

**A HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF EVANGELISM AND CHURCH  
PLANTING BASED ON THE GREAT COMMISSION WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO ALL NATIONS FULL GOSPEL CHURCHES  
INTERNATIONAL (ANFGCI).**

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## ABSTARCT

The *Great Commission* gives the Church its mandate to go into all the world to preach the good news to all nations. In the past, missionaries from Europe and North America took the gospel to many parts of the world. Today, missionaries from Africa and other former missionary recipient nations are in turn sending missionaries from the global South to the global North.

This phenomenon of "*reverse*" *missionary movement* is discussed in detail as it relates to the work of All Nations Full Gospel Church (ANFGC) whose founder migrated from Africa to North America as a *reverse missionary* in the early 1980s; in this particular case from Ghana to Canada to evangelise and plant churches in North America and Europe.

Thus, ANFGC's success in fulfilling the *Great Commission* is based on the founder's understanding that evangelism must result in church planting. This is the focus of this thesis and the contributions of the *reverse missionary movement* to the growth of Global Christianity.

In the study of evangelism, Church planting and growth, one can either choose quantitative or qualitative methodology or both.

Reviewing these three approaches in the light of what this study entails, the mixed methodological approach is the choice that encompasses the entirety of this thesis because it captures the best of all approaches. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. The data were collected and coded into the system during the data entry.

The SPSS was programmed to process and analyse the data. The simple frequency percentage distribution was used to present, interpret and discuss the data collected for the study. The explanation and views of respondents were also presented.

This thesis argues that evangelism for the sake of converts without *discipling* them falls short of the *Great Commission*. Converts therefore must be assimilated into the church to be *discipled* to become responsible members of the body of Christ who will also produce after their kind by making disciples of all peoples. The thesis used the ANFGC church planting strategy as a model aand praxis for fulfilling the *Great Commission*.

**Key Words:** Great Commission, go into all the world, evangelism, church planting, make disciples, converts, indigenou churches, missionaries, membership, mission, church planter, decisions, faith, Christians, believers, reverse evangelism Pentecostal, charismatic, mission churches.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

AIC	-	African Indigenous Churches
AMEZC	-	African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
ANFGCI	-	All Nations Full Gospel Churches International
ANIDA	-	All Nations International Development Agency
AOG	-	Assembly of God
NT	-	New Testament
NVTI	-	National Vocation Training Institute
OT	-	Old Testament
TTC	-	Toronto Transit Commission
USA	-	United States of America

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## INTRODUCTION

All Nations Full Gospel Churches International (ANFGCI) believes its success in evangelism and church planting is as a result of the organisation's leadership understanding and implementation of the mandate enshrined in the Great Commission. The Church in her efforts to fulfil the mandate of the Great Commission has expended great energy and resources towards world evangelisation. Nevertheless, the results have not always been great despite the massive crowds that sometimes flock to many evangelistic crusades. Even the use of modern media technology has not always yielded the desired results despite the colossal amounts of money spent by the church on media outreach programmes. Because evangelism without assimilation of converts into the church robs the Church of the fruits of evangelisation.

It has been said that seeking to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-20; Lk 24:47-49; Jn 21:21-23; Acts 1:8) without the planting of local churches is like giving birth to a baby without a family. Church planting ascertains a foundation for making and multiplying disciples among various people groups in the world. In other words, the Great Commission finds fulfilment in the context of the local church. C. Peter Wagner, Win Arn and Elmer Towns wrote, “The Great Commission implies that church planting is the primary method to evangelise the world.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Wagner confirmed, “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”<sup>2</sup> While the Great Commission does not emphatically mention church planting, it implies it by the very nature of the command to “make disciples.” The local church is the divine agency empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel and to make disciples for the Lord and His Kingdom.

### **A Brief History of the Founding of ANFGCI**

At this juncture, it is important to provide a brief history of how the mission was founded. The establishment of ANFGCI was born out of the conviction of African Christians' need to evangelize the Western Hemisphere in order to reciprocate the Western Church. It was an overwhelming sense of gratitude towards Western missionaries who paid the ultimate price for their work of evangelization in Africa. It was with such burning desire to be a blessing to the Western world for

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<sup>1</sup>C Peter Wagner, Win Arn and Elmer Towns, *Church Growth: State of the Art* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), 143.

<sup>2</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest: A Comprehensive Guide* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002), 11.

their work in Africa that the founder stormed the streets of Toronto, Canada with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ. The work began at Yonge and Dundas Streets near the Eaton Center in 1981. It later moved in the fall of that year to East York with the work of Street Evangelism centering in the area of Victoria Park Avenue and St. Claire Avenue. Every Saturday with a handful of gospel tracts the founder would go out to share the love of God with whosoever shall hear. After a year at that location the founder moved to the Jane and Finch area where street evangelism intensified.

Every evening in the Summer and all-day Saturday, a small group of new believers accompanied the founder to the plazas and malls of Downs view to evangelize. Many responded and committed their lives to the Lord. Converts were cared for in two ways. Through bible study and prayer meetings at the founder's apartment. Then taking them to the local church where the founder was attending on Sunday mornings. To be easily accessible and in order to reach out to more souls the founder moved the fellowship from the apartment to the Yorkwoods Gate Community Center at 20 Yorkwoods Gate, North York, Ontario, M3N 1J8. As more souls were won it became apparent that a more holistic ministry must be provided to the members instead of just a loose gathering of believers with no clear-cut goals or mission. So, a decision was made to transition the ministry from just an outreach fellowship to a church.

After Ordination by the Evangelical Church Alliance at the Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, Indiana, USA the All Nations Full Gospel Church was launched at the Yorkwoods Gate Community Center on July 26, 1986. Only thirty-six (36) out of about fifty (50) members agreed to be part of the new church because not everyone shared the enthusiasm for the new direction of the Ministry. Some expressed doubts and skepticism about the future of their beloved fellowship turning into a church. Others felt that there was no way one would succeed in ministry with a bunch of no name people with unimpressive backgrounds. Majority of the members were new immigrants who were yet to be established in Canada. Nevertheless, the All Nations Full Gospel Church was born in the City of Toronto, Canada in 1986. In December of 1986 the new church moved to 96 Hucknall Road, North York, ON, M3J 1V8 to share facilities with the Faith Lutheran Church in Downsview, Ontario. Immediately, the Church exploded from about fifty (50) members to approximately one hundred and fifty (150) members. The small Lutheran Church sanctuary could not hold the people that attended the services. Some sat in the hallway and fellowship hall with speakers extended to them. The Church grew rapidly due to the opportunity to meet several times in a week to worship, pray, preach, teach, counsel and train leaders.

Though every available space in the building was taken up with seats yet not all the people who came to the service could fit into the building. Hence, the Church had to move. That resulted in a move to an industrial building on 4267 Steeles Avenue West in December 1989. The move to an industrial area in the City became a subject of debate and study at a York University Environmental Studies class. Because to site a church in an industrial area where pollution could be high was considered unhealthy and that only an African immigrant would do such a thing. But little did All Nations Full Gospel Church know that it was setting a precedent for churches of all denominations and backgrounds. A few years later many churches moved to industrial areas as cost of land and by-laws restricted new churches in several areas of the City.

The All Nations Full Gospel Church ministry became vibrant and strong inviting speakers to minister to the congregants from all over the world. From this rented facility the church grew to over three hundred (300) members. Very soon the growth outpaced the facility as the church ran out of space to meet the needs of a young vibrant congregation which needed to cater to a diverse constituency of members; from newborns to toddlers to teens to adults. Eventually, in 1992 the Church moved to its current location at 4401 Steeles Avenue West, North York, ON, Canada. The new facility of over 25,000sq. ft provided ample space for the ministry to grow and expand.

The leadership training classes were reorganized into a degree programme with affiliations to Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Studies. Then a robust church planting programme was launched. Branch churches were planted in neighbouring cities starting from Hamilton, Ontario to cities in other Provinces throughout Canada and many other countries. Today, the church planting ministry has reached the Philippines. From one church in Toronto, the ANFGCI now has churches on five (5) Continents and in fourteen (14) Countries.

From the headquarters of ANFGCI was born the All Nations International Development Agency (ANIDA) which is a non-governmental agency that caters to the needy globally. ANIDA aims at helping orphans and needy children, women empowerment and economic empowerment through education and skills training locally and in developing countries.

ANIDA currently has over 500 needy children they care for in Ghana and Jamaica. As well as a Women's Development Center in Ghana. ANIDA has also established an accredited University called All Nations University College in Koforidua, Ghana. Through many of the branch churches in Canada, ANIDA runs food banks for needy families and youth programmes for young people.

The street ministry which started with a passion for winning souls in the Western World as a reciprocal gesture from Africa to the Developed Nations that sent many missionaries to Africa in bygone years has indeed revived the church in the Western Hemisphere. The revolution of reverse missionary work or reciprocal evangelism which All Nations started has inspired many Africans and non-African churches which once benefited from Western missionaries once upon a time have now become the main drivers of Christianity throughout Europe and North America today.

### **i. Statement of the Problem**

One of the most effective ways to fulfil the Great Commission is through evangelisation that results in Church planting. It appears that many interested in church planting do not know this crucial factor. ANFGCI prides itself in fulfilling the Great Commission which accounts for the mission's success. This thesis looks into how the Great Commission is a mandate to evangelise and plant churches and see if ANFGCI evangelising and church planting strategies fulfil the Great Commission.

### **ii. Elaboration of the Research Problem**

Evangelism must result in the founding and establishing of churches. Many evangelistic campaigns are done only to share the good news of Christ. Through ignorance, many church leaders are not aware that evangelism should result in the planting of churches as a way of fulfilling the Great Commission. Evangelisation without the intent to establish a fellowship, does not keep converts together to be nourished and grow. The church has failed several times to keep and maintain converts and new Christians by ignoring the role church planting plays in consolidating new souls. After souls have been saved from the clutches of the devil, the church should endeavour to protect and safe guard these new comers by assimilating them into the folds.

### **iii. Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the Biblical basis of the Great Commission
- To study the approaches related to evangelism that led to the Church's growth
- To investigate ANFGCI's strategies in order to fulfil the Great Commission.

- To discover crucial information and praxis for evangelistic and church planting ministry.

#### **iv. Scope/Limitation of the Study**

Although this research will focus on the evangelistic and church planting history and strategies of ANFGCI, to get a wider understanding of the study, the history and styles of evangelism and church planting from biblical times to the present will be studied.

#### **v. Research Methodology**

This thesis is a combination of theoretical and empirical study. In the study of evangelism, church planting and growth, researchers are free to choose either quantitative or qualitative methodology or both, the later will result in a mix method approach. The mix methods captures both the theoretical and empirical aspects of this thesis. Detail discussion on this issue is found below in section 2.4.2.

#### **vi. Structure of the Research**

Chapter One, "Review of Literature, provides a critical analysis and summary of past and present academic knowledge in the area of the study."

Chapter Two, "Exegetical Insight of Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 28:18-20,"

Chapter Three, "Evangelism and Church Planting from the Early Church to the Present," is divided into four sections. The first focuses on the evangelistic campaign of the early apostles leading to Paul's church evangelistic and church planting exploits as recorded in NT and in the writings of the Church Fathers. The second section, "Evangelism and Church Planting by Euro-American Missionaries," looks into the advent of the Euro-American missionary enterprise and their evangelical church planting strategies in Africa. The third section is about "Evangelism and Church Planting by Neo-Religious Movements," which studies the evangelistic and church planting strategies of the neo-religious movements. All the endeavours of these groups will be compared and contrasted with current ones and their successes and challenges will be considered as a paradigm. The fourth section focuses on the "Formation of All Nations Full Gospel Church" and its strategy for evangelism and church planting as it relates to the Great Commission. In Chapter Four, "Empirical Study of All Nations Full Gospel Church ," deals with the methodology

used by the researcher in carrying out this research which includes: research design, population of the research location, sample size and sampling technique, instruments of data collection, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis process.,

"Conclusions and Recommendations," deal with the reiteration and proof of the achievement of the objectives of the study, and the Great Commission ANFGCI way.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The review of the literature summarises the past and present academic knowledge in the area of the Great Commission as relating to evangelism and church planting. The effort will be made to discover and identify any strengths and weaknesses in previous published works to reveal the strengths and weaknesses in this thesis, and to guide and eliminate the potential weaknesses, whilst bringing to the fore the potential strengths of the work in progress.

#### **1.2 Mandate and Implication of the Great Commission**

The researcher in a paper entitled, “Church Planting: A fulfilment of the Great Commission” has made an attempt to show that evangelism and church planting has its biblical foundation in the Great Commission.<sup>3</sup>The Great Commission was given at five different times in separate locations in the New Testament (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-20; Lk 24:47-49; Jn 21:21-23; Acts 1:8). The researcher in this paper went on to state that on each of these occasions, Jesus added to the previous command, and the reader must see the total picture to understand the full implication of the Great Commission.

The Great Commission was initially given after the resurrection to ten disciples. Jesus said, “as the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). Jesus was simply giving his perplexed disciples a commission to represent him. In this text the message, destination, and task were not given to them. Perhaps they were not ready to receive it.

A week later in the upper room when Thomas was present with the other disciples, Jesus told them; “Go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). Two aspects were added to the commission. First, they were not just to minister to Israel but to the world. Second, they were to preach the gospel to every person in the world.

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel H. Donkor, "Church Planting: A Fulfilment of the Great Commission," ANUJAT 1 no.1 (2014): 11-25.

The next time the Great Commission was repeated was at least two weeks later. The disciples were no longer in Jerusalem but on the mountain in Galilee approximately one hundred miles away. He assumed they would eventually obey, for he used the principle “As you are going” (Matt 28: 19, literal translation). This is based on the previous command to go and preach the gospel to every person. Here Jesus added two additional aspects to the Great Commission. First, they were to disciple (imperative), which involves a command to get results. Second, they were to centre on nations, *ethne* (“people groups”). This concern with social groups has vast implications that we shall see later.

The fourth giving of the Great Commission (Lk 24:46-48) stated that the gospel message must include repentance and belief. The fifth reiteration was given the same day of the ascension. This included the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit to indwell them and also the geographic scope: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts (Acts 1:18).

**Table 1. The Great Commission**

THE GREAT COMMISSION						
TEXT	WHERE	WHEN	TO WHOM	MESSAGE	KEY	
John 20: 21	Upper room, Jerusalem	Resurrection Day	10 disciples	I am sending you	Commission	
Mark 16:15	Upper room, Jerusalem	One week later	11 disciples	Go to all the world, preach to every person	Recipients	
Matt 28:19-20	Mountain in Galilee	At least two weeks later	11 disciples 500 brethren	Disciples all “peoples” then baptize and teach	Strategy	
Luke 24:46-48	Jerusalem	Fortieth Day	11 disciples	Preach repentance and forgiveness of sins, based on the resurrection of Christ	content	
Acts 1:8	Mount of Olives	Fortieth Day	11 disciples	Jerusalem to uttermost part of earth	Geography	

No doubt the most popular passage of the Great Commission is Matthew 28:18-20 version which states: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20: "is one of the church's great charters for evangelism.<sup>4</sup>This biblical mandate, is instructing believers to go out to make disciples, teaching and bringing them into the Christian faith and fellowship. As such, the church is to go to nations or peoples and evangelize them. This is best done by planting indigenous churches where people can be saved, baptized, and continue to disciple them in the Word of God. It is with this in mind that Vergil Gerber<sup>5</sup> concludes that the definitive evangelistic target in the New Testament is twofold:

- To make responsible, reproducing Christians
- To make responsible, reproducing congregations.

According David J. Bosch, the Gospel of Matthew reflects “Mission as Disciple-Making.”<sup>6</sup> For him, Matthew presents an important and different sub-model of the early church's understanding and experience of mission. He went on to express his concern that in today's missionary circles much of the discussion about the gospel has, regrettably, been muddied by the very high attention placed on the significance and interpretation of the so-called “Great Commission” (Matt 28:16-20). In other words, for Bosch, it appears missionaries only see the value of Matthew in this passage, and the overall missional paradigm is ignored.

### 1.2.1 Evangelism - The Church's Task

Sproul noted, that Jesus prefaces his Matthean commission by announcing to His disciples that He has been given all authority in heaven and earth. The impetus for the task of the church to be involved in evangelism resides in the authority of Christ, who commands that the church be engaged in certain kinds of activity. "<sup>7</sup>Sproul continues by saying:

In recent years, discussion has emerged on whether evangelism is even an appropriate enterprise of the church. Yet it seems unthinkable to me that a church

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<sup>4</sup>R.C. Sproul, *What is the Great Commission?* (Stanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2015), 7.

<sup>5</sup>Vergil Gerber, *God's Way to Keep a Church Going and Growing* (Glendale, California: Regal Books, 1973), 18.

<sup>6</sup>David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Missions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016), 57.

<sup>7</sup>Sproul, *What is the Great Commission?* 7.

should consider whether evangelism is an appropriate enterprise when it has the mandate of the authoritative command of the Lord and Head of the church. Why has this become a debatable point? Emil Brunner gave one answer in *The Mediator*, his classic work on Christ. Brunner lashed out at the modern church, saying that the issues of nineteenth-century liberalism, for example, are not a matter of technical debates about minor points of doctrine. Rather, the question is essentially one of unbelief, and we have to recognize that we do live in a time when there is a great deal of unbelief, not only outside the church but inside it as well. When strong unbelief is present, the church's vision, zeal, passion, and commitment for evangelism tend to decline. Who would be zealous about urging other people to believe something that they themselves do not believe? But it would be simplistic to assume that every discussion about the legitimacy of evangelism resides in unbelief. That's certainly a factor, but there are other reasons as well. In many circles, evangelism has a bad name because it conjures up ideas of high-pressure techniques, simplistic buttonholing, and insensitive forms of communication. For others, evangelism implies those high-powered sales pitches that almost intimidate or manipulate people into "responding" in the way the salesperson desires. But that's not what the Bible teaches us about evangelism.<sup>8</sup>

According to the researcher, some of the differences involved in the diverse applications of the word "evangelism" emanated from drastic theological disagreements over the very nature of the essentials of Christianity. But the disagreement between theological tolerance and a more conservative evangelical theology does not count for every dissimilarity in the use of the word.<sup>9</sup>

The researcher further argued that even among committed evangelical church leaders there is an apparent lack of agreement as to the nature of evangelism.<sup>10</sup> In an address to itinerant evangelists meeting in Amsterdam, Billy Graham observed:

Today, the world church is not sure what evangelism is, and often the gift of the evangelist is neglected – evangelism is not taught in many of our Bible schools and seminaries. Today we have scores of definitions of what evangelism is, and what the evangelist is. Some think of evangelism simply in terms of getting more people to join the church. Others define evangelism as attempting to change the structures of society.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Sproul, *What is the Great Commission?* 7-8.

