at the words that you wrote, and take a few moments to think through what God has laid on your heart during this time of prayer, and how much this creates a similar, or different, view of Africa in you.
- Turn over the piece of paper and draw the outline of Africa again. Write down any new words, images or pictures that you want to remember to inform your future prayer for the continent, and take this sheet away with you.
- Now look one last time today at the map of the continent of Africa displayed. Choose two countries – one whose needs you know something about, and one you don't know much about, or have never even heard of.
- Pray now, and commit to God when else you will pray, for the familiar country. Do you feel there is anything specific you should do to be part of the answer to your prayers? Commit to do this when you leave.
- In the coming days and weeks, continue to take Africa to heart by:
 - Researching the unfamiliar country you chose, and praying and/or taking action in response to what you learn, and as you feel led.
 - Continuing to pray and/or take action on behalf of the familiar country you chose.
 - Using your two images of the African continent, to pray for a new vision of the continent to grow in you, and others, and to inspire them to take action for lasting change.