



MANI 2026 Consultation

Abidjan Declaration

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire | March 9–13, 2026

Movement for African National Initiatives

Theme: Present and Future Realities, Challenges, and Prospects of the African Church

Preamble

The fifth quinquennial MANI Continental Consultation – following four in-person gatherings and one virtual one – held here in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, from March 9–13, 2026, is the first ever held in Francophone Africa. This marks 25 years since the founding declaration of MANI in Jerusalem. Representatives have come from churches, mission agencies, and national initiatives from Africa and African diaspora networks. Additionally, we have representatives from the global church, including the Lausanne Movement, World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), Christ Over Asia, Latin America, and Africa (COALA), European Evangelical Alliance, and others. We have arrived at a kairos moment for the Church in Africa. Africa is now the continent with the largest Christian population, totalling approximately 750 million Christians. The centre of gravity of global Christianity has decisively moved southwards. This gathering is not just a celebration of this theological reality, but a reckoning with the weight of responsibility this places on the Church in Africa. The consultation also marks the formal leadership transition from Rev. Dr. Reuben Ezemadu, who served sacrificially in leading MANI for twenty years as Continental Coordinator, to Rev. Peter Oyugi. This transition marks a theological statement about the maturation of a Pan-African mission movement transitioning from mission field to a dominant global mission-sending force.

Africa: Now a Missionary-Sending Continent

Africa's missionary identity is not new – it is woven into Scripture itself, from the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 to the theological giants of Alexandria, Carthage, and Cyrene. The era of Africa as primarily a mission-receiving continent is over. Sending hubs now operate in Lagos, Nairobi, Jos, Ibadan, Owerri, Addis Ababa, Yaoundé, Lome, Abidjan, and Johannesburg. Workers are deployed among the Fulani in Guinea, in North Africa, and in the Francophone Sahel. The infrastructure to send out more missionaries from Africa exists. There is a will to multiply it, fund it from within, and direct it strategically toward those who have not yet heard the good news. God calls every church in Africa to be a sender – not eventually, but now.

Missions: Strategic Significance of Francophone Africa

The choice of Abidjan was missional and intentional, not logistical. The Francophone Sahel, stretching from Senegal and Mauritania through Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroun and Chad, is one of the most concentrated mission frontiers on earth, home to the Kanuri, Soninke, and Fulani and various unreached peoples' groups. Francophone African believers carry linguistic and cultural proximity to these communities that no other part of the global church possesses. The consultation renews the longstanding MANI call to Go North. We commit to dismantle the structural Anglophone default that has persisted even in pan-African gatherings by ensuring that Francophone and Lusophone voices shape strategy at the highest levels.

Africa: The Suffering Church

One in five Christians in Africa currently faces some form of persecution. In Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, the DRC, Mozambique, and North Africa violent extremist groups target believers through massacres, abductions, and forced displacements. This consultation receives the reality of Christian persecution with theological clarity, rather than despair. Persecution is not the end of mission – it is frequently the engine of mission. In fact, persecution does not mean the abandonment of the believer, in a theological and missiological sense, persecution purifies the Church. The Church is called to prepare believers and church workers theologically and practically for suffering. The Church is to offer concrete solidarity across the body and to pursue both intercessory prayer and credible legal advocacy on behalf of persecuted communities.

African Diaspora: Divine Deployment

The spread of African believers globally is reframed not as displacement but as sovereign deployments. African Christian diaspora and missionaries are planting churches in European, Asian, North American, Latin American, Oceanian cities etc., where indigenous Christians have retreated, reaching migrant communities, and carrying the gospel into spaces where traditional missionaries cannot gain access. Second-generation diaspora Africans – culturally Western but ethnically African – are uniquely equipped for the cross-cultural complexity of the remaining mission task. The consultation declares plainly: your presence in the diaspora is not a distance from Africa's mission. It is by divine orchestration an extension of Africa's mission.

MANI: Six Strategic Priorities

After five days of plenary sessions, panel discussions, round table presentations, breakout sessions, and corporate prayer: This consultation hereby issues six strategic priorities as the agenda of the African church for the decade ahead. These are not recommendations – they are our commitment to Kingdom advancement.



SP1

Renewed MANI Vision and Strategic Leadership: MANI reaffirms its identity as a movement – not an organisation. The leadership transition from Rev. Dr. Reuben Ezemadu to Rev. Peter Oyugi signals maturity and continuity. Delegates, National, Regional and Network Co-ordinators are called to renew their commitment, resist systemic stereotypes, and carry this Abidjan's momentum into local church mission culture across every nation.