<sup>9</sup>Samuel Donkor, "Evangelism: A Channel for the Understanding of the Mind and Mission of Christ," ANUJAT 1 no.1 (2012): 10-28.

<sup>10</sup> Donkor, "Evangelism," 10-28.

<sup>11</sup> Billy Graham, "The Gift and Calling of an Evangelist" in the *calling of an Evangelist: The Second International Congress for Itinerant Evangelists, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*, Ed. J D Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1987), pp.15,16.

Evangelism has been consistently practiced by the church to some extent throughout its history, but the practitioners rarely took time to define the specifics of what they considered evangelism. It appears no attempt to define this term was made prior to the mid nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> According to Mendel Taylor, “Although Biblical writers introduced the term evangelism, it failed to become meaningful enough to be used in Christian circles until the Nineteenth Century.”<sup>13</sup>

Evangelicals understanding of evangelism during much of the twenty-first has been accredited to early efforts to classify the term during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the close of the twentieth century, the evangelical church’s perception of evangelism appears to have been affected by numerous contemporary developments in evangelism including those connected with the November 1966 World Congress on Evangelism in West Berlin,<sup>14</sup> America’s largest and fastest growing churches,<sup>15</sup> the contemporary church growth movement,<sup>16</sup> the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization,<sup>17</sup> the hidden people’s movement,<sup>18</sup> the Billy Graham International Conferences for Itinerant Evangelism<sup>19</sup> and the AD 2000 movement.<sup>20</sup>

The process of defining evangelism is an important task within the scope of this work. In the James Sprunt Lectures at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in February 1957, Charles Templeton suggested:

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<sup>12</sup>In 1850, Charles Adams authored a book entitled *Evangelism in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. Another in 1888 was written by Arthur T. Pierson under the title, *Evangelistic Work in Principle and Practice*. Since that time the term has come to indicate the major thrust in New Testament Churches.” Charles L. McKay, *Five Simple Keys to Effective Evangelism: You Too Can Do It* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1978), p.4.

<sup>13</sup> Mendel Taylor, *Exploring Evangelism*, p. 19. Cited by McKay, *Five Simple Keys to Evangelism*, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> This international congress on evangelism is viewed by many observers as the first serious attempt by evangelicals to study evangelism in a congress setting and as such, that which appears to have awakened a renewed interest in evangelism on the part of evangelicals.

<sup>15</sup>This represents the influence of Elmer L Towns, *The Ten largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1969) and other writings and public statements made by author Towns and the ministers of the various churches identified in the book and subsequent listings of America’s largest and fastest growing churches.

<sup>16</sup> This represents the influence of Donald A McGavran, his various writings on the subject of church growth, and that of his students and associates at the Fuller Theological Seminary Institute of Church Growth, Pasadena, California.

<sup>17</sup> This represents the influence of the original congress, its participants, and the various national and international committees which it has spawned.

<sup>18</sup> This represents the influence of Ralph Winter through his writings and the US Center for World Missions.

<sup>19</sup>This represents the influence of Billy Graham and other speakers at the First and Second International Conferences for Itinerant Evangelists held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, the publications coming out of those conferences, and subsequent national and regional conferences conducted by participants in the international conferences.

<sup>20</sup>This represents the influence of about 78 mega-plans to evangelize the world by year AD 2000 and an unknown number of associated smaller regional plans to evangelize an area or specific people’s group during the same period.

It is important to arrive at an adequate definition of evangelism, not only because evangelism is a word so frequently misunderstood, but because it is one of the two principal responsibilities of the Church. The Church is called to worship and to witness. Its witness may be made corporately as well as through its individual members, being expressed by the life of the Church in the world as well as in the speech of its clergy and its laity.<sup>21</sup>

While it is not the focal point of this chapter to produce an exhaustive theology of evangelism, the investigation of the relationship with which this thesis is based requires at the outset a perception of the components of effective evangelization. As such, this chapter considers the usages of the term 'evangelism' by evangelical Christian leaders in the twentieth century and the diverse sources of information to be sought in propagating a biblical theology of evangelism prior to suggesting a functional definition of evangelism.

Numerous definitions of the term 'evangelism' have been given by contemporary evangelical leaders in an attempt to describe what is engrossed in evangelism. Church growth writer, C Peter Wagner,<sup>22</sup> suggests contemporary definitions of evangelism may be classified in one of three representative views which he calls:

- 1-P Presence Evangelism
- 2-P Proclamation Evangelism
- 3-P Persuasion Evangelism.

These three contemporary views of evangelism may be well construed through deciphering specific definitions of evangelism propagated by evangelical leaders in this century.

### *1-P Presence Evangelism*

The 1-P Presence Evangelism view of evangelism tends to emphasize the social implication of Christianity independent of any attempt to identify Christian theological distinctive or suggest the superiority of a Christian worldview. In this view of evangelism, acts of justice and mercy are performed as ends in themselves rather than as means to convince others to embrace Christianity. In this extreme expression, Wagner is correct when he concludes, "this is not an evangelical point

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<sup>21</sup>Charles B. Templeton, *Evangelism for Tomorrow* (New York, NY: Harper Publishers, 1957), 40.

<sup>22</sup>C Peter Wgner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), pp. 55-57 and *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission and Evangelism*, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1987), pp. 117-130.

of view.”<sup>23</sup> But a less radical form of this view of evangelism appears to be gaining recognition among some evangelicals. In the Preface of his book, Harvie M Conn explains:

This book is not intended as a simple how-to-do-it manual on evangelism as traditionally known... Rather, this is an effort to look at the relation between evangelism and social questions as two sides of the same coin. *Holistic evangelism* has more recently been the term used to describe what I mean. Perhaps *Lordship Evangelism* is easier to pronounce and understand. I want to speak of evangelism in context, of giving cups of cold water to the thirsty world, but giving them in the name of the Lord. I speak not of an easy truce between faith and works, not even a partnership. All partners may be equal but too frequently some are more equal than others. No, our goal is an interdependence that guards the integrity of both components and sees them constantly interacting.<sup>24</sup>

In a similar vein of thinking, Myron S Augsburger suggests: “Evangelism is anything that makes faith in Jesus Christ a possibility for persons. It is the loving deed in the name of Christ as the loving word. Evangelism is sharing the joy of the new life in Christ in fellowship and friendship. It is inviting persons to open their lives to the lordship of Jesus.”<sup>25</sup>

The above-mentioned statements by Conn and Ausberger concerning the nature of evangelism do not differ significantly from that of non-evangelical theologians such as Dom Helder Cămara, the archbishop of Recife in Brazil. According to Cămara: “Evangelization is the name of Christ ... aims at humanization in the fullest sense. The boundary between the two fields is purely theoretical – with respect of course for the distinction from a theological point of view.”<sup>26</sup>

The weakness of these definitions of evangelism is not so much what it states as what it leaves unstated. While the kind of positive expressions of Christianity called for by Conn, Ausberger and Cămara ought to be present in an evangelical lifestyle and witness, evangelism reaches beyond these acts of charity. Acts of charity in the proper context aids and empowers evangelism. It makes evangelism effective and authentic. It is like the condiment that brings flavour in foods.

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<sup>23</sup> Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth*, p. 119.

<sup>24</sup>Harvie M Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academia Books, 1982), p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Myron S Augsburger, *Evangelism as Discipl- ling* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983), p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>Helder Cămara, *What is evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 13.

### *2-P Proclamation Evangelism*

A second and more popular way of defining evangelism is designated by Wagner as 2-P Proclamation Evangelism. Those who hold this view argue “evangelism is a proclamation of the Gospel which leaves men free to make decisions about it.”<sup>27</sup> According to George W Peters: “Evangelism is the announcement of a unique message. It concerns itself primarily with the proclamation of the Gospel of God, the redemption act of God in Christ Jesus.... It is the announcement of good news to a world alienated from God, bound in sin, and under a sentence of condemnation.”<sup>28</sup>

This view of evangelism may represent the predominant evangelical view of evangelism:

This view of evangelism is very strong among evangelical Christians. I previously mentioned that many authors of books on evangelism simply assume a definition of evangelism. When they do, nine times out of ten their definition is proclamation. They feel that is so commonly accepted it needs no argument. Most evangelists and evangelistic associations that I am aware of also assume proclamation as their working definition of evangelism.<sup>29</sup>

Once again, the weakness of this view of evangelism is not found in what it states, but what it leaves unstated. Is it enough to “preach the gospel” without taking further steps to encourage a positive response to the Gospel on the part of the hearer? Some may agree it is enough. Others argue there must be something more. Proclamation evokes a reaction or a conviction about the message which moves people to a decision. Therefore, it becomes necessary to go beyond proclamation. This is a message worthy of acceptance therefore mere proclamation is certainly not enough.

### *3-P Persuasive Evangelism*

A third view of evangelism considers evangelism has not been completed until there has been a response from the unconverted. The growing popularity of this view of evangelism is probably due to the influence of the Church Growth Movement. According to Donald A McGavran and

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<sup>27</sup>Douglas Webster, *What is Evangelism* (London: The Highway Press, 1964), p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> George W. Peters, *Saturation Evangelism*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth*, p. 121.

Winfield C Arn: “A Church Growth definition of *evangelism* is “to proclaim Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and to persuade people to become his disciples and responsible members of his church.”<sup>30</sup>

But the idea that evangelism includes the idea of persuading individuals to respond positively to the Gospel is older than the Church Growth Movement which promotes it. As early as 1918, the Archbishop’s Committee of the Church of England framed the following definition of evangelism: “Evangelism is to so present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.”<sup>31</sup>

The British Archbishops were not the only pre-church growth movement Christian leaders to conclude evangelism presupposed a positive response to the message of the Gospel. A committee of thirty Protestant ministers representing a variety of American denominations met in Columbus, Ohio in 1946 and drafted the following definition of evangelism:

Evangelism is the presentation of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ, so that men are brought, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to put their trust in God; accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour from the guilt and power of sin; to follow and serve him as their Lord in the fellowship of the church and in the vocations of the common life.<sup>32</sup>

This is apparently the preferred definition within the Church Growth Movement in part because of their interpretation of the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:18-20 as a strategy statement for both evangelism and church growth. According to Wagner:

This is the definition which best fits the understanding of the Great Commission explained in Chapter 2. To reiterate, the one imperative out of the four action verbs in Mathew 28: 19, 20 is “make disciples”. “Go”, “baptizing” and “teaching” are all participles in the original Greek. So far as measuring evangelistic results is concerned, the bottom line is how many disciples are made as the result of a given evangelistic effort, not how many people hear. And, as I also brought out in chapter 2, an acceptable criterion for knowing when a person who makes a decision is really

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<sup>30</sup>Donald A McGavran and Winfield C Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), 51.

<sup>31</sup> Cited by Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth*, p.128. See also Templeton, *Evangelism for Tomorrow*, 41.

<sup>32</sup> Cited by Jess M. Bader, *Evangelism in a Changing America* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1957), 15.

turning out to be a disciple is that they become a responsible member of the Body of Christ in a local church.<sup>33</sup>

Ben Campbell Johnson writes:

I suggest, as an initial working definition, that evangelism is “that particular task of the church to communicate the good news of God’s love to persons so that they may understand the message, place their trust in Christ, become loyal members of his church, and fulfill his will as obedient disciples.” This intentionally specific definition of evangelism focuses the vision and energy of the church on individuals and their relationship to Christ in the Christian community. It excludes corporate statements on national issues, ministry to the poor, the struggle for justice, and the various ministries of compassion, because these do not belong intrinsically to the evangelistic task of the church.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Lausanne Definition of Evangelism*

One of the outstanding evangelical definitions of evangelism came from the International Congress of World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland in July 1974. Article 4 of the Lausanne Covenant, 1974 recognizes the strengths of each of the previously mentioned definitions of evangelism and incorporates them into a hybrid evangelical view of evangelism.

The Lausanne Covenant affirms:

To evangelize is to spread the Good News that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the Gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church, and responsible service in the world.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth*, 122.

<sup>34</sup>Ben Campbell Johnson, *Rethinking Evangelism: A Theological Approach*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 12.

<sup>35</sup>*The Lausanne Covenant*, 1974, Article 4. “The Nature of Evangelism, cited by Alfred C. Krass, *Evangelizing Neopagan North America: The Word that Frees*, (Scottsdale, PN: Herald Press, 1982), 191.

One of the main factors of the Lausanne Congress was to bring together various evangelicals dedicated to fulfilling the mission of World Evangelization. In such a wide-ranging meeting of evangelical bosses, the development of a statement encompassing common beliefs and commitments was not without its problems.<sup>36</sup> However, the resulting statement on evangelism appears to be one which many evangelical leaders have chosen to support. One measure of the influence of Lausanne Congress is seen in the following statement concerning the nature of evangelism offered by Billy Graham to those attending the Second International Congress for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam:

The term “evangelism” encompasses every effort to declare the Good News of Jesus Christ, to the end that people may understand God’s offer of salvation and respond in repentance, faith and discipleship. We must always make it clear that there is a “cost” to following Christ. There is the denial of self, and the taking up the cross. Christ never offers cheap grace. He never lowers His standard for entrance to the kingdom of God.<sup>37</sup>

A church growth perspective of evangelism (3-P Persuasion Evangelism) certainly falls within the broad perimeters of the Lausanne Covenant. Those holding this view of evangelism, have a view of evangelism consistent with that which was widely held by evangelicals at the end of the twentieth century. But not all evangelicals share this view of evangelism. Those who do, however, have a ministry perspective which, when applied consistently, necessarily results in numerical church growth.

### 1.2.2 Go and Make Disciples

According to Jon C. Tomlinson, Matthew 28: 19-20:

Is often used as a basis for evangelism, which is certainly an appropriate application of Christ’s words, but the emphasis is often misplaced. In English, it seems as though Jesus gave several commands: go, make disciples, baptize, and teach. However, in Greek, the only imperative is the verb translated as ‘make disciples.’ The instructions to go, teach, and baptize explain how the command to make disciples is to be carried out.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Wagner refers to this as it impacts the definition of evangelism in his brief discussion of the resolution of a difference of opinion between himself and John Stott while working on the Lausanne Covenant (see *Strategies for Church Growth*, pp. 129f.). See also Hollenweger’s appraisal of the Lausanne Congress in *Evangelis Today: Good News or Bone of Contention*, pp6-9.

<sup>37</sup>Billy Graham, “The Gift and Calling of the evangelist,” 16.

<sup>38</sup> Jon C. Tomlinson, "The Great Commission: Discipleship and Followership," *Inner Resources for Leaders*, 3.

Mary Hinkley Shore emphasise that in the Commission, the main verb, meaning “to make disciples,” is critical to understanding the language of the commission itself.<sup>39</sup> It is “much more than simply to proclaim.”<sup>40</sup> “It does not mean to present or offer only a message, but rather to lead to a close personal relationship, modelled on the relationship between the earthly Jesus and his own disciples.”<sup>41</sup> In Matthew’s account of the Great Commission:

Jesus is not just interested in declaring a simple message. He goes beyond that, saying, 'Make disciples.' The Greek word translated 'disciple,' *mathētēs*, means 'one who is a learner or student.' It's part of the church's mission to be involved in instructing and catechizing—that is, in discipling—people; this involves not just asking for an initial commitment, but rooting and grounding people in the whole counsel of God.<sup>42</sup>

R. Smith argues the verb to "make disciples" means “to turn converts and confessors of Jesus from among Jews and Gentiles into disciples, people walking the way of righteousness, trees bearing good fruit, guests wearing a wedding garment.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, according to Matthew, it is a “catechetical mission, evangelism through Christian education ... of each generation, learning the way of the Kingdom at each state of life and through all human experiences.”<sup>44</sup>

In addition, Jacques Matthey states that, “the condition of disciple" is not a specific, past condition of that group of people following Jesus in the first century, but describes the status of any Christian .... What Jesus tells his disciples he tells us.”<sup>45</sup> Herrero buttresses this point, noting: The eleven, in order to carry out their received mission must go to all humankind. They cannot remain at home, waiting with folded arms for people to come to them; they must set out on a journey (going) and, modelling themselves on the itinerant style of Jesus, go to all people everywhere...taking into account the geographical reference (all peoples) and the following reference to time (to the end of the age), the conclusion is clear that this mission is now the

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<sup>39</sup>Mary Hinkle Shore, “Preaching Mission: Call and Promise in Matthew 28:16-20,” *Word & World* 26.3 (2006): 322-328.

<sup>40</sup> Francisco Perez Herrero. (2006). “Mission Following the Missionary Mandate of the Risen Christ,” *International Review of Mission* 95. 378/379 (2006): 308.

<sup>41</sup>Herrero, “Mission Following the Missionary Mandate,” 308.

<sup>42</sup>Sproul, *What is the Great Commission?*8.

<sup>43</sup>R. Smith, “Matthew 28:16-20, Anticlimax or Key to the Gospel?” *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 32 no.595 (1993): 595.

<sup>44</sup>Mortimer Arias, “Church in the World: Rethinking the Great Commission,” *Theology Today* 47 no.4(1991): 412.

<sup>45</sup>Jacques Matthey, “The Great Commission According to Matthew,” *International Review of Mission* 69 no.274 (1980): 162.

responsibility...of all future collaborators and successors, that is to say all Christians.”<sup>46</sup>This is the end the means seek to achieve turning converts into believers who become disciples of Jesus Christ.

