

Nigeria

Federal Republic of Nigeria

Africa

Geography

Area 923,768 sq km. Mangrove and tropical rain forests in the south, savannah and grasslands in the north. The country is drained by the Niger-Benue river systems.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	158,258,917	2.35%
2020	193,252,473	1.90%
2030	226,650,634	1.53%

Africa's most populous nation.

Capital Abuja 1,995,187. **Other major cities** Lagos 10.6 million; Kano 3.4mill; Ibadan 2.8m; Kaduna 1.6m; Benin City 1.3m; Port Harcourt 1.1m; Ogbomosho 1.0m. **Urbanites** 49.8%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 43%. **Life expectancy** 47.7yrs.

Peoples

Over 520 ethnic groups. The triangular rivalry among the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo has dominated Nigerian politics since independence and continues to do so.

Sub-Saharan African 99.6%.

Yoruba 22.8%. 8 peoples, including Oyo Yoruba 18.6%. Mostly in south and southwest.

Benue 17.8%. 255 peoples. Ibibio 3.0%; Tiv 2.5%; Ebrira 1.1%; Anaang 1.0%. Many small people groups in east-central (Benue state) and southeast.

Hausa 16.0%. 3 peoples, including Ajawa Hausa 15.6%. Mainly in centre and north.

Igbo 14.9%. 10 peoples, including Igbo 13.2%. Mainly in southeast.

Fulani 10.4%. 5 peoples, mostly in north. Toroobe 4.8%; Haabe/Bauchi 1.7%; Sokoto 1.7%; Mboboro 1.5%; Adamawa 0.8%.

Chadic 4.5%. 104 peoples, most of which are small in number. East and northeast of country.

Kanuri 4.0%. 4 peoples. Far northeast.

Guinean 2.5%. 31 peoples, including Edo 0.9%.

Nupe 2.0%. 9 peoples. Central belt to the west.

Ijaw 1.8%. 10 peoples. South-central coasts.

Adamawa-Ubangi 1.2%. 41 peoples, mostly in the east.

Other Sub-Saharan African 1.7%.

Other 0.4%. Arab, Western, Chinese, others.

Literacy 69.1%. **Official language** English.

Hausa is widely used in the north and middle belt, Yoruba in the southwest, Igbo in the southeast and Pidgin English all over the south.

All languages 521; 96% of the population use 21 major languages. **Languages with Scriptures** 22Bi 60NT 98por.

Economy

Fertile agricultural land, extensive mineral resources and vast oil reserves. Highly dependent on income from export of crude oil and gas – such income accounts for 95% of foreign exchange earnings. But much revenue has been lost through capital flight by multinationals, squandered on prestige projects, embezzled by a series of corrupt rulers and wasted through inability to harvest and refine all that is drilled. “Bunkering” (illegal siphoning by local militia and gangs) and other disruptions from disgruntled locals, who see no benefit from the untold oil wealth, often bring production to a standstill, threatening the entire nation’s economy. Corruption is a massive evil in the country, ubiquitous at every level of society. Repayment of external debt is nearly done, heralding a potential increase in economic progress. Despite reforms, central commercial banks remain fragile and need stabilizing. Infrastructure is often sagging. The majority still live below the poverty line.

HDI Rank 158th/182. **Public debt** 13.4% of GDP. **Income/person** \$1,401 (3% of USA).

Politics

Independent from Britain as a federation in 1960. Component states now number 36 with a federal capital area. Vast differences between the feudal, predominantly Muslim north and the more developed, largely Christian south – plus, the rivalry among the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo – constantly generate tension. Muslim machinations to extend politico-economic control are the main causes for the turbulent post-independence history of tension, violence, coups and civil war. Obasanjo, a Christian, was elected president in 1999 following a long period of (Muslim) military dictatorship. He served two terms and then oversaw the elections that led to the installation of Umaru Yar’Adua, a Muslim, as president with Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian, as his vice president. After a long illness, Yar’Adua died and Jonathan became president. President Jonathan has many challenges facing his government – achieving a permanent resolution to strife in the Niger Delta, restoring peace to the troubled Plateau State, fighting corruption and establishing a truly independent Electoral

Commission to oversee free and fair elections in 2011. The danger of national fragmentation along tribal or religious lines is never far away.

Religion

Nigeria is constitutionally a secular state with freedom of religion. But the northern ruling elite give preferential treatment to Muslims and discriminate against Christians. Little has been done to stem the growth of violent Islamist groups or to stop persecution of Christians in the north, resulting in hundreds of churches burned and many Christians killed. Since 1999, Muslim state leaders have imposed shari'a law in nine northern states and parts of four others.

NOTE: Claims and counter-claims by Muslims, Christians and individual denominations are impossible to verify and are often inflated. Estimates for Muslims vary between 30% and 55%, and for Christians between 40% and 65%. Eight states appear to be overwhelmingly Muslim, 18 are overwhelmingly Christian and 10 are split around 50% of each.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	51.26	81,123,521	2.7%
Muslim	45.12	71,406,423	2.7%
Ethnoreligionist	3.31	5,238,370	-4.8%
Non-religious	0.30	474,777	2.4%
Other	0.01	15,826	2.4%

Actual practice of traditional religions may be as high as 10% of the population; percentages of both Muslim and Christian would therefore correspondingly decrease.