SP2

Missionary Mobilisation and Cross-cultural Training: Africa must develop its own structures for sending out missionaries and fund them from its own resources. There is need to establish a coordinated Francophone missionary movement in the Sahel – not as a new organisation, but a new dynamic of collaboration. Creative outreach strategies include evangelism through sport, medical missions, professional activities, missionary work, audio Bibles in local languages, as well as digital and radio platforms in the propagation of the gospel.

SP3	Church Unity, Collaboration, and Partnerships: Partnership is not generosity – it is a Kingdom necessity. The consultation calls for reduced duplication, shared research data, deeper engagement with the global church, and sustained diaspora–continent connection. Bridging the Anglophone-Francophone gap must be corrected structurally and not just rhetorically.
SP4	Addressing Persecution and Political Instability: With 1 in 5 African Christians facing persecution, workers must be prepared contextually, theologically, and missiologically for suffering for the sake of the gospel. The church requires a security-conscious deployment, concrete solidarity from stable churches, combined intercessory prayer, and credible advocacy grounded in the conviction that resistance is real – but it is not final.
SP5	Transformational Discipleship and Youth Engagement: More than 50% of Africa’s population is under 25 years old. This is a generation ready to go! The consultation calls for discipleship producing Great Commission disciples, direct theological confrontation of the prosperity gospel, and genuine inclusion of youth now – belonging platform, peer connectivity, and the undiluted gospel.
SP6	Contextual Challenges and Opportunities: The Church’s dependency syndrome must be deliberately unlearned and replaced with a communal culture of giving which is rooted in the African extended-family logic. Poverty mentality and the prosperity gospel are named as twin theological distortions which weakens the missional capacity of the church in Africa. The challenge of reaching all with the gospel as good news is held within one eschatological anchor: Revelation 7:9 – every people group before the throne – is not a metaphor. It is the certain end towards which all the work presses forward.

Moving Together: The Way Forward

The consultation identifies clear, immediate next steps for every level of the African mission movement:

1. Every nation should strengthen or establish its National Mission Initiative as the indigenous engine for mobilising, training, and sending missionaries.
2. The Church in Africa should build a communal culture of giving for missions, drawing on the logic of collective care already embedded in African family culture, rather than depending on external donors.
3. African women should be at the forefront of mission mobilisation and leadership in realisation of the strategic role they play in the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

4. Older leaders need to actively open genuine leadership pathways for younger leaders now, passing the baton with intentionality.
5. The Francophone church needs to step fully into its strategic position on the doorstep of the Sahel, supported by the whole African and global mission community.
6. Every participating church is to identify and adopt an Unreached People Group, give generously, pray persistently, and send sacrificially.
7. The African Christian Mission Authors (ACMA) initiative should tell the African mission story in African voices, shaping the identity and calling of the next generation.

Africa is not coming to compete, but to compliment and collaborate with the global Church for Kingdom advancement.

Our Resolve: A Clarion Call

We the delegates at the MANI 2026 Consultation declare unequivocally that we leave Abidjan not merely with a declaration, but also with a mandate. The movement from Jerusalem to Abidjan is not geographic – it is the movement of the gospel through twenty centuries, carried by faithful people who, in their little strength, trusted the One who holds the key of David and walked through the doors He opened. The Church in Africa has come of age. It carries the weight of 750 million Christians on a Continent where 1 in 5 faces persecution. A Continent where Muslims are encountering Jesus in dreams across the Sahel. A Continent where house churches grow in the cities of Tertullian and Augustine and where a new generation of young Francophone missionaries are answering the call to go to the hardest places in faithful obedience to God.

To every church and mission leader returning home: you are not returning to report on what others said. You are returning as a commissioned agent of the African mission movement. Mobilise your church. Invest in your younger leaders. Find your nation's unreached people group and adopt them.

To every young missionary here present, you are not the future of this movement. You are its present. The door is now wide open for you to step out in faith in the Lord who called you.

To the Francophone church: Your position on the doorstep of the Sahel is not an accident of geography. It is a divine assignment. Therefore, Go North!

To the diaspora: you were not scattered. You were deployed on the Master's Kingdom assignment.

For all delegates present, the Abidjan Declaration is "From Abidjan to Everywhere – Until Jesus Comes."

*Signed and resolved this 13th day of March, 2026.
The Participants of the MANI 2026 Continental Consultation | Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.*

Listening and Communiqué Sub-Committee:

The Revd Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam (Chairman); Members: Dr. Esther Chengo, Rev. Dr. Israel Oluwole Olofinjana, Olaoluwa Adeyemi, Rev. Clement Hlama, and Lin Kabachia.