### 1.2.3 Go and Teach

Since Jesus told his disciples to teach their followers “all things that he commanded,” the command to make disciples must also be obeyed by the next generation of believers. As such, the Great Commission was not only for the first disciples but is to be obeyed by every Christian.

Walter H. Norvell states that:

The Great Commission draws all believers into the teaching process of God and shows us the centrality of teaching in the church’s mission. To find teaching as an element in the Great Commission should come as no surprise. Jesus came teaching and he commanded that we make disciples using baptism (implying evangelism) and teaching as integral, necessary elements of the disciple-making process. Commanding such stood Jesus in the cultural and religious heritage of Judaism. Examining the teaching concept in the Old Testament lays the foundation for understanding this function’s imperative in the Great Commission.<sup>47</sup>

Norvell went on to say that: "In the New Testament, Jesus modeled teaching and commanded His followers to teach everything He taught. The 'teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' phrase of Matthew 28:20 partners with the 'baptizing' phrase just prior in verse 19 to support that main command, 'make disciples.'"<sup>48</sup>

Further, Novell, states that Jesus gave to those disciples and all subsequent believers a 'two-handed' task to accomplish the command. Working together like two hands, by baptizing and through teaching we make disciples. The teaching ministry of the church can in no way be separated from the evangelism ministry of the church. They are two sides of the same coin.<sup>49</sup>

Arias argues “the Great Commission is a warning to those churches that are not doing well in their Christian education program, or in their biblical preaching and teaching, fostering

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<sup>46</sup>Herrero, “Mission Following the Missionary Mandate,” 309.

<sup>47</sup>Walter H. Norvell, "The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching: Why Christian Education Should Be On the Cutting Edge of the Church’s Mission Today" *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 1 no.2 (2003): 94.

<sup>48</sup>Norvell, "The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching," 97.

<sup>49</sup>Norvell, "The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching," 97.

generations of Bible illiterates.”<sup>50</sup> He continues “The temptation is to water down the demands of the gospel preaching from a comfortable pulpit, to a comfortable pew.”<sup>51</sup>

Paul carried out the Great Commission agenda at Ephesus by shifting from an evangelistic mode when he first arrived in Ephesus to an educational-evangelistic mode later, which likely provided the great success he had in Ephesus.<sup>52</sup> Paul’s model demonstrates how “in-depth, heart-inflaming education can ignite widespread, life-transforming evangelism, with a far-reaching cultural impact.”<sup>53</sup> All of this helps us understand the profoundly obvious truth: Christianity is transmitted through the teaching function of the church.<sup>54</sup>

Norvell wisely explains that, while every generation has needed the teaching function of the church, today’s postmodern culture is in particular need. “Today’s generation seems to trudge hopelessly in a slough of despair, oozing with the thick mud and stagnant waters of pluralism and relativism. Popular thought, or perhaps better said as popular non-thought, has eliminated absolute truth. Human existence is meaningless unless one can make his or her own meaning but therefore no ethics exist to guide one to the making of meaning.”<sup>55</sup>

Teaching is the cutting edge of the mission of the church, then, today, and always. “Close attention to teaching, from the pulpit to the Sunday School class of the youngest, will focus the church on a needy, lost world, on a triumphant Redeemer who saves, and on life-changing encounters with Him.”<sup>56</sup> That attention is brought about with allegiance to the Great Commission and the Christ Who gave it. “Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” is possible with our singular commitment to obey Him in that phrase.<sup>57</sup>

C.E. Autry states that:

Educational evangelism is an organized effort to enlist and train church members. It also provides organizational outreach for evangelism. It would train Christians to witness, and it would bring the unchurched into the Bible study program and confront them with Christ as Savior. It is neither an extensive training program which seeks to educate and culture folk into the family of God, nor an effort to find God by understanding His laws of human growth and development. Nor is it a

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<sup>50</sup>Arias, “Church in the World,” 412.

<sup>51</sup>Arias, “Church in the World,” 413.

<sup>52</sup>A. Boyd Luter “Deep and Wide: Education Overflowing as Evangelism from Ephesus,” Faith and Mission 19 (Fall 2001): 34.

<sup>53</sup>Luter “Deep and Wide,” 34.

<sup>54</sup>Norvell, “The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching,” 99.

<sup>55</sup>Norvell, “The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching,” 100.

<sup>56</sup>Norvell, “The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching,” 105.

<sup>57</sup>Norvell, “The Great Commission Imperative of Teaching,” 106.

process of bringing one into oneness with God in Christ. We recognize that every person must have certain knowledge before he can be saved. He must recognize his need for a Saviour, who the Saviour is, and how to receive Him. Men are not saved by the teaching process, but the teaching process prepares men for a saving experience with God. Educational evangelism is not opposed to sudden conversion, but conversion is preceded by some instruction.<sup>58</sup>

Evangelism and teaching work together like the two hands of a clock. Both hands are needed to tell an accurate time. Similarly, Evangelism and teaching are both needed to make disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ. They are interdependent and interconnected. One cannot do without the other; both are equally needed.

### **1.3 Church Planting: A Fulfilment of the Great Commission**

Malphurs defines Church Planting as "an exhausting but exciting venture of faith that involves the planned process of beginning and rolling new local churches, based on Jesus' promise and in obedience to his Great Commission."<sup>59</sup> In explaining his definition, Malphur states that Church Planting is an *exhausting* work "because church planters must be initiators and because the actual work of planting a church is hard."<sup>60</sup>

Church planting is exhausting but *exciting*. "Boredom and routine are completely foreign to church planting. Starting a church is one of the most exciting spiritual ventures a group of Christians may ever undertake."<sup>61</sup> The factors behind such excitement are.<sup>62</sup>

- Church planting appeals to the pioneer spirit. The pioneer/starter/planter relishes the idea of being on the leading edge of something new that God is doing
- The sense of anticipation. the anticipation that God is about to do something extraordinary, and participants are going to be part of it
- The sense of expectation. In addition to anticipating that God is going to do something special through the new church; there is also deep within the participants, the expectation that He is going to do so. Participants can sense that the time is right; the time is now!

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<sup>58</sup>C. E. Autry, *Basic Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959), 92.

<sup>59</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 19.

<sup>60</sup> Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 19.

<sup>61</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 21.

Church planting is a venture of *faith*. "Anything of authentic spiritual significance is accomplished through faith."<sup>63</sup> People who are planting a new church must have strong and stretching faith in God which involves both believing and obeying God.<sup>64</sup> That involves taking risks that sometimes defy logic but often times God inspired and that leads to great success.

Church planting further involves *a process* of twofold:<sup>65</sup>

- Life Cycle - church planters are required to take the new work through a cycle, "similar to the human life cycle" which consists of six stages of development: 1. conception, 2. development, 3. birth, 4. growth, 5. maturity, and 6. reproduction
- Reproduction - planting the church is not the end of the process. Pioneers/starters/planters must maintain what God has done. Reproduction provides churches with potential to evangelize unchurched communities nationally and globally.

Church planting requires *a plan*. If the pioneer/starter/planter does not know what he or she is doing, it will result in either a failed or small struggling church. The solution is proper and strategic planning.<sup>66</sup> The process of founding and growing a church rests on Jesus' promise in Matthew 16:18 which shows that Jesus is the builder and grower of churches.<sup>67</sup> Finally, Malphurs states that church planting is a response to Jesus' Great Commission.<sup>68</sup>

This chapter is based on a similar understanding of the role of the Great Commission. The response to church planting is a fulfilment of the Great Commission. Otto and Wilson state that, "in light of the Great Commission Jesus gave to the church, any definition of fruitfulness for a local congregation must include growth by the conversion of unbelievers, including the planting of new congregations."<sup>69</sup> Otto and Wilson:

Insist that any church plant must be based on the centrality of Jesus and his Great Commission ... 'a great commitment to the Great Commandment and Great Commission will grow a great church'... all believers are called to plant churches as we reproduce the life of Christ in others and follow the Great Commission. Jesus has given the church a job to do, and we must obey the Great Commission or,

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<sup>63</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 22.

<sup>64</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 22.

<sup>65</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 23.

<sup>66</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 24.

<sup>67</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 27.

<sup>68</sup>Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 29.

<sup>69</sup>Otto and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, p. vii.

regardless of what else we do, we will fail at fulfilling our purpose for existing, which is helping Jesus bring others into the kingdom of God.<sup>70</sup>

This Great Commission includes church planting for the following reasons:

- To “make disciples” of people in all nations is best fulfilled by an indigenous church in every culture.
- “Baptizing” identifies a new believer with Christ and with the church. The result of baptizing is to plant a church to carry on this process.
- The focus of discipling is *ethne* (“nations”), which has three meanings: (1) ethnic groups, (2) Gentiles, (3) nations. In each case, the target is not individuals but groups of people. The best means of evangelizing a group of people is through a ministering assembly of saved people – the church.
- “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Means instructing believers to obey the words of Christ (including the Great Commission). This command was carried out in the New Testament church by “teaching the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:9). The continuous teaching in the church became the basis of the church’s growth and fellowship. When new areas were evangelized, the result was new churches with new believers who had to be taught the words of Christ.
- By illustration, the New Testament records stories of believers going everywhere establishing churches (see Acts 9:31). Wherever the gospel was successful a church sprang into existence.

Beginning with the great dispersion of the Jerusalem believers (Acts 8:1); the disciples successfully multiplied congregations and planted additional churches. In fact, “new congregations were planted in every pagan centre of the then-known world in less than four decades.”<sup>71</sup> As the believers were scattered, so was the seed of the gospel that would take root in various national soils. In Acts 9:31 a geographic broadening had taken place so that believers described in “churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria” as directed in Acts 1:8. Based on the

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<sup>70</sup>Otto and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>71</sup>Gerber, *God’s Way*, p. 17.

understanding of the eleven disciples and the success that resulted from their obedience, it is evident that planting local churches throughout the world is God's plan.

The dynamic church-planting efforts of the Apostle Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and others who were all early disciples verify the concept of local church expansion to which Jesus Christ is committed. Surely, they would have done no less than He Commanded and no more than He empowered. By analogy, each produces after its own kind, so a church sends out missionaries who should plant churches like those that sent them out:

From the day God said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth", multiplication has been the secret of growth of the human race, until this geometric progression has staggering proportions of a population explosion. Even when we grasp the simple fact that multiplication is the secret of the growth of the church, we need to ask – a multiplication of what? Not committees, not high offices, not even individual believers as such. We must apply our secret at the level of the local church. To start rapid growth by multiplication, we must encourage our own local church (be we pastors, laymen, or missionaries) to produce itself in another part of the city or neighbouring town or village.<sup>72</sup>

James Engel and H. Norton believe that one believer winning another is enough. They state that "it is a demonstrated principle of church growth that Christianity gains in a society only to the extent that the number of existing church is multiplied. Multiplication of new congregation of believers, then, is the normal and expected output of a healthy body".<sup>73</sup>

The Apostle Paul concentrated his efforts on cities, which were centers of communication, transportation, and commerce. Paul planned to evangelize these areas by planting churches. He would often go to the synagogue seeking first to win his Jewish countrymen (Act 13:5, Salamis; Acts 13:14, Pisidian Antioch; Acts 14:1, Iconium; Acts 17:1, Thessalonica; Acts 18:1, 4, Corinth). Paul gained a hearing with the Jews who attended the synagogues and later continued with the Gentile God-fearers who also had heard of him and his message. As the scripture indicates, before Paul reached Thessalonica he had been practicing his plan for starting churches to the point where Acts 17:2 records, "Then Paul, *as his custom was*, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (emphasis added).

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<sup>72</sup> Paul David, "Church Multiplication," *Church Growth Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1965): p. 92.

<sup>73</sup> James F Engel and H Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? A Communication Strategy for the Church and World Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), pp. 143-144.

Referring to the rapid and wide expansion of the early church, Roland Allen emphasizes “spontaneous expansion,” although he does explain the issue of organization as well:

The church expanded simply by organizing these little groups of early disciples as they were converted, handing on to them the organization which she had received from her first founders. It was itself a unity composed for a multitude of little churches, any one of which could propagate itself, and consequently the reception of any new group of Christians was a simple matter. By a simple act the new group was brought into the unity of the Church, and equipped, as its predecessors had been equipped, not only with all spiritual power and authority necessary for its own life as an organized unity, but also with all the authority needed to repeat the same process whenever one of its members might convert men in any new village or town.<sup>74</sup>

Donald McGavran, whose concern and interest is clearly the multiplication of new churches, believes the sequence of the Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations” precedes “teaching them to observe all things.” He argues:

Only churches can exist and, be perfected. Only babies who have been born can be educated. Only where practicing Christians from sizable minorities of their societies can they expect their presence seriously to influence the social, economic, and political structures. The Church must, indeed, “teach them all things,” but first she must have at least some Christians and congregations.<sup>75</sup>

Since the purpose of the great commission is finalized when a New Testament church is planted, those church planters who establish churches are not doing something that is spectacular or overwhelmingly unique. They are simply carrying out the command of Jesus Christ, also, church planters should not be thought of as divisible (sapping strength from existing churches) or selfish (wanting to control a church so they plant their own) nor independent (unwilling to take an existing pulpit). They should be thought of as those who are employing the most biblical methods to reach the developing areas of the world. Church planters bring the gospel to the unsaved peoples of the world by creating a home for newborns in Christ to be nurtured and grow to become disciples.

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<sup>74</sup>Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 143.

<sup>75</sup>Donald A McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 359. See also, Charles L Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986).

## 1.4 Conclusion

The Bible is the source and mandate for the fulfilment of the Great Commission. In other words, the response to evangelism and church planting has its biblical foundation in the Great Commission which was given at five different times in separate locations in the New Testament (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-20; Lk 24:47-49; Jn 21:21-23; Acts 1:8).

This biblical mandate is instructing believers to go out to make disciples, teaching and bringing them into the Christian faith and fellowship. Jesus modeled teaching and commanded His followers to teach everything He taught. The "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" in Matthew 28:20 goes hand-in-hand with the "baptizing" to support the main command "make disciples."

Jesus gave to His disciples and to us all believers a two-fold task to accomplish the command. Working together like two hands, by baptizing and through teaching believers make disciples. The teaching ministry of the church can in no way be separated from the evangelism ministry of the church. They go side by side.

In this regard, the church must go to nations or peoples and evangelize them. This is best done by planting indigenous churches where people can be saved, baptized, and continually discipled in the Word of God. In the New Testament the definitive evangelistic target is twofold: that is to make responsible reproducing Christians and responsible reproducing congregations

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

#### 2.0 Introduction

In the study of evangelism, church planting and growth, one can either choose quantitative or qualitative methodology or both. Knowing the popular methodology of one's area of academic concentration is very important for a positive grasp of the direction of one's work. This no doubt will result in genuine, rational findings and conclusions.

Reviewing these three approaches in light of what this study entails, the mixed methodological approach is the choice that will encompass the entirety of this thesis because it captures the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

#### 2.1 Exegetical Insight of Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 28:18-20

##### 2.1.1 Introduction

To gain a better understanding of the Great Commission the Lord gave to His disciples, it is essential to providencritical explanations or analyses of Genesis 12:3 and Matthew 28:18-20 that offer insight into the Great Commission in order to arrive at an accurate and useful interpretation of these biblical texts. Due to the details that are required in exegeting a passage, and as this exegetical exercise is for only a chapter, the researcher is limiting it to only one passage each from the OT and NT.

In general, many people, even some scholars, strongly believe that there is clear evidence that the NT has a strong mission emphasis than the OT. It appears mission is not a topic scholar will readily accord to the OT.<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately many people have the conviction that the OT people were only concerned about preserving their God given heritage and culture. Indeed, a close look at Israel's behaviour rightly attest to that fact. But one should not forget that God chose Israel to be a light to the nations, in order that these nations would be blessed through them. Israel's unique position was to be God's ambassadors to the nations. In this regard, as ambassadors they have a mission to fulfill. It is therefore disappointing that the call for a mission mandate is overlooked in

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<sup>76</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Great Commission in the Old Testament." *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 13. 1 (1996): p. 1.

the OT. It is evident in Genesis 1-11 that the message of this section is targeting a universal audience. One can rightly say the message of the OT was/is universal in its scope and range. This exegetical exercise is intended to provide the opportunity to discover the original intended meaning of the selected passages in order to closely understand them as did the original recipients.

## **2.2 OT Exegesis – Genesis 12:1-3 “The Call and Promise to Abraham.”**

### 2.2.1 Wider Context

Before looking at our passage Genesis 12:1-3, it is in place to first get an overview of the document in which it is contained – the Book of Genesis. In that regard, this segment will consider the issues of the authorship, date, addressee and purpose, genre, structure, and content of Genesis.

#### *Authorship*

It is known that ancient manuscripts of Genesis do not claim any authorship of the book. Perhaps it is because in the ancient Near East, most literary compositions were anonymous. It is perhaps during the Greco-Roman era people start seeing statements in early Jewish texts that Moses wrote Genesis and the Pentateuch.<sup>77</sup> During this time, Judaism had been influenced by Greek culture, where authorship was crucial and the writings of Homer was excelling in prestige. In response, the Jewish authors of texts such as Jubilees claimed that their Pentateuch had an ancient author as well referred to as Moses. The attribution to Moses as the author made some sense considering that the four books of the Pentateuch which come after Genesis are all set during Moses' life time, and he is the major mortal character in the document. Further, among similar passages, the passage: “This is the law that Moses set before the Israelites” (Deut 4:44), was understood by later tradition and contemporary understanding as attributing the authorship of the entire Pentateuch to Moses.

However, critical minded readers of the Bible came later to the realisation in subsequent centuries that there were problems with Mosaic claim of authorship. For instance, some passages in Genesis refer to events after Moses' time, as when the Canaanites were no longer in the land

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<sup>77</sup> The Greek word Pentateuch – penta (“five”) and teuchos (“books”) is the designation for the first five books in the Bible, namely: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Amazingly, unlike other canonical divisions, where there is heated debate within and between different religious traditions, there is an agreement among Jews and Christians regarding the order of these books and that they form one single unit.

(Gen 12:6). Further, the most challenging issue and question to ask is: How would have Moses written an account about his own death and burial (Deut 34). Of course scholars in favour of the authorship of Moses have dwelt on these issues. But like other ancient manuscripts, Genesis was originally anonymous, and only attributed to Moses later through an author-oriented culture.