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	524	21.91	34,671,000	3.7%
Independent	3,915	15.16	23,992,000	2.7%
Anglican	1	12.61	19,950,000	3.3%
Catholic	1	12.08	19,118,000	1.3%
Orthodox	3	<0.01	6,000	1.9%
Marginal	23	0.95	1,502,000	3.9%
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>		-11.45	-18,121,000	0.0%

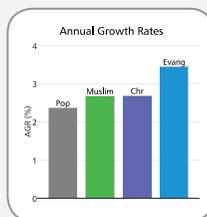
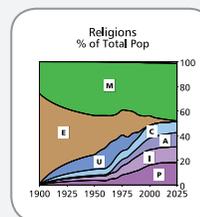
Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Anglican Church	A	7,600	5,000,000	19,950,000
Catholic Church	C	1,976	8,892,166	19,118,157
Baptist Convention	P	10,000	3,000,000	6,500,000
Evang Ch Winning All	P	10,949	3,000,000	6,000,000
Apostolic Church	P	5,500	2,027,027	4,500,000
Celestial Ch of Christ	I	2,029	912,941	3,880,000
Ch of Christ in Nigeria	P	3,000	1,340,000	3,350,000
Cherubim & Seraphim	I	12,708	1,525,000	3,050,000
Assemblies of God	P	10,700	1,156,000	2,890,000
Christ Apostolic Ch	I	7,000	1,050,000	2,625,000

Methodist Church	P	2,250	900,000	2,250,000
Redeemed Chr Ch	I	6,300	1,013,514	2,250,000
Ch of God Mission Int	I	6,600	732,000	1,830,000
Ch of the Lord (Aladura)	I	1,469	587,459	1,780,000
Luth Ch of Christ in N	P	2,400	387,789	1,745,050
Evang Reformed Ch	P	310	485,000	1,700,000
Presbyterian Church	P	1,000	500,000	1,000,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	5,417	325,000	877,500
Deeper Life Bible Ch	I	11,300	500,000	825,000
Gospel Faith Mission	I	2,500	250,000	625,000
Living Faith Ministries	I	472	235,849	625,000
Charis Fellowship Int	I	2,500	300,000	600,000
Ch of the Bre (EYN)	P	450	180,000	540,000
United Methodist	P	157	375,940	500,000
Foursquare Gospel	P	1,992	162,389	470,000
Holy Spirit Ministries	M	850	255,000	460,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	840	285,000	395,000
Chr Reformed Ch	P	457	142,276	350,000
Reformed Ch of Christ	P	187	140,476	295,000
United Evang Ch	P	1,000	178,125	285,000
Syn Ch, All Nations	I	6	93,333	280,000
Christ Chosen Ch of God	I	750	90,000	225,000
Christian Brethren	P	514	90,000	180,000
Other denominations[4,430]		26,465	3,353,192	7,207,323
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>				-18,121,000
Total Christians[4,467]			147,64839,465	47681,119,127

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	30.8	48,806,250	3.4%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	19.4	30,662,342	3.1%
Pentecostals	8.0	12,737,941	2.6%

Missionaries from Nigeria

P, I, A 8,944 (6,644 long-term), most cross-cultural, most in Nigeria, but also in 56 other countries.



Answers to Prayer

1 The successful transition from one civilian government to another is a first for Nigeria. Attempts to strengthen the national banks and economy and to combat corruption have met with some success. The promise of further development assistance for the

aggrieved oil-rich states has also helped establish a measure of peace. Praise God that despite many threats, Nigeria's national stability seems to be consolidating.

2 Nigeria's prayer movement is one of the world's strongest, stimulated by political stresses, by Muslim persecution of Christians and by a genuine desire for revival and evangelization. Some of the largest prayer meetings in history have been in Nigeria (an estimated 3 million in Lagos). Positive political developments and church growth can be attributed in large part to these movements.

3 The dynamic growth of the Church continues to be impressively solid. This has been among Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, evangelical groups such as ECWA (Evangelical Churches Winning All/SIM) and TEKAN with interdenominational roots (SIM, Pioneers, others) and Pentecostal and charismatic denominations (both indigenous and international). A few specifics:

- a) **The Church of Nigeria** (Anglican) has grown from 900,000 in 1960 to perhaps nearly 20 million in 2010. They are a bulwark for evangelicals and conservatives in the global Anglican community.
- b) **SIM's work**, which started with such cost a century ago, has resulted in a dynamic Church, ECWA, with 6,000 churches and six million people.
- c) **The Apostolic Church**, birthed out of the 1904-05 Welsh revival, has six million affiliates globally; 4.5 million of them are in Nigeria.
- d) **Deeper Life Bible Church** began as a campus Bible study in 1973 and has grown to nearly one million affiliates in Nigeria and many more globally.
- e) **Redeemed Christian Church of God** started in 1952 as a single, local congregation and has grown to over three million affiliates worldwide, with a presence in over 130 countries. It is the fastest-growing denomination in Nigeria.
- f) **Evangelicals** have grown from 2.1 million in 1960 (5.7%) to 49 million in 2010 (30.8%).

