

**Title: Singing the Lord's song in a strange land: a practical theological investigation into the spiritual experiences of South African expatriates in Africa after 2000 A.D.**

**Abstract:**

An evaluation of the spiritual experience of South African expatriates living in or migrating to other African countries, as a process of practical theology, established that expatriates do not isolate themselves from their churches in South Africa (SA). SA churches only make provision for traditional missionary outreaches and do not make provision for the SA expatriates, black or white, living in these African metropolitan areas. The subjects studied included SA expatriates, the relationships between SA churches, local African churches and expatriates, the act of migration, repatriation and its challenges together with the spiritual and social impact on individuals, marriages and families. A topical view implicates a direct relationship between fieldworkers, missionaries and chaplains deployment into African countries from SA. Furthermore, from research it is implied that the church in SA remains the spiritual home and resource centre of the migrant.

The practical theological call for a realignment of mission praxis is vital and is linked to Christ's parable of the ninety nine sheep, whilst one is lost (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:4-7). This analogy produces the direct requirement of the Church to reconstruct missions to encompass combined support for their congregants in SA, the ninety nine, and those expatriates living in other African countries, the one. The missions to Africa should no longer be missions that only seek to convert African tribes to Christianity, but rather to serve Africans and others immigrating to countries on the continent.

Church resources for SA expatriates would be made available when a visionary change occurs at the planning stages of strategies for African missions. Proposed mission strategies should include cell church, care group and discipleship models geared for missions and the African expatriate terrain. A realistic strategy that harmonises resources within the church to serve those abroad shall ensure positive impact on the spirituality, family and marriage of the expatriate. Finally two challenges are laid before the SA church, one, to continue with missions in Africa according to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ, Matthew 28:19-20, with the second, to combine the expatriate discipleship models into its mission strategies.

(344 Words)

**Key terms:**

Africa, chaplains, children, evaluation research study, family, local African church, marriage, missionaries, mission strategies, pastors, practical theology, South African expatriates living in Africa, South African church and spirituality.

(28 Words, 13 terms)



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