### *Date*

Over two centuries of scholarly work on Genesis have established that the book was written over a period of many centuries, using oral traditions. It is considered so because Genesis was written in a mainly oral culture. Evidences of such oral culture could be seen in the way similar stories about social issues were connected to various patriarchs for example 20:1-18; 21:22-34; 26:6-33. Most scholars now agree that the present texts in Genesis started to be written sometime after the establishment of Israel's monarchy in tenth century BCE.

### *Structure*

Genesis is divided into two main sections, the primeval history is in chapters 1-11, and in chapters 12-50 we have the ancestral history of Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. In Genesis chapters 1-11, the primeval history section, God is trying to curb repeated unfaithfulness, violence, and corruption of the people. It was a constant struggle and battle for God to get the people the way He wanted. This prompted God to try a new strategy by choosing a Jewish couple. As it is in the NT, it was the sins and disobedience of the people that brought Jesus to earth to lead humankind to God. The sins and disobedience of the people made God provide a way out for his people to be saved. The call of Abraham was to bring Israel into a new direction. Our passage Genesis 12:1-3 opens the latter section which is part of the Abraham and Sarah story contained in chapters 12-25. The ancestral history takes over where the primeval history ends.

#### 2.2.2 Immediate Context

Genesis 12:1-3 is the first of three divine speeches in which a patriarch is given travel directions and promises of blessing (12:1-3; 26:2-5; 46:1-4). One can say that the calling/blessing of Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 is for the express purpose of establishing God's Kingdom. God called Abram to receive the blessing from him, so that God's kingdom could be established through Abraham - a

kingdom that all peoples of the world would be a part of. When God called Abram, he left out in faith from Ur to Haran and eventually to Canaan. God then made a covenant with him, by telling him that he would be the founder of a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, but the other nations of the world would also be blessed through Abraham’s descendants. Israel the nation that would be founded by Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram’s lineage, Jesus came to save humankind. Genesis 12:1-3 is the story of God’s choice of Abram and the transmission of the promise through his descendants.

### 2.2.3 Exegesis

Text - Genesis 12:1-3

מֵאֵינְרוֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי בָאֵם לֵךְ-לְמַצְרָאֵת מִיִּתְדֵלִי מִיִּבְתְּאֵי אָדָם לְרֵאֵהוּ אֶשְׂרָאֵל:

Now Yahweh said to Abram, Get out from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you

עֲשֹׂוֹנִי גָדֹל וְגַל אֲנֹכִי בְרָךְ לְדָגְאֹה מִשָּׂדֶה הַיְיָ בְרָךְ:

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you will be a blessing

בְּרָבְאֹה יִכְרַבְמָה לְקַמֵּיהֶ אֶרֶר בְּרָבְנוֹ בְּהֶ תִפְשְׂמִלְכַת מִדָּאָה:

I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

#### Verse 1

The call of Abram begins with an imperative command, לֵךְ-לֵךְ *Lek-leka* (“Get out!”). The command indicates from where Abram is being called, “Go, from your country, from your kindred, and from your father’s house!” (Gen. 12:1) to a place to be directed by God. The repetition of the preposition מִן (*min* (“from”)) is evidently emphasising on the three things Abram is to leave behind. The list goes from the general “your land”, to “your kindred” then to the specific “your father’s house”. After telling Abram what he is going to leave behind, Yahweh then directs his attention to the encouraging side of his command. His destination is described vaguely by the relative clause: אֶל-הָאֵרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה לְךָ *el-haares aser areka* (“the land that I will show you”). The use of the Hifil denotes

the fact that it is the Yahweh who is in control of the initiative all along. This means it was Yahweh's idea for Abram to leave. That is why Abram did not even know the destination and must depend on God to eventually direct him. Abram duty was to obey, and God would disclose the destination.

#### Verse 2

God's instruction continues with the use of the Qal Cohortative in three promises following his command. The first is that God will make Abram into a "great nation" לַדֹּגְמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִגְדַל לוֹדָגְמָה *weeska lagow gadowl*. For God, it is turning a new page – a new direction. He wants a new nation emanating from Abram. It is a new beginning.

God's second promise is: וְאַבְרָם בָּרַךְ וְאָמַר וְאָבְרָכְךָ *waabarekka* ("and I will bless you"). God is going to bless Abram. This idea of "blessing" is found throughout the Patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12-50. The word בָּרַךְ *barekka* ("blessing") is important to the call of Abram. In general, a blessing is any benefit God freely gives in order for it to be known to the recipient and to others that God is favorably disposed toward the recipient. And what makes a blessing a blessing is the relationship between God and the person receiving the blessing. God gives out his blessing to those who are in right relationship with him. God's promise to bless Abram leads to the result: וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה *weh yeh barakah* ("and you will be a blessing").

The third promise is that God will make Abram's name great: וְהָיָה שְׁמִי וְהָיָה שְׁמִי וְהָיָה שְׁמִי *(waagaddaleh semeka)*. In the close of the primeval history section, Genesis 11 to be precise, the ambitious builders of the Tower of Babel tried to make a great name for themselves through their technological feat, but they failed because God was not part of their plan. In the new direction, God graciously offers to give Abram a "great" name. Abram is favoured by God. Abram through obedience is destined for greatness.

#### Verse 3

The Greek Septuagint (LXX) translation of Genesis 12:3 rendered the verb in it in the passive form– "be blessed." However, the reflexive interpretation is the one common in some recent Bible versions and commentaries. Reading the text contextually, it is evident that God's intention was to use Abram in a way that he would be the agent of blessing to all the nations of the world, and not only the Jews. In other words, Abram was to be the human channel in bringing redemption to

the people of the world. As Genesis 12:1-3 picks up where Genesis 1-11 left off, it is proper to say that the mission of Abram was God's solution to the curse that had been caused as a result of the sins and decadence from Adam to the tower of Babel in the primeval history section – Genesis 1-11.

But the descendants of Abraham, knowing how wide the scope of their influence would be in disseminating the blessing of God, could not be complacent, apathetic with legs crossed, and relegate the work of missions to God or to a later generation. The patriarchs, and subsequently, the chosen people or nation that emanated from them, must constantly call a waiting and watching world to repentance and to believe in the one promised by God that is going to come from their offspring. To this end Abram must leave his environs to go to an unknown place. Signifying that the carrier of the blessing must be the one to go those who must receive the blessing.

### **2.3 NT Exegesis - Matthew 28:18-20 “Make Disciples of All Nations.”**

This study has shown that the Great Commission has been used by churches as a mandate for mission and evangelism. The study has also identified NT passages that contain a Great Commission implication. However, in all these passages only Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 record the commission as an imperative – *poreuthentesporeuthentes* (“go” “to go”). It is a known fact that the Matthean version of the Great Commission is the most popular of the NT passages and has attracted the greatest amount of attention among scholars, and since Matthew 28:19 is considered by many as the pivotal command for mission and evangelism, it is imperative that we understand the words: *matheteusate panta ethnematheteusate panta ethne* (“make disciples of all nations”). The question to be asked is whether the command in the Great Commission is for discipleship or evangelism. Is the church or missionary enterprises use this text as intended? In answering this question, the usual procedure in exegesis demands a look at the contexts of the passage before an exegesis of Matthew 28:19 can be made.

### 2.3.1 Wider Context

#### *Authorship*

Traditionally the church has attributed first gospel to Matthew, one of the apostles of Jesus. As stated above in the section relating to OT exegesis, it is known that ancient manuscripts do not claim any authorship of the books of the Bible. This might be because in the ancient Near East, most literary compositions were anonymous.

Generally, in the case of this gospel, internal and external evidences have been put forward in support of a Matthean authorship. Internally, looking closely at the gospel, it is discovered that it is deeply rooted in Judaism and that the author is familiar with the Hebrew Bible. He quotes substantially from it. And he painstakingly tries to present Jesus as the fulfilment of messianic prophecy. Because of his Jewish focus, the author pays attention to Jesus' ministry within Galilee and not so much on Jesus' work with the Gentiles as does Luke in particular. Further, the author discusses financial matters only contained in the gospel. One of the passages frequently cited to buttress this issue is Matthew 17:24. Because of the Jewish and financial focuses of the gospel, it has been argued that Matthew is the best candidate to have authored the gospel. Reasons being, that Matthew is believed to be a Jew, hence the heavy Jewish focus of the gospel. Also, he was a tax collector before becoming an apostle. Externally, the early church is unanimous in their acceptance of Matthew as the author of the first gospel.

To understand the periscope of Matthew 28:18-20, it is imperative to first understand the overall purpose of Matthew's Gospel. "No exegesis of the 'Great Commission' divorced from its moorings in this gospel can be valid."<sup>78</sup> It is generally understood that the purpose of Matthew is to prove that Jesus is the Messiah and to present the kingdom programme of God in a new dispensation. Israel was waiting for their Messiah and king. Hence, the Gospel started with the genealogy that traced Jesus' Jewish root to David which qualifies him to be the Messiah that the prophets were preaching about. In the light of Jesus' messiahship, Matthew discusses how Israel rejected the Messiah, and how the Gentiles were included into God's new direction, and the obligation of the Christians to the Messiah in line with the new agenda and direction to make more disciples for the kingdom.

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<sup>78</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 58.

One can rightly say then that Matthew is essentially a missionary text. Matthew had a missionary vision that compelled him to write what he wrote on mission. In this light, Bosch has argued that Matthew did not intend to write about the “life of Jesus” rather to give direction to a community struggling to figure out how it should understand its calling and mission.<sup>79</sup> It is generally accepted that Matthew writes for a Jewish audience. One of his major intentions is to let the Jews no longer regard themselves as a sectarian group but to boldly and consciously see themselves as the church of Christ.

### 2.3.2 Immediate Context

Matthew 28:16-20 simply put is a command Jesus gave to his disciples to continually make disciples. In terms of the structure and outline in light of this command, Ryan Phelps has argued that his work on the subject fits the passage best. According to him, “Matthew uses five lines to present this scenario. He first covers the characters and setting, then he moves on to the circumstances. He gives them motivation for their action, commands them what to do and how to do it, and finally closes with a promise that only God can make.”<sup>80</sup> Phelps went to state that Matthew presents his commissioning in a similar manner as the OT commissions of Exodus 7:1-5; Joshua 1:1-9; 1 Chronicles 22:11-16; and Jeremiah 1:1-10. Matthew also, Phelps continues, ends this section with a Moses-like statement, which also concludes each of the five teaching sections. Referencing Craig Evans, Phelps points out that “these statements may be quotes of Moses, phrases that sound like Moses, or an allusion to Moses. Through this he recalls the entire Gospel as he wraps up his book on discipleship.”<sup>81</sup> As the setting of the Great Commission was in Galilee on a mountain (Matt 28:16), it may recall the commissioning of Moses on the mountain. Here then we see Jesus as the “new Moses.”

In general, Matthew 28:16 and 17 form the setting of the commission, and verses 18 through 20 form the speech of the commission. In the situation of the commission, it is seen that the disciples compliantly went to the mountain as instructed by Christ (vs.16) and some disciples freely worshipped Christ and some disciples timidly worshipped him (vs.17). Verses 16 and 17 in other words are about the activity of the disciples. No doubt, the emphasis of this section is on Christ’s commission rather than his appearance. The rest of the passage, verses 18-20, is held

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<sup>79</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 58.

<sup>80</sup> Ryan Phelps, “The Great Commissioning: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20” (Course Paper presented at Liberty University, 2011), p. 17.

<sup>81</sup> Phelps, “The Great Commissioning,” p. 17.

together in terms of subject and sentence structure. This section outlines the speech of Christ which is made up of three sentences:

- “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me” (vs. 18)
- “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (vss, 19-20a)
- “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (vs 20b).

### *Outline*

Douglas Finkbeiner outlined Matthew 28:18-20 as follows:<sup>82</sup>

- Proclamation of his authoritative position [indicative]: Christological(vs. 18)
- Plan for his people [imperative]: missiological (vss. 19-20a)
- Promise of his enduring presence [indicative]: Christological (vs. 20b)

He went on to state that the Matthew 28:18-20 focuses on the commission; nevertheless, from the indicative statements came the power of the imperative. The truth of verse 18 requires obedience to the commission, and verse 20 encourages obedience to the commission.

### 2.3.3 Exegesis

Text – Matthew 28:18-20

Kai. proselqwno Ihsou/j elalhsenautoi/j legwnedotqemoi pasa exousia en ouranw kai epighj  
And Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Poreuqentej oun maqhteusate panta ta eqnh Baptizontej autouj eij to onoma tou patroj kai tou uiou kai tou agiou pneumatouj  
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>82</sup> Douglas Finkbeiner, “An Examination of ‘Make Disciples of All Nations’ in Matthew 28:18-20” *Calvary Baptist Theological Journal* (1991): p. 19.

didaskontej autouj threin panta osa eneteilamhn umin kai idou egw meq umwn eimi pasaj taj hmeraj ewj thj sunteleiaj tou aiwnoj  
and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age

#### Verse 18

Now take a look at the outline above. In the proclamation of his authoritative position, the statement in verse 18b shows how Jesus was conscious of his authority which gave him the prompting to give the command and commission. Jesus knew the level of authority and power he possessed. His authority and power is evident in all the gospels and the entire NT. In Matthew 9:6 Jesus claimed the authority to forgive sins. He also claimed that all things have been given to him by the Father (11:27). Therefore, the claim of authority in 28:18 “only heightens the reader’s understanding of Jesus’ authority. Jesus gives here a new dimension to the implications of his authority.”<sup>83</sup>

Because of some similarities or parallels between Matthew 28:18 and Daniel 7:14, some have considered Jesus as a fulfilment of Daniel 7:14. The words *edotqe- edothe* (Matthew “has given”), *ibhye- yehib* (Daniel “was given”); *panta-panta* (Matthew “all”), *olekw- wekol* (Daniel “that all”); *exousia- exousia* (Matthew “authority”), *naetels- seletan* (Daniel “dominion”); and *to ethna- to ethna* (Matthew “the nations”), *Uuayyamw -umayya* (Daniel “nations”) are common to both passages, and the trust focus of both passages is the activity of the Messiah. While Daniel 7:14 refers to Christ's Parousia (“arrival”), Matthew 28:18 refers to Christ post-resurrection glorification. Whatever arguments are presented about the affinity or lack of about these passages, it is clear, that both passages describe the exalted activity of the Messiah.

On this issue of the similarities between Daniel 7:14 and Matthew 28:18, Freeman has this say:

It is not clear whether the phrase *pasaexousia en ourano* (“all authority is given to me in heaven”) is drawn from Daniel 7:14. The majority of commentators believe that v. 18 is at least an echo of Daniel 7:20. Yet while Jesus fulfills the role of the “Son of Man” (Dan 7:13), there are also points of discontinuity with the Daniel passage. First, Jesus’ power is presently realized; it is not something attained at his future coming. Second, the interpretation of the vision in Daniel is nationalistic. It is to the “saints of the “Most High” to whom the kingdom is given, and to whom the other nations, their former oppressors, must submit (cf. 7:18, 22). In Matthew,

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<sup>83</sup>Hal Freeman, “The Great Commission and the New Testament: An Exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20” p. 16.

however, it is Jesus who rightfully deserves submission, and his authority forms the basis for making disciples of—not executing vengeance upon—the other nations.<sup>84</sup>

Matthew emphasises the authority of Christ and shows the continuity of his authority before and after the resurrection (vs.20). Christ emphasises that “All Authority” is his. He has Absolute Power that came from God (cf. Matt. 11:27; John 3:35). Christ authority being divine, gives him control of everything. As such, he is the Lord of the earth that is why his salvation is not limited to only one group or sect but to the entire world. His death was for the people of all nations. Christ then deserve our worship and reverence. “The universal and glorious position of the Lord is a key motivation for the commission which follows.”<sup>85</sup>

#### Verses 19

The next outline, “Plan for his people,” with such a divine authority and universal focus, the plan of Christ for his followers is to disciple all nations (Matt 28:19-20a). This unit rightly so has one imperatival clause which is followed by one aorist participle and two present participial phrases. According to Finkbeiner, this unit:

Shows the usage of the three participles and analyses the main clause and the two participial clauses. (1) Identification of the three participles. A key to understanding "make disciples" is to determine the relationship of the accompanying participles to the main verb. The aorist participle *poreuthentes* has been understood four basic ways: 1) as a parallel command to the main verb; 2) as a pleonastic participle with little or no significance; 3) as a circumstantial participle with no imperatival force; 4) as a preparatory participle. The first view sees the participle as parallel to the Old Testament commission texts or as a technical term for mission. The evidence for this view is questionable and unconvincing. The grammar mitigates against it; typically, a participle is grammatically subordinate to the main verb. In addition, Matthew uses parataxis imperatives in succession in his book (Matt. 8:4; 18:15; 19:21), yet chooses not to in this situation.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Freeman, “The Great Commission,” p. 17.

<sup>85</sup>Finkbeiner, “An Examination of ‘Make Disciples of All Nations,’” p. 23.

<sup>86</sup>Finkbeiner, “An Examination of ‘Make Disciples of All Nations,’” p. 23. See also Phelps, “The Great Commissioning,” pp. 24-29 for discussion on the “Command,” “Participial Functions” and “Participial Meanings.”