4 Missions vision was birthed in the 1970s through revival among university students. This vision has blossomed into a movement accounting for over 5,000 Nigerian missionaries at home and abroad, helping lead the way for Africa-wide mission mobilization.

Challenges for Prayer

1 Nigeria's unity has survived, almost miraculously, despite countless threats. The cumulative effects of ancient tribal rivalries, Muslim conquests, British colonial policy in which the north and south were handled differently, the bitter Biafra war of 1967-70 and heightened religious tensions have left deep scars. Pray for healing and reconciliation; pray also for leadership that will serve to reconcile and unite rather than to embitter and divide.

2 The challenges facing the government are myriad and urgent – extremist Muslim agitation in the north, armed militias in the disgruntled and oil-rich southeast, pervasive corruption, a self-serving network of bureaucratic elite, emigration/brain drain, widespread poverty and an apparently disintegrating sense of national identity. These are challenges enough for any established government, never mind a fledgling democracy. Pray for the right balance between caution and decisiveness in addressing such threats, and between prudence and ambition in economic development and in combating poverty.

3 The scale of corruption in Nigeria is staggering. It is widely regarded as one of the world's most corrupt societies and is infamous for e-mail scams, international crime and drug-running.

- a) **Graft, bribery and embezzlement are commonplace** at every level of society. Since the 1960s, over \$400 billion has been lost through corruption, almost all to the very people entrusted with the nation's stewardship. Politicians, bankers, police, military, even religious leaders have all been found guilty. Corruption is not even discouraged by either a strong Christian presence or shari'a law; it appears to be more deep-seated than both of these.
- b) **Capital flight.** Much of Nigeria's vast wealth has been siphoned out of the country through various illicit and corrupt means by multinational companies operating in Nigeria.

- c) **The impact of corruption on Nigeria** is devastating and crippling. It pulls others into the grasping free-for-all, it undermines those who attempt good governance, it inspires the imposition of shari'a, it disarms the effectiveness of Christians caught in its grip, it leaves the nation's reputation in tatters and it generates such disillusionment that violent and extreme reactions appear to be the only ones that work.

Pray that God may raise up many more who fear Him and have the moral integrity and courage to tackle the rottenness manifest in society.

4 **The introduction of shari'a law** in northern Muslim states is a direct challenge to the federal government. It is an open door to human rights abuses and the further infiltration of Nigeria by extremists. It is a danger to national stability and a threat to Christian ministry in those states so affected. Pray for the intrinsic cruelty and injustices of shari'a to be exposed and for those seeking moral order and social righteousness to find it in the practice of biblical principles under the authority of Christ.

5 **Church growth has been massive and remains so.** Nigeria has a large majority of West Africa's evangelicals. But such growth is not without its own dangers. Pray against:

a) **A failure of discipleship:** the emphasis on evangelism and soul winning without adequate follow-up and balanced biblical teaching. Africa's – and Nigeria's – greatest spiritual challenge is not Islam, not corruption, not even the need for missions, but discipleship. If the Nigerian Church were truly disciplined and brought to maturity in Christ, it would be an unstoppable force.

b) **Unbalanced prosperity theology** and chasing after dubious miracles cheapen the good news. Numerous doctrinal distortions, greed masquerading as biblical prosperity, spiritual charlatanism and unethical fundraising not only exchange the truth for lies, but they also inoculate millions against the real message of the gospel. Pentecostal groups are especially prone to these excesses.

c) **Second-generation nominalism** in both traditional and younger churches is a big problem. Double standards are widespread, and immorality, membership in secret societies and compromise with the world bring strife and disrepute to the gospel.

d) **Syncretistic Christianity.** Many newer indigenous groups have a desire for God but also much admixture of unbiblical worldviews and practices. Many are open to greater gospel light but are often isolated from, or shunned by, the more orthodox churches. They are increasingly benefitting from access to solid evangelical seminaries and sound theological literature.

e) **Enthusiastic and aggressive but uninformed approaches to African spirituality.** This is often and most sadly expressed in witch hunters, who identify and accuse children of being witches or being possessed by demons and then administer harsh, even fatal, "cures". Pray that biblical truth and practice might prevail over superstition.

f) **Division and disunity.** There are several major networks of churches in Nigeria. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) is the umbrella body for five major Christian blocks – the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN); Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN); ECWA/TEKAN (Protestant mainline); PFN/CPFN (Pentecostals); and the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC). Praise God for their vital contribution to national Christian life and unity. Some megachurches and newer denominations do not bother to integrate into the wider Christian scene. Pray that leaders and in turn believers might look past the denominational and tribal rivalries that may exist to focus on their underlying and more profound unity in Christ.

6 **Christian leaders** are under great stress in today's Nigeria, including spiritual opposition, political pressure and financial temptations. Those in the north also face very real dangers from Muslim extremists. Many have ministries with wider African or even global impact. Pray for:

a) **Integrity and unity in leadership.** There is frequently a gap between what is preached and what is perceived to be practiced by Christian leaders. Especially among the newer, fast-growing churches, prayer is needed for:

- i) **Unity.** The fragmented nature of the Church is not so much about personal ambition and personal conflicts as it is about denominational or tribal differences. If leaders cannot work together, then neither will their followers.

