

“Although Africa is very rich in natural resources, it remains economically poor. At the same time, it is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities which it can offer to the churches and to humanity as a whole.”

Pope John Paul II, Post African Synod Apostolic Exhortation, 1995

“My thoughts and prayers are with our beloved people of Africa. I encourage our Catholic institutions to continue giving generous attention to their needs, and I hope and pray that the international community will become ever more involved in the problems of the African Continent and work to bring justice and peace to that land.”

Benedict XVI, Africa Day, 2005

How Much Do You Know About Sub-Saharan Africa?

Take this quiz to find out. Answer the following questions, then see the other side of this sheet for the correct answers.

- Africa occupies what percent of the world's landmass?
 - 15%
 - 20%
 - 25%
- What is Africa's total population?
 - 400 million
 - 600 million
 - 900 million
- What percent of Africa's population is under 25 years of age?
 - 35%
 - 52%
 - 71%
- How many languages are spoken in Africa?
 - 200
 - 1,000
 - 2,000
- How many Christians live in Africa?
 - 60 million
 - 220 million
 - 410 million

How many Muslims?

 - 75 million
 - 298 million
 - 358 million
- How many refugees are there now in Africa?
 - 5 million
 - 10 million
 - 15 million
- Colonialism has had a lasting impact on Africa. True or False?
 - True
 - False
- 50% of Africans live on less than \$4 a day. True or False?
 - True
 - False
- How many of the world's most heavily indebted poor countries are in Africa?
 - 12
 - 25
 - 32
- What percent of Africans have access to healthy drinking water?
 - 45%
 - 82%
- Life expectancy in Africa is 46 years old. True or False?
 - True
 - False
- What is the most common cause of death in Africa?
 - malnutrition
 - AIDS
 - malaria
- What percent of the African population depends on farming?
 - 33%
 - 49%
 - 66%
- How many firearms and weapons are in Sub-Saharan Africa?
 - 10 million
 - 20 million
 - 30 million



1. (b) Africa occupies 20% of the world's land mass.
2. (c) Africa has 900 million people, 14% of the world total.
3. (c) 71% of Africans are under 25 years old. This is due to several factors, including HIV/AIDS and other diseases, lack of sanitation, clean water, health care, etc.
4. (c) Over 2,000 languages are spoken in Africa.
5. (c) 410 million Africans are Christian and (c) 358 Africans are Muslim.
6. (c) There are 15 million refugees in Africa, mainly due to conflicts and violence. 3.3 million have fled their native countries and 12 million are internally displaced, such as the 1.7 million in Northern Uganda, who live in cramped and unhealthy camps while a civil war rages on.
7. (True) The arrival of Western Colonial powers brought great upheaval to Africa that will continue for generations to come. Western countries exploited Africa's people and resources with no efforts to mitigate the social breakdown that resulted. Survival strategies which Africans had developed over centuries prior to colonialism to suit both their lives and their finite ecology eroded. Local institutions and traditional authorities were replaced by political and economic structures over which local people had little control. Change which took centuries in Europe occurred in only generations in Africa, and growing hunger, social disruption, and conflict have inevitably resulted.
8. (True) 50% of Africans live on less than \$1 a day. Sub-Saharan Africa has the poorest countries in the world.
9. (c) 32 of the 34 most heavily indebted poor countries are in Africa. Debt continues to drain and cripple these countries, and the Vatican, among other church leaders, have long called for debt forgiveness for this countries.
10. (a) and (b) In rural areas, only 45% of Sub-Saharan Africans have access to healthy drinking water, while 82% of urban Africans have such access.
11. (True) The average African lives to 46 years of age.
12. (b) AIDS has killed millions of Africans (2.4 million died there in 2005 alone) and has created 12 million AIDS orphans in Africa.

13. (c) 66% of Africans depend on farming for their survival. Unfortunately, current debt and trade policies are not supportive of farming in Africa.

14. (c) There are about 30 million weapons in Africa, fuelling local conflicts. An unregulated international arms trade keeps weapons pouring into Africa; U.S. companies are the largest makers and suppliers of arms.

Source: National Geographic, African Faith and Justice Network

Reflection Questions

Given the basic facts shared on these pages, what are some of the main issues in Africa?

What are some of the causes of the current problems in Africa? What part has the West played, what part does it continue to play in Africa?

Why has the Catholic Church been so concerned about Africa? What do you know about efforts of the Church to aid Africans?

What are some of the "wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities" that African can offer to humanity, which Pope John Paul II refers to in his message?

What are some ways you, and your faith community, can learn more about Africa and learn about ways to be in solidarity with Africa?

Prayer from Africa

This we know, all things are connected:
 Like the blood which unites one family.
 This we know, we did not weave the web of life:
 We are merely a thread in it.
 This we know, whatever we do to the web,
 We do to our brothers and sister,
 We do to ourselves.
 This we know:
 We are all children of God and
 We must extend our hands to each other. Amen.