Finkbeiner in quoting Chukehas this to say:

That the *poreuthentes* ("go") is a participle of attendant circumstance with imperatival force, ie. a preparatory imperative. Although *poreuthentes* has imperatival force, Matthew has recorded it as a participle, preparatory to the main verb *mathateusate*, "make disciples." Thus the command is not fulfilled in the "go," nor is the participle one step in the process. The imperative is a "go and do" command. *poreuthentes ... mathateusate* is probably best understood as a constative aorist commanding the action as a single whole.<sup>87</sup>

In light of previous arguments and Chuke's summary, Finkbeiner concludes that the best translation is "go make disciples." This then is a command and commission which has to be fulfilled through evangelisation. However, as Acts 14:21 suggests, "to evangelize" (*euangelizesthai*) and to "make disciples" (*matheteuein*) are related but different activities. Finkbeiner rightly puts it that:

The command, in keeping with the teaching about a disciple in Matthew's Gospel, signifies the bringing of someone into a submissive, growing, living relationship with Jesus Christ.<sup>101</sup> This begins with conversion. This relationship is enhanced by a decision (baptism-declaration of discipleship) and a process of growth (teaching to observe--application of discipleship). The one who disciples is not making disciples of himself but is making disciples of the Lord. This activity becomes a paradigm for all disciples of all ages (not just the eleven) because the initial eleven were unable to fulfill this command and present believers still alive in the age prior to the consummation, in which age Christ is to be proclaimed as Lord.<sup>88</sup>

The focus on discipleship is vital in Matthew's gospel and to the gospel's concept of the church and mission. The most remarkable use of the word *matheteuein* -*matheteuein* is contained in Matthew's Great Commission (vs. 19). It is also in the Matthean account the verb is used in the imperative sense: *matheteusate*, "make disciples!"<sup>89</sup>In his contribution to this discussion, Freeman has this to say:

The only imperative in the commission is *matheteusate* ("make disciples"). Some conclude, then, that the participle (*poreuthentes*) with which the verse begins should be translated "as you go." Malina even argues that perhaps it should not be

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<sup>87</sup>Finkbeiner, "An Examination of 'Make Disciples of All Nations,'" p. 25.

<sup>88</sup>Finkbeiner, "An Examination of 'Make Disciples of All Nations,'" p. 27.

<sup>89</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 74.

translated at all. Based on the fact that “go” is a participle and not a finite verb he concludes, “Then to call the command a ‘*Missionauftrag*’ or a ‘*Sedungsbefehl*’ would be inaccurate.” Yet Rogers has demonstrated that in some instances where a similar construction occurs if the participle were not given an imperatival force, then the action indicated would make no sense. When a participle is linked with an imperative, the participle should also be given imperatival force. Clearly Jesus is directing them to go to all the nations and to make disciples, and it is entirely appropriate to describe this passage as a mission passage. They are commanded to go. The verb *matheteusate* is “characteristically Matthean.” It does not appear to emphasize an initial commitment to Jesus. The rest of the verse describes more of what it means “to disciple.” Discipling means teaching persons to observe that which Jesus has commanded.<sup>90</sup>

In contrast to the distinctiveness of the verb *matheteusate*, the noun *mathetes* “disciple” is common, at least in the gospels and Acts, for it is not seen in any of the other NT writings outside the gospels and Acts.<sup>91</sup> Comparatively, *mathetes* is more central in Matthew than the other synoptic gospels. *Mathetes* appears seventy-three times in Matthew, in Mark it occurs forty-six times, and in Luke it is used thirty-seven times. But more important than the difference in the frequency of usage of the word *mathetes*, among Matthew, Mark, and Luke is the difference in nuances of meaning:

For Matthew, the expression “disciples” does not refer to the Twelve only (as it does in Mark and Luke). It is used in a less exact way, although the Twelve are always presupposed when the word is used. Put positively, for Matthew the first disciples are prototypes for the church. The term thus expands to include the “disciples” of Matthew’s own time. His gospel is known, and for a very good reason, as the gospel of the church. The link between Jesus’ own time and the time of Matthew’s community is, in fact, given in the command “Make disciples!” (28:19). In other words, the followers of the earthly Jesus have to make others into what they themselves are: disciples. In the final analysis, therefore, there is, for Matthew, no break, no discontinuity between the history of Jesus and the era of the church. The community of believers of Matthew’s time does not constitute a new period a new period in the economy of salvation. The past relation between the Master and his first disciples is being transformed into something *more* than history-it aims at nourishing and challenging the present hour. Faith takes effect in what Kierkegaard has called *contemporaneity*, that is to say, in the unceasing yet irreversible recurrence of the foundational and exemplary history of the Master and his disciples. It is precisely this indispensable dialectic between the history of Jesus and the life of the church of his own time that justifies, for Matthew, the writing of his Gospel.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Freeman, “The Great Commission,” p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 75.

<sup>92</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 75.

Scholars have argued about the meaning and application of the phrase *panta ta ethna* -*panta ta ethna* (“all the nations”). Some believe it is the nations of Israel in Dispersion, some believe it is all nations excluding Israel, and others believe it is all nations and ethnicity including Israel. Freeman has limited it to two essential interpretations: First, is the belief that the phrase should be translated “all the Gentiles,” exclusive of the Jews to whom Jesus sent his followers in Matthew 10:5:

This interpretation is based in part on the belief that Matthew was written after Judaism and Christianity had parted ways and were no longer in conversation with each other. Some support for this view occurs in the reference to “the Jews” in v. 15. The significance of this commission for Matthew’s audience would be that the mission to the Jews has ceased, and Jesus now instructs his followers to turn to the Gentiles’. Meier has offered a thorough response to Hare and Harrington. He has shown that in at least three instances in Matthew the term denotes Jews or Israel. That Matthew saw an end to the mission to the Jews is hard to reconcile with 10:23. Against the insistence of Hare and Harrington that Matthew’s church has already moved away from Jews and Judaism, Levine states, “If Matthew’s church still follows the Jewish Law, uses the Jewish Bible as its anchor, has a nucleus of ethnic Jews, and accepts Jewish converts, then it is difficult to see in what way the first gospel depicts the rejection of the Jews.” There is no evidence from Matthew that “mission” efforts to Jews should ever cease.<sup>93</sup>

In Matthew we have the Particularity and Universality focuses. On the issue of *panta ta ethna*, Bosch states that:

Following through on the supposition that, for Matthew, the Jews have-by their conduct-forfeited the “right” to be preached to, some scholars (particularly those who believe that the author of our first gospel was a Gentile) suggest that these words refer to all nations *excluding* the Jews: those who had not been called before may now become Jesus’ disciples; those who had been called previously are now rejected.<sup>94</sup>

Bosch has joined many scholars who have written before him on this issue to declare that this is a misinterpretation of Matthew. In other words, the Jews are also among “all the nations.” But they are no longer:

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<sup>93</sup>Freeman, “The Great Commission,” p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 64.

A specially privileged people ... 'Israel' is no longer the 'church.' In what happened to Jesus, the ancient notion of 'Israel' has been raptured and God's eschatological community ushered on to the stage of history. All restrictions have been lifted. It is true that *ethne* in Matthew's gospel mostly refer to Gentiles only. But, in almost all these cases we have to do with either Old Testament quotations or material of non-Matthean origin. To this we must add that, where Matthew adds *panta*, "all," to *ta ethne*, and important nuance is added. Matthew uses *panta ta ethne* four times, and all of these are in the final part of his gospel (24:9, 14; 25:32; and 28:19), where the Gentile mission comes into focus ever more clearly.<sup>95</sup>

Most of the Gospel was concerned with the Jews, but by the close of it we see the universal agenda. When Matthew uses *panta ta ethna* in 24:9 it is without any particular but universal focus. Based on Matthew's agenda, although not prominent like in Mark and Luke, this researcher supports the third view that *panta ta ethna* refer to all nations – Jews and Gentiles. This understanding supports Jesus' ministerial agenda for his disciples to make disciples of all peoples everywhere, without distinction. The parallels to Matthew's fourfold use of *panta ta ethne* also suggest universality:

*Hole he oikoumene* (the whole inhabited world), *holos (hapas), ho kosmos* (the whole [human] world) and *pasa he ktisis* (the entire [human] creation). It is clear, then, that Matthew was simply trying to say that Jesus was no longer sent only to Israel but had, in fact, become the Savior of all humankind ... Therefore, despite his strong views on the hardheartedness of Jews, Matthew never doubts the continued validity of a mission to his compatriots. This remains the inalienable task of himself and his community; they continue to regard themselves as inwardly and outwardly tied to Israel ... Yet he is equally committed to the Gentile mission."<sup>96</sup>

The Great Commission is about fulfilling the ministerial agenda of Christ. Making disciples compels the Christian to bring without discrimination or prejudice all persons from all ethnicity and walks of life into a unique, obedient, and spiritual relationship to Christ. "And lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age". This statement places time limitation on the Great Commission, which is till the end of the ages. Thus, making the Great Commission of going into all nations with the gospel of Christ gospel to preach, baptize, teach and make disciples binding upon all believers of all generations till the close of the ages. Therefore, the Great Commission is as relevant to the Church today as when Christ first gave it to his disciples then.

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<sup>95</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 65.

<sup>96</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 65.

Verse 20

The concluding segment of the Great Commission talks about “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20). In Matthew’s understanding, “on the face of it, this ‘teaching them,’ together with the preceding ‘baptizing them,’ appears to be the real content of disciple-making, and therefore of mission.”<sup>97</sup> Bosch went on to state that, further, it appears to be somewhat different from mission in parallel passages in the other gospel accounts and in the Book of Acts. For instance, in Luke 24:47, the message to the nations is about repentance and forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. In Acts 1:8, the disciples are informed that they will be empowered by the Holy Spirit and be witnesses to the resurrection events. Similarly, in John 20:21-23, the disciples are promised the Holy Spirit, “and sent into the world by the risen Christ with the authority to forgive sins.”<sup>98</sup>

Jesus commissioned the disciples to “teach” - didasko. To his disciples, Jesus never preaches; he teaches them. Also among believers in the synagogues and in the temple, Jesus always teaches and never preaches.<sup>99</sup> It is important to note that:

For Matthew, teaching is by no means a merely intellectual enterprise (as it often is for us and was for the ancients Greeks). Jesus’ teaching is an appeal to his listeners’ will, not primarily to their intellect; it is a call for a concrete decision to follow him and to submit to God’s will ... Moreover, teaching does not merely involve inculcating the precepts of the Law and obeying them, as contemporary Judaism interpreted it ... No, what the apostles should “teach” the new disciples according to Matthew 28:20, is to submit to the will of God as revealed in Jesus’ ministry and teaching.

We are called to teach the people we encounter, to submit to the total will of God. Their entire being must be given to Christ. The new disciples are not called to be lukewarm followers of Christ. With regards to the command about “teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you” (vs. 20a), Phelps states that:

This crucial line of text provides two inferences. First, if the disciples were to teach everything Christ commanded them, then teaching their disciples to create other disciples would be part of this, and the command would be reciprocal. Second, if there is another command for evangelism within Matthew’s Gospel that is included as part of “all that I have commanded you,” then this would be a command for

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<sup>97</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 66.

<sup>98</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 67.

<sup>99</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 67.

evangelism. Because both of these conditional statements prove to be true, then believers at all times have a command to spread the gospel (evangelize) to unbelievers.<sup>100</sup>

In the Matthean account of the Great Commission, three words summarise the core and importance of mission – make disciples, baptise, and teach.

## **2.4 EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ALL NATIONS FULL GOSPEL CHURCH**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology of the research and explains how the study was conducted. According to Marilyn K. Pelosi, Theresa M. Sandifer and Uma Sekaran,<sup>101</sup> methodology in the context of research spells out how the research is conducted. It should be mindful of sampling sizes and techniques, the data collection procedure, and state the statistical tools used to analyse the data.

### **2.4.2 Research Design**

Jill Hussey and Roger Hussey have stated that, research design is the general approach to the research process from the theoretical involved in the collection and analysis of data.<sup>102</sup> Designing a study helps researchers to plan and implement the study in a way that will help them obtain the intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation.<sup>103</sup>

In the study of evangelism, church planting and growth, one can either choose quantitative or qualitative methodology or both. Knowing the popular methodology of one's area of academic concentration is very important for a positive grasp of the direction of one's work. This no doubt will result in genuine, rational findings and conclusions.

As John W Creswell indicated, methodology is a strategy or plan of action that links methods to outcomes which governs the researcher/writer's choice and use of methods.<sup>104</sup> Mostly,

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<sup>100</sup>Phelps, "The Great Commissioning," p. 3.

<sup>101</sup>Marilyn K. Pelosi, Theresa M. Sandifer and Uma Sekaran, *Research and Evaluation for Business* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2001).

<sup>102</sup> Jill Hussey and Roger Hussey, *Business Research* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 54.

<sup>103</sup> N. Burns and S. Grove, *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, Critique, and Utilization*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1997),

<sup>104</sup>John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative & Mixed Method Approaches* (2nd ed. Thousand Oaks. London. New Dehli, Sage Publications, 2003), 5.

scholarly research is categorized by the type of study conducted and broadly by the particular methodology employed to carry out that type of study.<sup>105</sup>

For every academic discipline, there is an accepted methodology documented<sup>106</sup> that is explained in the literature.<sup>107</sup> Creswell in an earlier work states that:

In the past two decades, research approaches have multiplied to a point at which investigators or inquirers have many choices. ... I recommend that a general framework be adopted to provide guidance about all facets of the study, from assessing the general philosophical ideas behind the inquiry to the detailed data collection and analysis procedures.<sup>108</sup>

The words of Creswell are still relevant. In fact, research approaches or methodologies are growing in startling proportion that one can rightly say that the superfluity and diversity of research methodologies in academe are confusing and challenging the academic novice.

The area of concentration for this thesis can use either of three research methodologies/approaches - quantitative, qualitative and mixed method.<sup>109</sup> In the quantitative approach, the researcher mainly uses:

Post-positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data.<sup>110</sup>

In the qualitative approach, the researcher mostly makes:

Knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed. with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative. or change oriented) or

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<sup>105</sup> John W. Creswell, *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2005), 61.

<sup>106</sup>L. R. Gay, G. E. Mills, and P. Airasian, *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2006); S. Isaac and W. B. Michael, *Handbook in research and evaluation*. San Diego, CA: EdITS publishers, 1981); P. D. Leedy and J. E. Ormrod, *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005); R. K. Yin, *Case study research: Design and methods* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publication, 1984).

<sup>107</sup>Y. Levy and T. J. Ellis, A systems approach to conduct an effective literature review in support of information systems research. *Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*,9 (2006): 181-212. <http://inform.nu/Articles/Vol9/V9p181-212Levy99.pdf> accessed March 25, 2016.

<sup>108</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

<sup>109</sup>Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

<sup>110</sup>Creswell, *Research Design*, 18.

both. It also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data.<sup>111</sup>

In the mixed methodological approach, the researcher has a propensity of basing:

Knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g., consequence-oriented, problem-centered, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information.<sup>112</sup>

Reviewing these three approaches in light of what this study entails, the mixed methodological approach is the choice that will encompass the entirety of this thesis because it captures the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In mixed methods approach, one may want to both generalise the findings to a group and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals. In this approach, in the one hand, the researcher can explore in general to understand what variables to study and then study those variables with a large number of interviewees. On the other, the researcher may first interview a large number of persons, then follow up with a few of them to glean their specific understanding and what they have to say about the topic. In such situations, the advantages of acquiring closed-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data is advantageous to adequately understand a research problem.

### **2.4.3 Population**

Population “refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, items, cases, articles or things with some common attributes or characteristics.”<sup>113</sup> It is all elements, individuals, objects and events, which meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>Creswell, *Research Design*, 18.

<sup>112</sup>Creswell, *Research Design*, 18 & 20

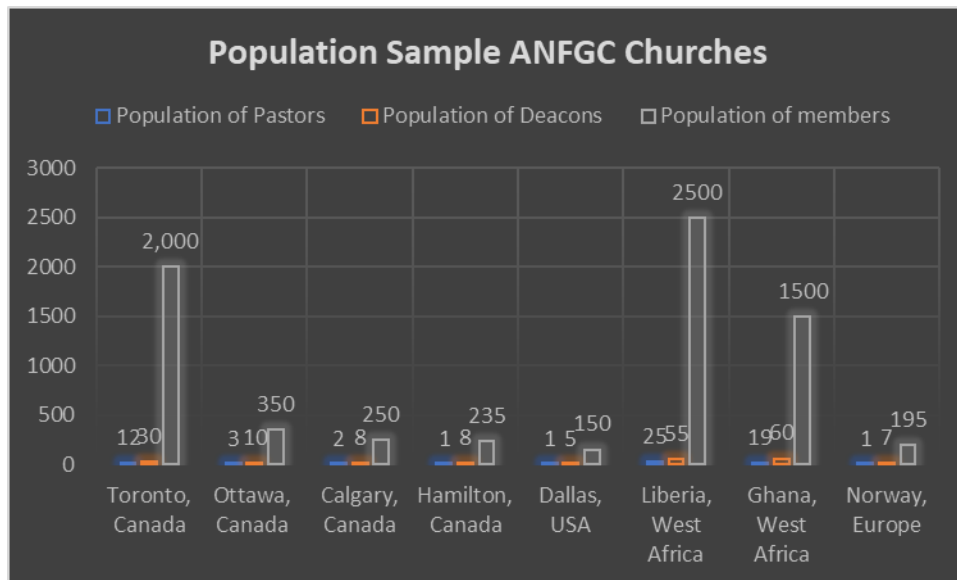
<sup>113</sup> A. Mugenda and O. Mugenda, *Research Method Dictionary* (Nairobi: ...

<sup>114</sup> N. Burns and S. Grove, *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, Critique, and Utilization*. 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1993), 779.

ANFGC has over one hundred and ten churches spread across most of the continents. The population of the field research was made up of the pastors, leaders and congregants of selected ANFGC churches in Africa, North America and Europe.

**Table 2 – ANFGC churches that received questionnaires**

Church	Population of Pastors	Population of Deacons	Population of members	Total
Toronto, Canada	12	30	2,000	<b>2042</b>
Ottawa, Canada	3	10	350	<b>363</b>
Calgary, Canada	2	8	250	<b>260</b>
Hamilton, Canada	1	8	235	<b>244</b>
Dallas, USA	1	5	150	<b>156</b>
Liberia, West Africa	25	55	2500	<b>2580</b>
Ghana, West Africa	19	60	1500	<b>1579</b>
Norway, Europe	1	7	195	<b>203</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>7180</b>	<b>7427</b>



#### 2.4.4 Sampling

The total sample size for each church branch was determined by using the Slovin's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Total population of each branch

e = Standard error whose value was taken at 0.05

The sample size for each section was calculated using the proportionate stratification formula as follows:

$$n_h = \frac{N_h n}{N}$$

Where:  $n_h$  = sample size for each stratum

$N_h$  = Population size for each section

N = Total Population of each branch

n = Sample size of each branch

The sample size of each branch under study was calculated and then the proportionate allocation of the sample to their various strata was calculated and presented as follows:

**Table 3 Sample sizes of the strata of the branches**

Branch	Pastors	Deacons	Members	Total Sample Size
Toronto, Canada	3	4	50	57
Ottawa, Canada	2	4	40	46
Calgary, Canada	2	4	40	46
Hamilton, Canada	1	2	30	33
Dallas, USA	1	2	20	23
Liberia, West Africa	1	2	20	23
Ghana, West Africa	2	3	30	35
Oslo, Norway	1	3	30	34
Grand Total	13	24	160	297

The random sampling technique was used to select the respondents of each stratum according to its sample size in each branch being studied.