- ii *Honesty*. A profusion of competing denominations and sects has emerged, many of them claiming inflated numbers to increase the prestige of their leaders.
- iii *Personal holiness*. Extravagant lifestyles and oily showmanship usurp spiritual depth and biblical preaching as indicators of anointing. Instances of corruption, theft, embezzlement and sexual immorality are tragically frequent.
- iv *Accountability* is often absent; the “big man” dynamic plays into the same materialism, pride and carnality that cripple Nigeria politically and economically.

Pray that humility, simplicity and holiness might become the watchwords of the Nigerian Church.

- b) **The multiplication of leaders** who are Spirit-led, well versed in the Scriptures, skilled in disciple-making and steeped in the knowledge of God and the power of prayer.
- c) **The hundreds of seminaries, colleges, Bible schools and training programmes** in Nigeria, as well as the many TEE courses. The rush of many theological institutions to affiliate to Nigerian universities has produced neither the academic excellence nor the genuine spirituality that the churches so badly need. Several of Nigeria’s leading seminaries are strengthened by pursuing the standards of ACTEA (Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa). Though demand for places is high from their own constituent churches, evangelical seminaries are able to offer significant help in the training of pastors for African Initiated Churches.
- d) **Servant-leaders and mentors to be raised up**. One-man ministries, dictatorial leadership, empire-building and unwillingness to entrust responsibility to the upcoming generation are common weaknesses. The generation gap between older and younger pastors is often large and a source of resentment, since the older leaders cling to their power and influence rather than passing the torch.
- e) **Expatriate ministries, seeking high-profile campaigns** that are not necessarily needed or welcomed by established Nigerian leadership networks, can always find other nationals through whom to run their events. This fosters further division and is symptomatic of the Church’s inability to stand as one.

7 Nationwide interdenominational movements, more than in most nations, have made a deep impact on specific sections of the community. Of note:

- a) **Secondary schools**. SU operates mainly in the south, while its partner organization FCS (Fellowship of Christian Students) operates in 20 northern states. They have had a huge influence in discipling and training Christian young people. There is considerable opposition and trials in the three northern regions, often including bloody violent attacks, yet a great harvest is being won. Pray that Christian teachers, advisors and student leaders may be encouraged and strengthened.
- b) **Universities and colleges**. NIFES (Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students), the largest member movement of IFES, has over 35,000 members on 300 campuses, with their largest groups in the central and southern parts of the country. FCS is stronger in the central and northern regions, having also mobilized outreach into schools and colleges, winning many to Christ. There are now many other church-based campus fellowship groups associated with some of the larger denominations. Christian students face many challenges – temptations to immorality and unethical paths to success, false teaching from “Christian” sects and pressure from Muslims. Christian witness has been divided in recent years by unhealthy competition from many other campus fellowships.
- c) **Peace House**, a non-denominational revival and retreat ministry, plays a significant role in encouraging the spiritual life within many professional groups, including pastors. The longstanding ministry of the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship supplements this strategic work.

8 The scale of persecution of Christians by Muslims has accelerated in Nigeria’s northern states and as far south as the central plateau. It has caused the death of thousands, including pastors, and the destruction of hundreds, even thousands, of churches. It has united Christians and driven them to the Lord in prayer, but it also threatens the very fabric of Nigerian society and statehood. Pray for:

- a) **An understanding of the causes** of this complex situation. Muslims fear a loss of power, influence and land as the Church grows and as democracy spreads. Tribal and political rivalries contribute to the tension. Jihadist influences foment pre-planned violence and use the flimsiest pretexts to invoke riots. Not least, the evil one seeks to kill, steal and destroy, from both Christians and Muslims.
- b) **Restoration and recovery** for those who have suffered loss, bereavement and rape. Both Nigerian churches and international agencies are providing new homes, clothing, food and essentials, but inner healing cannot be so easily procured.
- c) **Forgiveness** for persecutors and deliverance from a spirit of revenge.
- d) **The Christian Association of Nigeria** and its ministry of representing Nigeria's 88 million Christians in five major blocs to the local and federal authorities.
- e) **Decisive actions by the authorities.** Not enough is done to prevent and discourage the outbreak of violence by Muslims – many feel the police and/or military are compromised. Justice is rarely seen to be done, and compensation for the loss and destruction is often promised but almost never delivered.
- f) **The exposure of the violent and hateful nature of extremist groups.** Christians suffer a series of attacks, often pre-planned and well coordinated, and even attempts to force them to convert to Islam under threat of death. This has led to several courageously dying as martyrs. In a number of situations, Christians are unable to trust the protection of government security forces or police to prevent attacks from invading militants.
- g) **The conversion of Muslims,** both of persecutors and of those appalled by the behaviour of their co-religionists. Many of these have been won to Christ over recent years, which is part of the reason for the attacks.
- h) **The best possible response by Christians.** Until now, forbearance has been mistaken for weakness. The large majority of Christians endure such predations without retaliation. But at times of provocation, pastors struggle to prevent their members, especially nominal members, from taking vengeance. Many Christians are involved in peacemaking and pray for a supernatural love of enemies that no force can defeat.