## 2.4.5 Data Collection Methods

For Pelosi, Sandifer and Sekaran,<sup>115</sup> data collection methods are an integral part of the research method design. Data can be collected in various ways, in different settings and from different sources. Data are collected from either primary or secondary sources. Identifying the right sources for collecting data is a necessity in the completion of any research project. Relevant data sources provide requisite data that can minimize the risk of gathering irrelevant and unreliable data. In terms of primary data, they are “originated by the researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the research problem.”<sup>116</sup> Primary data are what researchers sourced directly from the study participant. Some of the methods are: interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, observation, and motivational techniques. Secondary data, on the other hand, are data that have been already collected and readily available from other sources like literature, the media and electronics.

The closed-ended type of questionnaire guide as instrument for the collection of data was used for this study. General questionnaire was made for the three groups of respondents – pastors, deacons, and members. In all of the dimensions, each group was asked to answer different set of questions as deemed appropriate to their positions, responsibilities and knowledge. Additionally, personal observations were conducted which were also included in the analysis.

Because the geographical distance between some branches that existed between the researcher and the respondents, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in each of the branches via e-mail. Each branch was dealt with separately. Some pastors interested in the data collection nudge their colleagues to expedite the exercise. The respondents after completing their questionnaires returned them also via e-mail attachment. These questionnaires are basis for the data analysis later in this chapter. Within the process of the distribution and collection of the questionnaires, personal observations were made simultaneously. Those observations were included in the analysis of the findings.

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<sup>115</sup>Pelosi, Sandifer & Sekaran, *Research and Evaluation for Business*, 20.

<sup>116</sup> Naresh Malhorta and David Birks, *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach* (London: Pearson Education, 2007), 94.

#### **2.4.6 Statistical Model for Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The data were collected and coded into the system during the data entry. The SPSS was programmed to process and analyze the data. The simple frequency percentage distribution was used to present, interpret, and discuss the data collected for the study. The explanation and views of respondents were also presented.

#### **2.4.7 Ethical Consideration**

Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison<sup>117</sup> emphasised the importance of maintaining ethical behaviour when carrying out research. This means that official and appropriate channels must be consulted, approvals must be sort and confidentiality of the data gathered must be maintained. In this regard, the researcher got approval and permission from all church leaders of the churches chosen for the field research to interview their members. In terms of the questionnaire, the researcher assured the participants that their responses would be kept anonymous and they would be strictly used for the purpose of this study. This approach, the assurance of anonymity and the use of their contributions for advancement of knowledge, encouraged the participants to be open and honest in their answers. They were confident that their answers would not come to hunt them as in some known cases.

#### **2.4.8 Presentation and Analysis of Data**

Empirical data was collected through quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data collection method employed the use of questionnaires, and the qualitative data method involved the conduct of interviews. In this section, tables on each of the questions of the questionnaire will be presented in percentile value to be followed by an analysis below the table:

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<sup>117</sup> Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (London: Routledge, 2000), 15.

Table 4. When did you become a member of ANFGCI?

When did you become a member of ANFGCI?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
1980s	20%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1990s	30%	20%	20%	20%	--	--	--	--
2000s	50%	45%	40%	35%	30%	10%	30%	20%
Total	100.0%	65.0%	60.0%	55.0%	30.0%	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%

Figure 4 - shows that all the branches experienced growth in the decades under study. Toronto the head church saw 100% growth. The other branches grew not as rapid as Toronto. The table also shows that membership was not fluctuating.

Table 5. Apart from being a member; Do you play any other role in the church?

Apart from being a member; Do you play any other role in the church?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Pastoral Role	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	3%	5%	5%
Lay leadership Role	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	3%	5%	5%
Volunteer	20%	20%	20%	10%	10%	5%	5%	10%
Total	35.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	11.0%	15.0%	20.0%

Table 5 – shows that 5% of the membership across the denomination play a role in pastoral ministry. Lay leaders supporting the pastoral ministry 10% are in Toronto and 5% in each of the other churches.

Table 6. How did ANFGCI start in your area?

How did ANFGCI start in your area?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
1 Evangelism & Church Planting	80%	80%	75%	80%	70%	80%	80%	80%
Total	80.0%	80.0%	75.0%	80.0%	70.0%	80.9%	80.0%	80.0%

Table 6 – projects that a majority of the members stated that it was through evangelism and church planting efforts that they came in contact with ANFGCI.

Table 7. What motivated the founder of your branch to come to your area?

What motivated the founder of your branch to come to your area?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Fulfilling the Call	90%	90%	80%	80%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Total	90.0%	90.0%	80.0%	80.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%

Tables 7 – shows that 85% of interviewees say that founder of their church branch came to them because the leader was fulfilling a spiritual call and mandate.

Table 8. How was the message received initially?

How was the message received initially?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
With Enthusiasm	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
With Reservation	30%	30%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

Table 8 – Tells that a steady number of 60% received the initial message with enthusiasm and pessimism. A fluctuating 25% were not that sure when they got the message initially. But at the moment of the survey they have been wholehearted enthused.

Table 9. Can you explain the general Mission Statement of ANFGCI?

Can you explain the general Mission Statement of ANFGCI?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Knowledgeable	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Little idea	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9 –Shows that a solid 80% of members all over the denomination know the denominations Mission Statement and were able to explain what it teaches. This is due to the fact that the Mission Statement is read every Sunday at the beginning of every worship service. It is now ingrained in their heads through this process. Also, there are brochures available that spell out and explain the Statement. There is a solid 20% of the membership that are not paying much attention to the Statement and were not able to fully explain it.

Table 10. What do you know about general founders and Senior Pastors of ANFGCI?

What do you know about the general founders and Senior Pastors of ANFGCI?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Spiritual Life	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Family Life	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Community Life	60%	40%	40%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

Table 10 – Demonstrate that 90% of those responded to the questionnaire knew a lot about their general overseas – Mr. and Mrs. Donkor’s impressive spiritual lives continue to encourage the members to stay in the church and get spiritually blessed. This reflects what has been discussed above about how the moral and spiritual life of the apostles played a major role in winning converts in the early church. 80% of the respondents were familiar with the family life of their general leaders and founders. As leaders leading by

example, the founders consider an impeccable and structured Christian family life is important. A mixed percentage of the respondents were aware of the founder’s humanitarian community involvement.

Table 11 Explain the role Evangelism and Church Planting plays in your denomination.

Explain the role Evangelism and Church Planting plays in your denomination	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
	Positive	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Less Positive	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Table 11 – 100% of respondents indicated that Evangelism and Church Planting played a crucial role in the establishment and growth of the denomination. It is their belief that the church would meet their growth projections as planned because of the ongoing Evangelism and Church Planting programmes in the different continents.

Table 12. What are the denomination's evangelism and church planting strategies?

What are the denomination's evangelism and church planting strategies?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
	Discipling and teaching	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Prayer & teaching service	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%

Table 12 – Whether the members are aware or unaware, this table shows that the denomination is indeed going according to the Great Commission. They are making and training disciples who in turn go out to promote the gospel.

Table 13. How is the Great Commission perpetuated by Matthew 28:19-20 understood and fulfilled in your church?

How is the Great Commission perpetuated by Matthew 28:18-20 understood and fulfilled in your church?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
	Discipleship & Mentoring	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%

Table 13 – This table shows that a solid 100% of respondents across the denomination know that fulfilment of Matthew 28:18-20 is mainly through discipleship and mentoring.

Table 14. Name and describe the different ministries in your church.

Name and describe the different ministries in your church.	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Cell Ministry Visitation Music Prayer Stewards	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 14 – Depicts the ministries of the denomination. The respondents explained the work of each ministry in light of the church’s objectives and mandate

Table 15. What are the branches or worship centres of ANFGCI?

What are the branches or worship centres of ANFGCI?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Branches in five continents	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Table 15 – The branches were named. This question was asked to see how the projected growth and church planting goal is being met. The respondents indicate that by the Grace of God things are moving in God’s direction.

Table 16. What are the para-church organisations of ANFGCI, and what led to their establishment?

What are the parachurch organisations of ANFGCI, and what led to their establishment?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
ANIDA	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
ANU	100.0%	100%	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 16 – It appears 100% of the respondents know about the two parachurch organisations being run by the denomination. They are the All Nations Development Agency (ANIDA) and the All Nations University

(ANU). ANIDA does humanitarian and people developmental projects. Children and women are mostly the beneficiaries of the welfare and educational programmes of ANIDA. The Agency has a Women’s Development Centre, Child Sponsorship, and Project Noah programmes. The University – ANU caters for students all over the world that are interested in a Christian based academic environment.

Table 17. How do these parachurch organisations carry the vision of the ANFGCI?

How do these parachurch organisations carry the vision of the ANFGCI?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Spiritual mentoring and Hospitality	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 17 – 100% of the respondents stated that spiritual mentoring and hospitality play a vital role in the pursuit of the denomination’s vision. Before beneficiaries are accepted into the programme, plans are put in place for their continuous spiritual welfare.

Table 18. What is unique about ANFGCI?

What is unique about ANFGCI?	Branches Responses							
	Toronto	Ottawa	Calgary	Hamilton	Dallas	Liberia	Ghana	Norway
Inclusivity and the quest to fulfil the Great Commission	100%	100%	100%					

Table 18 – 100% of the respondents wrote about the inclusivity of the denomination by ministering to all nations and status of people. In fact, the church came into being because of the quest to reach out to all regardless of their ethnicity or status in life.

### 2.4.9 Summary of Data Analysis

The study employed SPSS to analyse the church planting impact of All Nations Full Gospel Church. As indicated in Table 2, the population sample size comprises of 0.8% pastors, 2.5% deacons and 96.7% general members from 8 churches across the Denomination. Table 4 shows that the Denomination expanded in the 2000’s with the all branches showing at least 10% over the period. The discipleship aspect of the church planting model is highlighted in Table 5 where 5% of members in the various branches has played the pastoral role in their church. This implies that the leadership aspect of ANFGC strengthens the local churches. The empirical results show that majority of the members became members of the church through the founder’s evangelism and

church planting efforts and thinks the founder was fulfilling a spiritual call and mandate. The founders' impressive spiritual lives continue to encourage the members to stay in the church and get spiritually blessed. This reflects what has been discussed above about how the moral and spiritual life of the apostles played a major role in winning converts in the early church. 80% of the respondents were familiar with the family life of their general leaders and founders. As leaders leading by example, the founders consider an impeccable and structured Christian family life is important. Results for Table 11 indicated that 100% of respondents thought that Evangelism and Church Planting played a crucial role in the establishment and growth of the denomination. It is their belief that the church would meet their growth projections as planned because of the ongoing Evangelism and Church Planting programmes in the different continents.

Responses for the question on whether members know the Mission Statement showed that 80% of members all over the denomination know the Mission Statement and were able to explain what it teaches. This is because the Mission Statement is read every Sunday at the beginning of every worship service. It is now ingrained in their heads through this process. Also, the Mission Statement is explained in the weekly bulletin and other Denomination publications. All respondents stated that spiritual mentoring and hospitality play a vital role in the pursuit of the denomination's vision. That is because plans are put in place for their continuous spiritual welfare.

Table 12 shows that the denomination is indeed going according to the Great Commission. They are making and training disciples who in turn go out to promote the gospel while Table 13 table shows that a solid 100% of respondents across the denomination know that fulfilment of Matthew 28:18-20 is mainly through discipleship and mentoring.

A mixed percentage of the respondents were aware of the founders' humanitarian community involvement, but it appears 100% of the respondents know about the two parachurch organisations being run by the denomination. They are the All Nations Development Agency (ANIDA) and the All Nations University (ANU). ANIDA does humanitarian and people developmental projects. Children and women are mostly the beneficiaries of the welfare and educational programmes of ANIDA. The Agency has a Women's Development Centre, Child Sponsorship, and Project Noah programmes. The University – ANU caters for students all over the world that are interested in a Christian based academic environment.

All respondents wrote about the inclusivity of the denomination by ministering to all nations and status of people. In fact, the church came into being because of the quest to reach out to all regardless of their ethnicity or status in life. They felt that by the Grace of God things were moving in God's direction and the denomination was fulfilling its church planting goal and was on track to achieve the projected growth.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Both passages, Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 28:18-20 are Great Commissions that contain an imperative command to "go." The command to go in both cases denotes a call to mission which involves God's ultimate plan for the inclusion of all nations into his agenda. In the case of Abram, he must first bless his own people, and his people would in turn bless the other nations. Jesus blessed the disciples and they in turn through the dissemination of the Gospel have blessed the then nations. It is an ongoing responsibility. Both targets are inclusive in nature – "all nations." Since God is the God of the whole earth his salvation would be for the whole of humankind. Because He is the creator of all mankind. Therefore, it stands to reason that God's plan of salvation would include all peoples everywhere, in every nation. Just as through Abram and the nation of Israel the rest of the world should be blessed so through the disciples of Christ and the church all nations shall be blessed through the gospel. The Great Commission is time bound till the end of the age. Therefore, is as relevant today and binding upon all Christians as when it was first given to the disciples by the Lord Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING FROM THE EARLY CHURCH TO PRESENT

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter three is about how the early apostles carried out the Great Commission in the formative years, especially the first four centuries, of the early church. It is about the evangelistic drive of the first apostles leading to Paul's evangelistic work in the Book of Acts. Their successes and challenges are considered in order to find a paradigm. Although one must always be careful about distortions, the early Church still has much to say to our church today, and it is very crucial to be attentive to its messages and lessons, especially in evangelism and church planting.

In order for the church to be successful in evangelism and church planting today, it is proper to study chronologically how these efforts were carried out from the very beginning of the idea of evangelism and church planting to the contemporary. This chapter is organised in four sections. The first section, "Evangelism and Church Planting in the Early Church and Patristic," focuses on the evangelistic campaign of the early apostles leading to Paul's evangelism and church planting exploits as recorded in NT and in the writings of the Church Fathers. The second section, "Evangelism and Church Planting by Euro-American Missionaries," looks into the advent of the Euro-American missionary enterprise and their evangelical church planting strategies in Africa. The third section is about "Evangelism and Church Planting by Neo-Religious Movements," which studies the evangelistic and church planting strategies of the neo-religious movements. The fourth section, "Formation of All Nations Full Gospel Church", focuses on how the founder got born again, the passion for evangelism and how the ministry was shaped by the Great Commission. Then how reverse missionary work has benefited the church in the Western Hemisphere and the impact of ANFGCI globally.

### 3.2 Evangelism and Church Planting in the Early Church and Patristic

Evangelism, as G. W. Peters states, "must find orientation in the Bible, a return to the principles and practices unfolded in the Book of Acts is the only reliable answer."<sup>118</sup> No doubt, the New Testament has bases and clues for the foundation of a theology of evangelism and church planting in such passages as the "Great Commission" in the passages of the Bible we have dealt with above. In addition, the early Church patristic writings give us information on the activity, mission, and theological advancement of the early Christians.

The important questions to be asked here are: "How did the early apostles evangelise and develop the Church?" "Did their inspiration for mission come from God?" What were the evangelistic strategies that were used to institute the Church?" Should the founding and development of the church be attributed to 'the fullness of time' when the then world was prepared for the reception of the gospel? "The main trust of the Church is to propagate the gospel and win genuine converts. On account of the current growth and strength of Christianity, one can convincingly say that the Great Commission is being fulfilled by Christian disciples.

#### 3.2.1 The Necessity of Evangelism

For a while now, people continue to ask the following questions: "Why did the evangelisation of the church start at the Day of Pentecost?" Was it done because the disciples were obeying the Great Commission, or was it done in appreciation and commitment to Christ, or because of their love for sinners?"<sup>119</sup> William Weinrich, states that the early Church evangelised because it had no better option; it could not do otherwise.<sup>120</sup> With the endowment of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles had no better choice but to evangelise. Before Jesus' ascension in Acts 1:8, he spoke about the reception of the Holy Spirit by the apostles as their source of empowerment. This power from above bestowed upon the apostles the bravery, potency, and capability to found the Church on the Day of Pentecost.<sup>121</sup>

No one should disregard the reasons the apostles evangelised sinners, because these are the very reasons that relate to our understanding for spreading the message of Christ from Jerusalem to the end of the earth. In our understanding, the most obvious and remarkable appealing aspect in

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<sup>118</sup>G. W. Peters, *A Theology of Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 25.

<sup>119</sup>William C. Weinrich, "Evangelism in the Early Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, vol. XLV (1981): 64.

<sup>120</sup>Weinrich, "Evangelism in the Early Church," 64.

<sup>121</sup>Weinrich, "Evangelism in the Early Church," 64.

evangelising was the Christians' appreciation to God for eternal salvation. Milton L. Rudnick writes:

The early Christians were characterized by a compelling desire to offer others the incomparable blessing they had received through faith in Jesus Christ. What they had was simply too good to keep quiet about, too good to keep to themselves. Certainly, part of their motivation in sharing the Gospel was simply the natural delight related to bringing any kind of good news to others. It is rewarding to put smiles on people's faces and joy into people's hearts. The Good News of Christ, when believed, had that effect. The most prominent and compelling aspect of their motivation to evangelize was a high sense of privilege about this activity.<sup>122</sup>

However, Rudnick posits an interesting idea, that there is practically no mention of any exhortations or instructions to propagate the gospel of Christ in early Christian writings, and offers two possible explanations for this:<sup>123</sup>

- The impulse to spread the gospel was not considered important
- The impulse to spread the gospel was so strong and active, no encouragement was needed.