9 Ministry challenges among specific population segments include:

- a) **Young people and schools.** Legally, religious education should be given to all in schools. This is a great opportunity to engender religious understanding and explain the gospel, but Christian religious education teachers are limited in number and resources. With help from the International Institute for Christian Studies, government sponsored in-service training and manuals are giving fresh impetus. CEF reaches children and offers training seminars for Christian teachers and parents. CEM, an indigenous agency, has a significant Christian camping ministry. Sports ministries are also increasing in popularity and effectiveness.
- b) **Development ministries for the rural poor.** Poverty has prompted many Nigerian churches to establish departments of health and rural development, many recognized by the government as development agencies. Most notably, RURCON and its local subsidiary, CRUDAN, provide consultation and training. Pray for effective holism in ministry by the Church.
- c) **HIV and AIDS.** Official estimates state that 2.7 million carry the virus. The actual figure may be double that. An estimated two million children are orphaned by AIDS. Many groups are making use of awareness resources available through Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS). The Government has adopted biblically based materials developed by the Faith Based AIDS Awareness Initiative for AIDS to help with education and prevention in schools and colleges of education. FCS, SU, Tearfund, ACET, NIFES, CAPRO, ECWA, Baptist and Methodist churches all offer AIDS awareness programmes, but much progress is needed to fight the stigma associated with HIV and to care for those already infected.

10 Specific religious communities needing prayer and attention are many; Nigeria's religious context is highly complex and varied beyond the obvious domination of the Christian-Muslim dynamic. The major blocs are:

- a) **Muslims.** Many are more open to the gospel despite – or even because of – Nigeria's religious tensions. Tens, and possibly hundreds, of thousands have come to Christ. But many face death

threats, discrimination and ostracism. Powerful Christian literature for Muslims and effective outreach methods are increasingly available. One important ministry is caring for converts from Islam; beyond discipleship, they often need shelter and employment in an area away from their home due to threats against their lives. There are many expressions of Islam in Nigeria, including the majority Sunni and Shi'ite, Sufi and militant, and the hostility between some of these groups is evident.

b) Practitioners of African traditional religion. While they number officially only around 3%, they more likely number around 8%; even beyond this, their practices and beliefs penetrate deeply into some forms of both Islam and Christianity. Paganism has not so much disappeared as gone underground, often seething beneath the surface of Christian nominalism. Many of Nigeria's remaining smaller unreached-people groups are animist; they are responsive to the good news, yet are being rapidly Islamized. Pray for urgent Christian outreach to them while the door remains open.

c) African indigenous "spiritual" churches have multiplied – especially those related to the Aladura, Cherubim and Seraphim Church and Christ Apostolic Church. Some are highly syncretistic; others maintain varying degrees of biblical orthodoxy. Pray that their leadership may be rightly helped by other Christians, with biblical theology and practices adopted.

11 Pray for Nigeria's unreached. Research from the last 20 years reveals that 168 peoples are inadequately reached due to lack of resident workers, indigenous churches, Bible translation and such. Of these, 26 remain unengaged by Christian outreach. Notable among these are the Bole, Ganagana, Gera, Lala and West Marghi. Several others have no known Christians. Other strategic groups include the increasingly open Fulani (15m) and the highly resistant Kanuri (6m). Pray that those agencies and churches that have adopted them for ministry may carry that commitment through to a successful conclusion.

12 Missions vision. Nigeria is one of the leading missionary-sending countries of the developing world. Pray for:

a) Nationwide mission networks. The Movement for African National Initiatives (**MANI**), Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (**NEMA**) and Agape Missions and Evangelical Network (**AMEN**) all play huge roles in pushing forward the mission impetus started at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization and at the Nigeria Congress on Evangelization in 1975. This impetus is encapsulated with the Back to Jerusalem movement along with Vision 50:15, which has the goal of mobilizing 50,000 Nigerians for missions in the next 15 years. Currently, 5,300 long-term Nigerian missionaries are under the NEMA umbrella, representing 115 agencies. Around half serve cross-culturally within Nigeria; the other half serve outside the country.

b) Denominational agencies with a strong missions programme. The Evangelical Missionary Society of ECWA has by far the largest number of cross-cultural missionaries (1,600 in 2009). Deeper Life Bible Church and Living Faith Ministries have sent missionaries to over 40 nations. The former has planted over 3,000 churches outside of Nigeria. **AoG**, Baptists, Churches of Christ in Nigeria (**TEKAN**) and others also have strong missionary-sending programmes. Pray that other denominations may catch the vision.

c) Interdenominational agencies have multiplied – **CAPRO**, Christian Missionary Foundation (**CMF**), Missionary Crusaders Ministries (**MCM**), Evangelical Missionary Society (**EMS**), Great Commission Movement (**GCM**), Soul Harvesters, Full Stature Mission and growing numbers of others. Pray for their increase and for the Nigerian Church – usually so centered on congregational life – to support their ministries.