If attention is given to the rapid spread and development of the early church, it is apparent that the second explanation is correct. Rudnick went on to state that during the early centuries, "Christianity grew so rapidly that the chief agents of growth were, not the leaders of the church nor professional evangelists, but rather ordinary believers who shared the Gospel in the roles and relationships of their daily lives."<sup>124</sup>

Another factor that compelled the apostles to disseminate the gospel among the early Christians was the love for God and their neighbors as Rudnick opines, "the root of this sense of privilege about evangelizing was love—love for God and for the lost, based on His seeking and saving love for all."<sup>125</sup>

Another reason which might be given for the evangelism by the apostles is because of their enthusiasm and exigency to evangelize the lost. The ardent belief and signs about the second

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<sup>122</sup> Milton L. Rudnick, *Speaking the Gospel through the Ages: A History of Evangelism* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 29.

<sup>123</sup>Rudnick,*Speaking the Gospel through the Ages*, 28.

<sup>124</sup>Rudnick,*Speaking the Gospel through the Ages*, 28.

<sup>125</sup>Rudnick,*Speaking the Gospel through the Ages*, 30.

coming of Christ, compelled the apostles to accelerate the propagation of the gospel. Several factors were responsible for this motivation:

- Love for unsaved persons
- An apprehension of God's punishment for failing to publicly profess Christ and to evangelize the lost.
- The expectation of a future and everlasting recompense

Rudnick citing Clement of Alexandria states that these factors are spoken by Clement of Alexandria when he wrote: “Do you not fear, and hasten to learn from Him—that is, hasten to salvation—dreading wrath, loving grace, eagerly striving after the hope set before us, that you may shun the judgment threatened?”<sup>126</sup>

Michael Green states that, the leading force for evangelism by the early church was simply gratitude. The early church was just grateful because of the love of God. This love generated a loving response. In that regard, the early church, in an act of gratitude, dedicated themselves to propagate and disseminate their delight with those they encountered. The command Christ gave to "make disciples" was not the real appealing factor. The incarnation of Christ, taking human form, lived and equated with humankind and died on the cross in the place of humanity, more than anything else, is responsible for the urge to spread the gospel by the early Christians.<sup>127</sup>

The second motivation of the early church, Green speaks about, was born out of a devotion to duty or the nostalgia to live lives in proportion to the love that God had showed to humankind. Paul, for instance was much concerned not to displease the Lord. He struggled living out a faithful and satisfactory personal life in order to please God and not be ashamed before him.<sup>128</sup> Even though the early Christians did not take on forceful evangelisation for reward in heaven, they were conscientious in "living lives worthy of their calling" (Eph. 4:1). This, according to Green's view is another motivation to be a part of missions.

Finally, the early Christians were propelled to do missions because they did not want lost souls to go to eternity without Christ. To be in heaven will only be through Christ. Salvation cannot be achieved only by good works, as such, the apostles loving God and loving to see the lost spend

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<sup>126</sup>Rudnick, *Speaking the Gospel through the Ages*, 31.

<sup>127</sup>Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 243.

<sup>128</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 243.

eternity with Christ did not waste time, but went about preaching salvation as a gift that comes from God. Believing and receiving Christ as the ultimate solution in eradicating sin and restoring those who are lost and separated from Christ was the message of the apostles.

Christ gave to us the command that his gospel be preached to nations and peoples, because we are his ambassadors commissioned to spread the gospel. For the early Christians, evangelism was considered a privilege and an obligation to be fulfilled. As Weinrich puts it, “witnessing to the Gospel was not the work just of professional, full-time missionaries ... all Christians were taken up into the missionary endeavour.”<sup>129</sup>

The early Christians were the first to receive Christ’s command to proclaim the good news of his saving grace. What we have in extant today of any hint of the missionary activities are the writings of the early church. For instance, Eusebius wrote about a tradition wherein the apostles drew lots to decide where to go, what action should be taken and what to do.<sup>130</sup> Justin summed up the mission of the apostles by writing: “From Jerusalem there went out twelve men into the world; they were unlearned and had no ability in speaking; yet by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the Word of God.”<sup>131</sup>

After the apostles passed from time to eternity, the surviving Christians carried out their mission. Weinrich first mentions a group of workers he calls “wandering missionaries.” He writes: “Especially in the first and second centuries there were missionaries who believed themselves called by God to the task of evangelism but who do not seem to have been connected with any one congregation. These roving preachers did not stay long in any one place and usually were supported by gifts from host congregations.”<sup>132</sup>

### 3.2.2 The Early Church Evangelists

Starting from Chapter 6, "Conversion," Green turns from the gospel's message to the ones who carried the message - the messengers. So, we see in Chapters 6-9, Green exploring who the Early Christians were, how they functioned, and the reason for that. "Conversion" here shows the extent Christianity was a new idea in the then world, proclaimed by messengers who did things quite different from existing ethos. Judaism, as Green puts it "was conversionist--was striking enough

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<sup>129</sup> Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 65.

<sup>130</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 65.

<sup>131</sup>. Apol. 39. quoted in Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 167.

<sup>132</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 65.

in its Roman context. To some degree it anticipated what was to come. Christianity makes the skandalon of conversion absolutely insisting that even Jews be converted and accept baptism."<sup>133</sup> The level of personal transformation produced by true conversion was very crucial in fulfilling the church's mission. Green states: "once sever the fundamental root of conversion to Christ from the Christian message, and it becomes a broken and lifeless plant, however beautiful the flowers of Christian concern and social involvement it displays."<sup>134</sup> Green further explains that the deep personal change of conversion was produced by the working of the Holy Spirit and the Word. The Word, though adjusted in its presentation to the audience, had three essential ingredients:

- the person of Jesus
- the gift of reconciliation, and
- the expectation of concrete response

The reception of baptism, part of the new believer's response, was God's endorsement and evidence of conversion. In conclusion, Green discusses three contemporary objections to the call for conversion as it was presented by the early church. In that regard, he states that their universal message call for conversion was necessary to provide the Church with a distinct message and a motivated membership. The chapter closes with several individual conversion stories.

Green in the next chapter, "The Evangelists" gives us examples demonstrating the values established in "Conversion." No doubt, the gospel appealed to the people because the messengers conveying it showed true Christian attitudes and life. In this chapter, we see who's who among the early church's messengers, starting with professional or itinerant evangelists (wandering prophets, teachers, and apostles) who tried to replicate the preaching and actions of Jesus Christ. Green also included, presbyters, bishops, theologians and religious teachers in this group.

Discussing non-professional or non-itinerant evangelists, Green gives credit to them for the early spread and success of the gospel. In the beginning, Christianity was virtually in the hands of lay persons - every Christian was a dedicated evangelist, zealous to win souls for Christ. This no doubt contributed hugely to the rapid spread of Christianity to all and sundry. All classes in the society were reached. They heard and received the gospel.

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<sup>133</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 143.

<sup>134</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 147.

Evangelism not only occupied the life of the early believers, but through the faithful and dedicated lives of the messengers, it thrived and succeeded. The esteem for the gospel, blended with the moral consciousness and dedication of the messengers, were pivotal in the ministry of the early evangelists. This mindset and approach to ministry can be seen in many early Christian literature. Belief and practices were vital in evangelism - they go hand-in-hand and should not be separated for a fruitful evangelistic ministry. It is clear from the New Testament that infraction of the teachings and commands of God, and immorality were not tolerated among believers.<sup>135</sup>Coming to the conclusion of this chapter, Green discusses the characteristics of the new life in Christ - inclusive fellowship, transformed characters, joy, endurance, and supernatural manifestations of power - coupled with the gospel message, were very convincing to would-be converts.

The first Christians tell us about Jesus and their new-found spirituality and way of life in every possible way and place. They talk about them at synagogues, rooms and households. This shows the zeal, energy of the early evangelists, which invoked the attention of believers and non-believers, and as a result lives were blessed and transformed.

### 3.2.3 Advantages and Disadvantages to Early Church Evangelism

We again turn to Green for a better understanding of this subject. In the beginning, politics was a huge advantage for the early church. Through Augustus' unification of an empire that encompassed the Mediterranean, the appeasement of recalcitrant and citizens living in distanced parts of the empire, and his zest for infrastructural development, especially for building roads, provided enormous advantages to early evangelists. They were able to travel with ease from place to place. The gospel message was relayed expeditiously and at ease.

The popular, *Pax Romana* ("peace of Rome") was a timely advantage that coincided with the empire-wide diffusion of Hellenistic culture. Christian evangelists who knew and spoke Greek communicated and propagated the good news about Christ everywhere without any language barrier. Also, through the gradual eradication of old religious systems in the first century religiosity by existing Greek philosophical ideas, and the popular mystery cults that came into existence in response to the dying state religion, raised doubts in the minds of believers that Christianity later proved to wisely clear and provided answers. To the advantage of Christianity, some of the existing

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<sup>135</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 179.

cults thought their followers about guilt, self-determination, and the hope for life after death. These conveniently fit Christianity's cosmology and religiosity. Further, the dispersion of the Jews and acceptance of Jewish faith by the Roman government provided an added advantage to Christianity. "The Jews provided a preparation for the gospel; they accustomed the ancient world to the idea of proselytism, of conversion to an exclusive monotheistic religion."<sup>136</sup>

No doubt the timing was right for the coming of Christianity onto the religious stage. In those days the Romans were in control of the then Western world and expanded it into a colossal empire. The control and power of Rome was throughout the Mediterranean region. Infrastructural development of massive scale that made life better than before. Communication, travel and security provided an advancement of the gospel.

Socially, Rome was tolerant to the many cultures in the empire. The Romans even adopted the practices of many of the cultures and religions. As long as the non-Roman cultures did not challenge the power of Rome, they got along well. The tolerance of Rome allowed the cultures of other gods to coexist with the gods of the mystical religions and that of the monotheistic religion of Judaism. These religions, and the various Greek philosophical schools such as Platonism, Stoicism etc., and emperor cult were all tolerated and treated impartially. Their relation and treatment of the Rome state was crucial in keeping them in the "good or bad books" of the Romans. If they remained peaceful and cooperative, Rome did not notice. But if they involved in matters that would threaten the peace and morality of the state, then Rome was going to take action, and it was swift. "The Roman government was in practice tolerant of any cult provided it did not encourage sedation or weaken morality."<sup>137</sup>

On the issue of the disadvantages, that Green addresses in chapter two: "Obstacles to Evangelism," we discovered that although the gospel had a Jewish and Palestinian backgrounds, it affronted most of the worldview of Judaism. Top most of which was the belief in Jesus as the Messiah, a belief that the Jews found troubling. For the Jews, Jesus was/is not the expected Messiah. Another parting of the ways between Christianity and Judaism is Christianity's teaching that with Christ, Israel is no longer exclusively the chosen people of God. All those who repent and accept Jesus as saviour, irrespective of race and nationality, are God's chosen. Christians got rid of the ceremonial law which separated Jews from non-Jews. For the Christians, those laws were

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<sup>136</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 26.

<sup>137</sup>Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, London (UK, Penguin, 1967), 25.

not necessary any longer for salvation. Jewish law and worldview was challenged and reinterpreted by the Christians. These attempts and positions of the Christians no doubt left the Jews in limbo and made them feel that their faith had been hijacked and distorted by the Christians.

Christianity came in collision with especially the imperial heathen religious culture. Because the Roman, as mentioned above, was very tolerant of foreign religions and practices. It was not strange then to behold the practices of various religious traditions throughout the empire. Therefore, in such an inclusive and pluralistic religious environment, the Christians did not feel comfortable and saw themselves as out of place. The Christians refused to take part in and considered as evil: gladiatorial contests, crooked business contracts, the teaching of non-Christian writings and philosophies, or in paying obeisance to the emperor. The Christians refusal to pay obeisance to the emperor aggravated the Roman establishment and resulted in their persecutions until the time of Constantine.

The Christians seemingly anti-social and anti-religious behaviour was considered rebellious and an affront to the Roman establishment. Non-Christians also saw the worldviews of the Christians as strange and out of place. The story of the death of Christ, the encouragement of Christians of the marginalised and less considered persons in society, the unpleasant rumours about the underground meetings, and the false concepts about the Lord's Supper, were all slowing the advancement of the gospel. Although the Romans were tolerant, unfortunately Christianity was not seen as one of the many cults. Christianity was rather seen as a threat. In fact, it was considered offensive for Christ a "criminal" to be called the "Son of God" and the Messiah.

For several reasons, the Christians were seen as rebels. To start with, the Christian considered themselves as called-out.<sup>138</sup> Further, there was the issue about Jewish ethnicity. Jews were both living in and around Jerusalem, and non-Jewish communities throughout the Empire. In other words, Jews were found in almost every major city around the Mediterranean who were different from those living in Palestine. The Jews living outside Palestine have accepted the Greek way of life and were also exposed to them any different cultures and teachings among them.

At the beginning, the Christians were maintaining a relationship with the Jews in Jerusalem through the remittance of money, and were getting teachers from there to help them with their spirituality. As time went on, the Christians were eventually swayed by the Greek culture and philosophy which they willingly accepted and learned in order to be a part of the common and

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<sup>138</sup>Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals* 15:44.

prevalent culture. For some, as they became fluent in Greek, they were no longer able to speak their mother tongue. Because of this development, the Hebrew Bible had to be translated into Greek (called the Septuagint), the language they now understand, and this enabled them to read and study God's word. And it was these very Jews that became receptive to the Christian gospel and did all they could to propagate the Christian message. They also provided money and the necessary support for the spreading of the gospel to its divine target- the ends of the earth.

The message and practice of the early Christians was another contributing factor that effected the Empire. The preaching about only one true God who was above all other gods and powers seen and unseen, the message to love one another, the practice of "eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ," and meeting for fellowship in secret, contrary to the open meeting of the other religious traditions, caused the Christians to be targeted and falsely accused and misrepresented.

These false accusations and outrageous lies contributed to marginalised Christianity and set it at odds with the Roman authorities and other cultures. They were considered a strange group that did not fit into the cultural mix of the Empire. While the ridiculousness of these charges was recognized, they still caused great confusion in the Empire. The fact remained that although the Christians were different in lifestyle and worldview, they were a force to be reckoned with within the Empire.

#### 3.2.4 The Message Preached by the Early Evangelists

It is in place at this juncture to look at the message these evangelists preached. In a nutshell, the message of the early evangelist was about the good news of the forgiveness of sins and redemption through acceptance of and faith in Christ. The evangelists proclaimed the good news about the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus with great desire, vehemence and audacity. Their resolve that Christ came to reconcile humankind to God by his death, in that regard, Jesus is the solitary basis of salvation, was a crucial contribution to the expansion of the Christian message.

Looking at Green's chapters 3-5, "The Evangel," "Evangelizing the Jews," and "Evangelizing the Gentiles,"<sup>139</sup> we see a comprehensive discussion of the message the early church proclaimed to the then world. In Chapter 3, "The Evangel," we see a thorough evaluation of the ongoing theological pronouncements that the early evangelists were asserting a "heavily stylized pattern of the gospel," referred to as the "kerygma." This kerygma consisted of about a five to

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<sup>139</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 76-202.

seven-point message which was the accepted pattern of preaching followed by the early church.<sup>140</sup>This pattern of preaching was considered as the meeting of Christ that brought forth faith, and not any sequence of doctrinal declaration about a Jesus.<sup>141</sup>

However, this understanding did not sit well with Green's central theme of his book. He argues that the early evangelists portrayed different aspects of the gospel in context with their respective audiences. For instance, when the apostles preached to the Jews, they used and appealed to the Hebrew Bible their Jewish audience was familiar with and can easily relate to. This approach of course would not be relevant for non-Jewish audiences not familiar with the Hebrew Bible. For the Gentiles, the Lordship of Jesus Christ which has dominating powers in their life, appeals to them rather than Messiahship as proclaimed by Jews.<sup>142</sup>

No doubt that the proclamation of the "good news" about the advent, death and resurrection of Christ is in essence the NT's most common pattern in disseminating the Christian message. Outside Christianity, the word *euaggelion* referred to "good news" of military victory or the announcement of the birth of an emperor. In Christianity, the *euaggelion* referred to several events about the birth of Christ, his incarnation, resurrection, and so forth.<sup>143</sup>In contrast to the Gospel of Luke's use of the word "witness" meaning eye-witnesses who participated in the events of Jesus' life, the general Christian perception of "witness" refers to the people in the events about which they are talking about. The early evangelists were flexible in presenting the message about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in the context of their audiences' situations. A clear proof then that the early evangelists proclaimed a message that was tactically formulated and sensitive to their hearers' situations.<sup>144</sup>

Chapters 4 and 5 of Green's book, "Evangelizing the Jews" and "Evangelizing the Gentiles" we see the wisdom of the early church in structuring the gospel to address the situation of the different hearers they encountered. This strategy follows the German *Sitz im Leben* ("Life Setting") contextual application. As such, when dealing with the Jews, the church used and related to the Hebrew Bible which their audience were accustomed to and could easily understand. In similar vein, quotations and references from the Hebrew Bible are translated and interpreted in the NT as

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<sup>140</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 61.

<sup>141</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 61.

<sup>142</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 48.

<sup>143</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 70.

<sup>144</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 77.

having being fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in the experiences and encounters of the early church. OT passages about the messiah were interpreted in the NT as referring to Jesus as the messiah who has fulfilled that role. No doubt, it was a tough theology to promote because the Jewish understanding of the task of the messiah was different from that of the NT's concept which was mainly about spiritual deliverance and salvation. During that time there were also messianic discussions and expectation among several groups. For instance, the sect in Qumran held a very high expectation of the coming of the messiah. As such, the sect collected proof texts from the Hebrew Bible to support their view and expectation. The work of Qumran, no doubt provided a rich source of information about the messiah for the early church which the latter readily adopted.