d) Missionary training and support. There are now 50 missions-training institutions in Nigeria, an answer to prayer. Congregations still need to understand the vital roles they play in supporting and sending Nigerian missionaries into the field. Pray for Nigerian support agencies that seek to address this problem and to act as a bridge between churches and missionaries on the field. About 2,000 Nigerian missionaries serve in other lands, mainly in West Africa; they face difficulties in receiving funds to provide for their material needs and educate their children.

e) Research on the unreached – by ECWA, **CAPRO**, **AoG** and the Nigerian Baptist Convention – focuses the attention of churches and agencies. All of Nigeria's 168 least-reached peoples have been adopted for prayer and outreach. The Searchlight Project, run by

the National Research Working Group, is undertaking vital research on the Nigerian harvest force and on the least reached and is developing strategies, training and collaborative ministry.

13 Expatriate missionaries have steadily declined in numbers, as the large and mature Nigerian Church takes over the ministries of expats. Yet, 3,500 cross-cultural workers still serve in Nigeria (many of them being Nigerian or African). Pray for harmonious cooperation between foreign and indigenous agencies and churches. Key ministries for expatriates include Bible teaching, leadership training, a wide range of supportive and aid ministries and training Nigerian missionaries. Pray for the safety, health and effectiveness of the missionary force – each of these factors is even more a spiritual battleground in today's Nigeria. Some of the larger agencies are: **WBT, SIM, CRWM, IMB, Mission Africa.**

14 Literature is vital for the maturation of the Church, especially in the areas of discipleship, Bible studies and theology. These are avidly sought after, but in short supply. The number of bookstores is very few, given the number of Christians. Pray for:

a) **Nigerian authors.** Many megachurch pastors write copiously, but the topics are the same – prosperity, success and overcoming. Pray for those who are interested in writing on a wide range of issues, and in a culturally and contextually relevant way, but lack the means and publishing resources. Pray for the new publisher, Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS), working in partnership with other African publishers and Langham Literature to help African authors. ACTS has a growing list of titles designed for Nigerian leaders wrestling with Africa's issues.

b) **Publishing.** Due to mismanagement, several older Christian publishers are no longer functioning. Some new organizations such as Evangel have grown but tend to concentrate on reprinting foreign books. Denominational publishing is also low. But Oasis International, the Joint Sunday School Project and ACTS produce new materials useful for pastoral training and spiritual growth.

c) **Distribution.** Although there are well over 300 Christian bookstores in Nigeria, the range of books in stock is severely limited in the search for profitability. Denominational bookshops such as Challenge Bookshops have been declining for some time. Most growing bookshops are in the hands of private entrepreneurs. Christian Booksellers Association of Nigeria is a force for good. Major distribution agencies are Oasis, ACTS, Edysyl and others.

15 Media plays a greater role than ever, communicating not just information but also theology and style of worship, particularly for the burgeoning Pentecostal and charismatic ministries. Pray for:

a) **Bible translation.** Nigeria possesses the third-highest translation needs remaining of any country. With The Bible Society of Nigeria and Nigeria Bible Translation Trust at the forefront, the many Bible translation organizations are making great progress toward meeting the needs of more than 500 different languages in the country. Currently, there are 21 full Bibles, 61 New Testaments and more than 70 languages with Scripture portions and works in progress. This still leaves more than 300 languages with possible translation needs. A Bible translation degree programme has been developed at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, the first in the country, and the first graduates from the programme are committing themselves to meeting this huge remaining translation need.

b) **Christian radio.** Nigeria has one of the world's highest proportions and numbers of shortwave radio listeners. Even more have access to FM. Christians use both local and international radio broadcasts. With Nigeria's low rural literacy level and strong oral storytelling culture, radio is vital for evangelism and discipleship. Pray for all unreasonable restrictions to be lifted for local radio. Many unevangelized groups can receive Christian radio broadcasts in their own language. The Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON) is known to play a restrictive role on Christian broadcasts on national stations as well as in setting up Christian radio stations. This calls for prayer.

c) **Audio resources.** GRN has recordings in 573 languages/dialects and innovative cassette and record playback machines for ease of use. Sometimes a GRN recording is the only gospel witness to an unconverted ethnic group. Pray for recordings in 127 northern languages yet untackled. The Iseko, Izon, Vute, Yekhee, Kanuri and even Yoruba-language families need more.

- d) **Christian TV.** Television is used by many Christian groups. Pentecostal groups in particular exploit this medium to expand their ministries. Solid Bible teaching as well as creative and diverse programming are great needs. NLFA, ELWA, Baptist Media and Muryar Bishara all have studios.
- e) **Movies and films.** The JESUS film is extensively used in 70 languages. Another 70 are in production. Mount Zion Faith Ministries started their studio in 1999 and have already produced 24 films on DVD and seven TV series, which have been shown on 74 Nigerian TV stations. ECWA and Baptists have also produced films; pray these tools may be used effectively.
- f) **The Internet is being utilized** by many groups of all Christian expressions. For those with Internet access, a wealth of sermons, Bible study resources, streaming programmes and such are readily available.

The States of Nigeria

Three main regions emerged as a result of colonial policy. The British retained the pre-colonial, Hausa-Fulani Muslim feudal rulers of the North and allowed them to extend their rule over the peoples of the Middle Belt, few of whom were Muslim at that time. The South developed a more Western system of government. Between 1967 and 1995, the number of states increased from 12 to 36, plus a Federal Capital Territory. These states are clustered in six geo-political zones: SE, SS, SW, NC, NE and NW, but here they are grouped broadly in the three major regions of Nigeria.



The Southern Zones

SE

Area 29,525 sq km. Five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo.
Population 16,400,000.
Major peoples Igbo.

SS

Area 84,587 sq km. Six states: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers.
Population 21,000,000.
Major peoples Ijaw, Isekiri, Isoko, Urhobo, Ibibio, Efik.

SW

Area 78,771 sq km. Six states: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo.
Population 27,600,000.
Major peoples Yoruba.

1 Critical issues:

- a) **Christian-Muslim relations** continue to sour. The imposition of shari'a law and subsequent violence against Christians in the northern states generate resentment and even backlashes against Muslim minorities in southern cities. Pray for Christian values to prevail.
- b) **The oil industry** has polluted the pristine agricultural land of millions, but only an elite (or corrupt) few have benefited. In this environmental disaster, natural gas is wasted, the land is degraded and the sea polluted. After many years of increasingly violent protests and struggles, both the federal government and oil companies have recognized these issues. In 2009, oil companies paid their first reparations and compensation settlement (with the Ogoni people); the government granted amnesty to activists and promised \$1 billion in development aid. Pray monies will be spent justly and prudently for the benefit of all and that peace will result.

2 **The SW was pioneered** by Anglicans, Methodists and Southern Baptists, and the SS and SE by Presbyterians, Catholics, Qua Iboe (Mission Africa) and others. Christians are in the great majority. Pentecostal churches are the predominant influence and the fastest growing – ranging from small groups meeting in homes to megachurches. Rural areas lack dedicated pastors because of the relative poverty. Pray for sacrificial concern among Christians for the less-reached and less-privileged areas. Pray that revival might make the Christians into true disciples of Jesus.

3 The less-reached peoples and areas include:

- a) **The Muslim suburbs** (*sabongari*) in southern towns and cities where Northerners congregate. Very little prayer or outreach is directed to these difficult areas, despite their being much more accessible for witness and loving ministry.
- b) **Muslim groups among Southern peoples.** Yoruba Muslims are influential and constitute over one-fourth of all Yoruba. Muslim missionary efforts and enticements have brought pockets of other Southern peoples to Islam, including some among the Igbo. Pray for specific outreach to these groups; they are the most liberal and open of Nigeria's Muslims, coexisting more peacefully with Christians and traditional religionists.
- c) **African traditional religionists**, such as followers of Orisha spirituality, Ogun (iron and war) and Osun (the seas), are common in the south and southwest, intermingling beliefs with Christianity and Islam. Such religionists often are responsive to the gospel and the power of Christ, but excising idolatry and spiritism is a much more difficult task.
- d) **The Niger Delta (SS) and coastal regions.** Many peoples live in these virtually inaccessible swampy, riverine areas that are largely bypassed by missions. Christianity is often just a veneer over African traditional religion. Just a few miles from cities with thriving churches lie unreached villages awash with paganism. **CMS, CMF and AoG** have church-planting ministries in the area; local churches need to be convinced of their own responsibility – and ability – to reach out to these needy places.
- e) **Other needy areas:** the Benin border (SW) and Cross River state (SS), where ethnic religions and secret societies are strong (ECWA/**SIM**). Edo state is known for significant levels of “sexual networking”, including furnishing many thousands of prostitutes for Europe and Italy in particular.

The Central Zone

NC and Federal Capital Territory

Area 266,617 sq km. Seven states: Abuja, Benue, Niger, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Plateau.

Population 20,600,000.

Major peoples No dominant group, but a medley of over 230 languages, most using Hausa as a trade language. Largest: Edo, Esan, Gbari, Idoma, Igala, Igbirra, Nupe, Tiv.

1 **There has been dramatic church growth** over the last 50 years. Major denominations are ECWA, Anglican, Baptist, the TEKAN family of churches and, more recently, various Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Pray for the spiritual growth of believers and for true conversion of the younger generation – evangelical nominalism is a major problem. Pray for revival and a vision for cross-cultural outreach.

2 **Muslim missionary activity** has intensified in the region. Considerable efforts are made to win over followers of ethnic religions and backsliding Christians. Pray that these attempts may actually result in many coming to Christ. Pray that Christians may overcome historic hatreds and personal fears for the sake of courageous witnessing to Muslims in love.

3 **The occurrences of religious violence and persecution** in this region, especially Plateau state and its capital, Jos, have been prominent in the last decade (see main section, point 8). It is the fault line between Christian- and Muslim-dominated Nigeria. British colonial arrangements placed Muslim rulers over Christian populations; most recently, this has seen the imposition of shari'a on Christian-majority areas as well as the overturning of Muslim rule via democratic elections. Jos is a centre of Christian ministry; Jos itself and many believers therein have suffered as a result of much destruction and chaos. Pray for boldness and faithfulness in the midst of pressures and for a Christlike response to opposition.

4 **Less-reached peoples.** There are still 50–60 peoples in the region among whom outreach (and response) is limited. Two main areas of particular need:

a) **Plateau state.** Many peoples have turned to the Lord, but some are more resistant, such as the predominantly traditionalist Goemai (375,000), Kofyar (145,000) and Mada (140,000).

b) **Along the Niger River and Benin border** are numerous unreached and partially reached peoples. Pray for the Nupe cluster of peoples, some nominally Christian with most practicing folk Islam. Only a handful of Christian workers are attempting to reach them (UMCA, CMF, CAPRO, CRWM, LCCN, EMS-ECWA). The Benue cluster has many peoples (255); a few are still largely unevangelized.

The Northern Zones

NE

Area 272,395 sq km. Six states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Katsina, Taraba, Yobe.

Population 22,800,000.

Major peoples Kanuri, Fulani, Bachama.

NW

Area 191,873 sq km. Six states: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara.

Population 30,000,000.

Major peoples Hausa, Fulani.

1 **Critical issues:**

a) **The imposition of shari'a law** in nine northern states and portions of four others has precipitated a constitutional crisis and directly challenged the federal government. Pray for a wise defusing of this explosive situation.

b) **Shari'a law** is accompanied by restrictions on church buildings, the banning of Christian religious education in state schools, communal violence, destruction of many churches and loss of life – mostly of Christians, who are automatically degraded to second-class citizens. Pray that Christians may respond with love, wisdom, peace and spiritual authority; pray they will be able to freely exercise their constitutional right to testify about Christ.

c) **Persecution is often so severe** that many Christian workers have fled the region. In some areas, many churches and even entire denominations have been burned out. Rebuilding often happens – occasionally multiple times – at great expense to the congregation and without compensation or assurances that attacks won't happen again. Pray for great faith and endurance for those Christians suffering such loss.

2 **The gospel has made progress since independence** despite considerable opposition from Muslims. Many smaller non-Muslim peoples and an increasing number of Muslim-

Nigeria | September 20-22

majority peoples are responding to the gospel. Believers from a Muslim background are often driven either underground or out of their home area. As a result, an underground network of believers is developing, as are Christian ministries focused on sheltering and discipling converts. Pray for the protection and growth of this accelerating movement.

3 **There is a great need for Nigerian missionaries** to ensure that the costly gains in church growth are not lost. The Nigerian Church is burdened for this area and knowledgeable because of the good research done. Pray for the sending of workers, from the scores of denominations and churches who will be well prepared and effective in such a hostile, dangerous environment.

4 **Pray for the unreached peoples.**

a) **The Fulani (Fulbe)** are a strategic people across Africa and sub-Saharan Africa's largest unreached-people cluster. Their origins are in Senegal, but their greatest numbers are in Nigeria, where 16 million of the 32 million Fulani live. They form both the strongly Muslim ruling class (Sokoto/Toroobe) and the nominally Muslim nomadic cattle grazers over much of Nigeria and the Sahel. Over 90% of Nigerian Fulani are Muslim, but an increasing number are responding to the gospel. Recently, the Nigerian and global Church caught the vision for the evangelization of the Fulani, and partnerships were formed for mobilization, strategy and coordination of ministry. Effectively reaching nomadic pastoralists is a particular challenge. If the gospel gripped this group, all of West Africa would be affected! Many of the urban Fulani speak only Hausa and must be reached through this language.

b) **The Hausa** are known as predominantly Muslim, but a number actually follow traditional religions. Among these are the Maguzawa, a people with their own distinctive culture who retain the pre-Islamic, traditional Hausa religion. An exciting turning to Christ is happening among them. The Isawa, a Hausa Muslim fringe group that gives high honour to Jesus, are also responding to the gospel. Christian resources in Hausa are widely available. Pray for large numbers of Hausa to be won for Christ; this is happening on an increasingly larger scale.

c) **The Kanuri of Borno state** are proudly Muslim and have been so for 1,000 years. They doubt that other peoples can even practice Islam properly. There are few believers among the 5.2 million Kanuri, even after years of witness by TEKAN-Pioneers, **CMF**, **CAPRO** and 22 other Nigerian missions. There is only one Kanuri church, but now the NT is published and the JESUS film and other resources are available.

d) **The Gwoza Hills** (Adamawa and Borno). The area is hotly contested spiritually, with some peoples turning from paganism – more to Christianity than to Islam. Over 23 peoples live in the area. Pray for those in the heart of this battle, such as the Guduf (30,000), Dughwede (20,000) and Marakam (4,000).

e) **The mountain regions in the east** along the Cameroon border in Taraba and Adamawa states. This is the home of numerous peoples, some scarcely affected by the modern world and deeply trapped in the fearful world of spirits and ancestors. Over 50 peoples live in the area, many unreached. Pray especially for pioneer ongoing outreach to the seven tribes of the Mumuye (625,000, 50% or more of whom follow African traditional religions), the Chamba (150,000) and Bata (150,000).