The evangelists were not seen as preaching and teaching some end time doctrine and extreme spiritual overhaul. If that was the case, their message would be the same as the many existing cult religions of the day. Instead, their message was rather put in the "Life Setting" of the people they evangelised using the message of Jesus Christ. Jesus was the subject and focus of their message. When the people understood the life and mission of Jesus, then they were able to understand the message that was being preached. The evangelists proclaimed Jesus as the son of God, who fulfilled Israel's hope of the expected messiah. It was Jesus who brought about a change in understanding the relationship between God and humankind which made sincere repentance and forgiveness a possibility. As such, it was then by understanding Jesus and his mission that the Christian would begin to perceive the message of Christ's gospel.

Jesus Christ apart from preaching a new spiritual life and direction in God, also preached about a new death. Death is inevitable, like today, it was the common factor that all persons are aware of. In Jesus, the people were offered a new theological understanding that even death, that was considered and still consider "the terror," was not the end. They were taught that sincere and true believers are sure to die but would live in God. As such, the fear of death was hugely assuaged because it could be overcome. The people now have hope in a future and better life beyond death. The message was compelling and attractive – the death of Christ was to save humanity and eliminate the terror of death. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, provided the opportunity for humanity to be reconciled with God. In this regard, the message of the life and ministry of Jesus was crucial in the proclamation of the evangelists.

The Apostle Paul considered it a stupidity and a misfortune for those who do not understand the mission and message of Christ (1 Cor 1:18-24). If they followed Christ, they would know that

he is the power and wisdom of God. The non-Christians and those refusing to accept Christ were imprudent and were misled. Such a message about the power and importance of Christ obviously impacted and threatened the reigning Roman government, and relegated Judaism. This situation brought untold sufferings and challenges to the Christians. Because of the belief and hope they had in Christ, the Christians were ready to accept whatever befell them. They did not count the cost.

The evangelists on the basis of their hope in Christ vehemently and zealously proclaimed the message of the Risen Christ without fear or reservation. Because it was through the preaching and message of Christ, the only way their hearers would better understand the new direction. Indeed, “the early Church did not understand mission as a merely human action done in response to the good things God has done, Mission was perceived christologically – as God acting for the salvation of fallen mankind, but God acting only in union with mankind.”<sup>145</sup>In similar vein, Harnack’s discussion on the three stages of the mission preaching about Christ in the early Church is relevant to this point.<sup>146</sup>The first stage he discussed was that the kingdom of God is at hand and it was time for repentance. This message was appropriate and relevant to the Jews that were longing for such a kingdom. The Jews were expecting a political and earthly kingdom. They were waiting for a messiah that would come in a military fashion to overthrow the Roman government. Indeed, when the Jews realised that the Jesus’ concept of the messiahship and kingdom of God was contrary, dissimilar, and the type of earthly kingdom they were expecting was not going to happen, they angrily turned against Christ. Rightly speaking, “mission...is to proclaim the imminence of the kingdom of God, to awaken a sense to the other world – the city God has prepared for us – which is our homeland, where we truly belong.”<sup>147</sup> This was exactly the message, backed by biblical texts that the evangelists proclaimed.

The second stage of preaching Harnack discussed is about the messiahship of Jesus, which was the main point of the Gospel of Mathew. The lineage in the gospel, reveals how Jesus fulfilled OT prophecies. The gospel also tells about Jesus’ teaching and healing powers. In the incident of his Jesus’ baptism, God’s voice was heard endorsing the Sonship of Jesus and God confirming his pleasure in Jesus. No doubt, to the Jewish community, placing Jesus at the highest spiritual

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<sup>145</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 62.

<sup>146</sup>Harnack, *Expansion*, 76.

<sup>147</sup> Andrew Louth, “The Church’s Mission: Patristic Presuppositions” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44, no 1-4 (1999): 655.

pedestal, was blasphemy and to the Gentiles who were novice, the message was foolish. There was no doubt such a message was never heard of before. No religion of the day ever made such a proclamation. The Hypostatic Union of Christ (Jesus both divine and human) and eventual salvation of humanity through his death and resurrection, is exceptional. Such a unique message that no previous or existing religion has proclaimed, was an advantage to the evangelists. People were excited and longing to belong. They were looking for an authentic religion that gave sincere hope and redemption. The salvation and redemption Jesus offers is inclusive, non-discriminatory without barrier. Now, all peoples - both Jews and Gentiles – are part of this new dispensation. Every nation and ethnicity can now claim the salvific opportunity of Christ. Such a message was too good for the evangelists' audiences to dismiss. So they took advantage of it. Hence, the evangelists made great strides in establishing the Christian faith.

Harnack, in stage three, wrote about the interpretation of the OT, as a fulfillment of Jesus Christ, which no doubt transformed the insight and understanding of the OT. The interpretation of Christ as the fulfilment of the OT greatly transformed the understanding and interpretation of the OT. In Jesus' interpretation of the Jewish scripture, he emphasised that the OT was not an enough source to only follow, but it must also be internalised by recipients and readers in order to effect a complete change of life and direction. As Matthew 5 teaches, it is not just about obeying the law but to actually act in a way that shows a change. These changes create a new person who is expected to live in a way that is radically different from others around him or her. Obviously, such a message was in vast contrast to existing teachings and religious understanding. Therefore, the Christians found themselves in conflict with the OT and the establishments of the then world. The Christian teachings contravene established and existing heathen and Jewish norms. This was vital at this time when many of the pagan religions were continually encouraging and promoting fervent immoral and unethical practices. Such practices were condemned and avoided by Christians. The Christians instead taught moral and ethical standards of living that put them on a respectable and honourable platform.

Through these identified stages the Christian message was successfully proclaimed and souls won. As in all outcomes of any message delivered, there are different levels of acceptance. Groups accepted what was relevant and applicable to them. For example, the message about the long awaited messiah would resonate with the Jews, but this would not be as strong for the Gentiles

for whom the teaching of a radical repentance and acceptance of Jesus would have a greater appeal. In the final analysis, Jesus was the main object of the early Christian message.

Although, the early Christians did their best to base the Christian faith on the Hebrew Scriptures, the Jews were still not satisfied with their attempt and were strongly opposed to every efforts of the Christians to be a vital part of the religious establishment. The Jews did not accept Jesus as the fulfilment of the promised messiah because he did not meet their traditionally held messianic expectations. Jesus' death, for instance, did not rival or fit the political triumph commonly expected of the Jewish messiah. His method of death was the one preserved for a criminal and not for a messiah. In addition, Jesus' birth by a virgin, brought to mind the pagan myths about a god born of a virgin. On these premises of clear disagreements between expectation and fulfillment, the early Christians showed outstanding knowledge and expertise in interpretation of the Bible to fit their message of salvation through Christ. For instance, the resurrection and ascension of Christ was used to abrogate the crucifixion that suggested the weakness and vulnerability of Christ. Indeed, the resurrection and ascension proved Jesus' power over death.

Although the Christians did their uttermost best to appeal to their fellow Jews, the success with Israel was not that much. The Jews tenaciously held to their religion which was considered as a unique part of their culture. They were suspicious of the Christians. Christianity was a new sect which to some Jews came with a "strange religion." This new religion was intending to annihilate and replace the Jewish faith. For the Jews this was a radical move. Especially when the leader of the Christians did not meet the expectations of long held Jewish traditions.

However, the Christians were more successful with Gentiles. The Christian mission to Gentiles benefited from the same comprehensive understanding the gospel and the culture that defined the effort with Jews. The Christians transmuted the Jewish idea of God's coming kingdom into a concept more amiable to the Gentile understanding, for example, the lordship of Jesus. The Christians were flexible in their approach to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not discriminated against. They were seen as persons created and loved by God. The universality and non-discriminatory emphasis of the message of Christ, without a doubt resonated and appealed to persons of all classes.

On the chapter, "Evangelizing the Gentiles,"<sup>148</sup>Green ends up with the assumption that the Christians' determination to die for their beliefs coupled with their skilfulness in contextualising

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<sup>148</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 143.

their faith to fit in Gentile worldview is responsible for the gospel's advancement in the non-Jewish world. Taking into consideration the biblical evidence of how the message was contextualised, the researcher agrees with Green. However, Green acknowledges that this contextualisation may have been overdone, altering the Christian message into something sub-Christian resulting in syncretism. But, as a whole, the early Christian tact and skilfulness has given Christians of many generations a paradigm to follow.

For example, Paul's message to the Athenians (Acts 17:21-32) was contextually formulated. The speech which was very much like classical rhetoric was skilfully delivered. Paul wisely started with an acknowledgment of the Athenian religiosity as a means to captivate their attention and took his point of departure by making reference to an altar to an "Unknown God" which he informs and transforms into the Creator of all things and of all people. This "No longer Unknown God" is the one who rules over the whole world and who now demands repentance of all. He has revealed his will about a day of reckoning when Jesus Christ will be Judge. He has proclaimed a sovereign creator, the one and only God, who has determined, a judgment day. Jesus is the appointed Judge, as shown by his Resurrection. There is no room here for the charge against Paul of promoting new deities. Great opportunity arose and Paul made a masterful exposition of God's place and power in human history. Here Paul has given the proof of all his claims in the address that seemed new and strange to them.

This speech has been vastly considered as a model for a Christian approach to non-Christians in the entire mission of the church today. Paul found common ground with his audience in his language and expressions. From this speech all evangelists are called upon to learn how to relate biblical truth in culturally relevant ways, and how to formulate a theological defence that retains its value without compromise. The speech echoes "Acts 1:8a: "you shall be my witnesses..." in the sense of how a Christian should be a witness to the Gospel in areligious pluralistic setting. Paul contextualised his message by quoting Greek poets (Arius and/or Cleanthes) that were familiar to his audience.

Jesus and Paul were able to contextualise their messages because they were familiar with the cultures of their time. This should be borne in mind as Christians interact with other religions. We cannot effectively address what we do not understand. For effective and productive contextualisation, we must do our best to understand the culture in which God has placed us.

### 3.2.5 The Evangelistic Strategy of the Early Christians

It is believed that there is no reliable documentation to indicate that Christ's apostles ever sat down and figured out an elaborate evangelical enterprise to Christianize the Roman Empire. Rudnick believes that the evangelisation of the Roman Empire was spontaneous - it just happened! Although it cannot be said that the early Christians sat down and planned their evangelical strategy, but they were prompted by the urgency of the gospel and their calling.<sup>149</sup> It could be rightly said that Rudnick provided the appropriate summary of the evangelistic methods of the apostolic and early post-apostolic age:

As we examine the evangelistic activities and ventures reported in Acts, we do observe certain consistent patterns: (1) They concentrated their efforts on major centers of influence, the great cities of the empire (Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, and Rome, for example). (2) In virtually every location they began their outreach with those who were best to be prepared for their message—the Jewish religious community and those Gentiles who were drawn to Judaism. Apparently they expected the faith to spread from these centers to the outlying areas by means of the established channels of transportation and communication. (3) They gave immediate ownership and responsibility to the new believers, expecting them to keep the faith going and growing in their midst under their new leadership. (4) The evangelists kept in touch with their new churches by means of letters, messengers, and personal visits and put these churches in touch with one another. The purpose of these contacts was to supply encouragement, nurture, guidance, and correction as needed, as well as to maintain a sense of the whole body of Christ.<sup>150</sup>

It was by the second century that the clergy started taking the lead in establishing Christian churches.<sup>151</sup> Four distinct patterns of operation have been identified by Glenn Hinson:

- Sometimes a bishop or group of bishops consecrated another bishop and sent him to evangelize and to organize a group of Christians.
- Sometimes a bishop sent presbyters or deacons to organize a Christian community.
- Sometimes the bishop or bishops nearest at hand gathered with an already existing congregation and instructed them until they could elect a bishop or presbyter who would be consecrated or ordained to complete the constitution of the church.

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<sup>149</sup>Rudnick, *Speaking the Gospel through the Ages*, 30.

<sup>150</sup> Rudnick, *Speaking the Gospel through the Ages*, 36.

<sup>151</sup> E. Glenn Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Church*, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1981), 41.

- Sometimes a bishop himself evangelized and instructed converts until he had prepared a suitable candidate or candidates to carry on after him.<sup>152</sup>

Evangelisation of those considered non-religious was brave and forceful during times of little persecution, and during heavy persecution it was done in secret.<sup>153</sup> By the last half of the third century, the Church became increasingly well-structured and organised. The turning point in Christian history was the conversion of the emperor Constantine. This achievement gave the church the opportunity under the protection of the Roman government to begin formalising and organising their efforts to propagate the gospel and expand the faith to desired regions.<sup>154</sup> Hinson rightly puts it: “The expansion of the church under these favourable conditions entailed considerable attention to organization, the object of which was systematically to place churches in every nook and cranny of the Empire and to avoid neglecting the smaller villages and out-of-the-way places.”<sup>155</sup>

Different methods and ways were used to get the gospel message across to the non-Christians of which public preaching of the gospel in the synagogue and open market places, was the most common way.<sup>156</sup> Personal testimonies by individual Christians about their faith journeys to unbelievers most times proved very effective.

As already stated above, the believers’ high moral standards and their blameless lives was what first caught the attention of unbelievers.<sup>157</sup> In a Roman community that was overwhelmed with all sorts of lewd and immoral behaviour, Christians stood out because their moral and decent lifestyles made them noticeable. “There was something about their fellowship they shared with one another, something about their clean moral standards, something about their joy and endurance even when they were horribly persecuted, which attracted unbelievers to the Christian faith.”<sup>158</sup> In sum, the high moral values and lifestyle of the early Christians played a great part in their evangelistic success. The unbelievers were impressed with the behaviour of the Christians that the (unbelievers) were trying to find out how the Christians were able to “stand tall” in the midst of debauchery and indecency.

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<sup>152</sup>Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Church*, 41-43.

<sup>153</sup>Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Church*, 43.

<sup>154</sup> Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Church*, 44.

<sup>155</sup>Hinson, *The Evangelization of the Roman Church*, 44-45.

<sup>156</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 70.

<sup>157</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 70.

<sup>158</sup>Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 178-193.

The demonstration of love through charity was an effective method to introduce the unbelievers to the practice of Christian love. The Christians gave alms to the needy, cared for widows and orphans, the sick and infirm, slaves, supported those who were unemployed, caring for slaves, and providing burial services to the poor.<sup>159</sup> Indeed, the “active charity is the very ‘stuff’ of the Christian life, and with great probability works of charity provided the early Church its best opportunities for mission.”<sup>160</sup> The practical demonstration of love through acts of charity gave authenticity to their message of love and that validated the salt of the earth.

Green in his final chapter, "Evangelistic Strategy," explained the intention of the early Christians to propagate the faith along commercial routes that connected the cities in the Roman Empire. This was an attempt to carry the message to where the crowd and people of various cultures are encountered. As such, the Christians established connections in cities for their intended evangelistic campaign. So, one sees that from the metropolis the gospel message found its way gradually into the rural areas. This effort paid-off because by the Second Century, Christianity was reaching territories that Judaism had not reached.

Green attributes this successful progression to Paul’s shrewd evangelistic strategy that maximizes the Apostle's time and energy. For Green, Paul chose Roman administrative centers, prominent Greek and Jewish cultural areas, and commercial areas to begin maiden Christian communities. It is known that Rome was Paul's definitive strategic destination for eventual world evangelisation.

An interesting factor Green discusses in this chapter is the role which Christian eschatology played in motivating evangelism. Eschatological urgency, which has always urged Christians to expedite their work, was not the only factor working in the Church's formative years. The belief that the universal propagation of the gospel was a requirement to be fulfilled before the end of time, also provoked urgent evangelistic campaign. Thus, stoking the flame and passion for soul winning. It served as fuel that kept them going everywhere with the gospel message. They shared it with passion and fervency that made their message compelling.

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<sup>159</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 72.

<sup>160</sup>Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” 72.

### 3.2.6 The Growth of the Early Church

One of the first modernist scholars who attempted to discover the cause of the growth of the church by examining in detail the NT and early patristic records, is Adolph von Harnack. His book,<sup>161</sup> is believed to have set the standard for modern scholarship on early church growth. After posing several questions aiming at discovering the reasons for such an explosive growth in the early church, Harnack concluded that the growth occurred because Christianity included people of all echelons of society, especially the common and ordinary people, and formed them into a loving and vibrant community which addressed the needs of a communal existence.

Further, Christianity provided theological answers to the burning and controversial questions of life. They encouraged people and created an outlet to express those challenging questions of life and afterlife. This was done through liturgical activities and through a committed membership in a community that bonded together and protected the believers against a hostile world. Harnack assumed that these militating forces of life were powerful agents that swept across the Roman Empire and filled a void in an antagonistic and syncretic society. “From the very outset Christianity came forward with a spirit of universalism, by dint of which it laid hold of the entire life of man, all its functions, throughout its heights and depths, in all its feelings, thoughts and actions. This guaranteed its triumph.”<sup>162</sup> No doubt, universalism and inclusivism made the church to flourish in a hostile world because it was able to provide satisfactory answers to the mounting and challenging questions of human life. By so doing, the church succeeded in bonding people together. And as the message of the Gospel progressed from its Jewish roots to a more “Hellenized” form, it was made more attractive, appealing, comfortable and explainable.

But can we completely base the growth of the church solely on the ability of the apostle to provide answers to their audience’s life situations as Harnack is putting it? The researcher believes it is well beyond that idea and would like to agree with Green that the Church grew because of the clear Christocentric nature of the message that was appealing to the people.<sup>163</sup> The personality of Christ evident in his ministry and revolutionary worldview attracted people to the message of salvation. The apostles were zealously promoting the message of salvation in Christ because of the hope they had in him. The message presented was unique if even it sounded similar to what

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<sup>161</sup> Adolph von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (Williams and Norgate, 1908) a translated by OCR, 2009.

<sup>162</sup> Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, 406.

<sup>163</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*.

other religious traditions were propagating. As such, the message attracted many followers due to the life changing power of the gospel.

The Lord has been great and beneficial to the church, so the members in gratitude saw a sense of responsibility to spread the good news of their new found glory and blessing. That is why some scholars argue that there was no elaborate plan or strategy, but rather ordinary Christians showcasing themselves and their belief in Jesus.<sup>164</sup> The people see the sincere dedication of the Christians in their way of living, and determination to go all out to protect the integrity of the gospel message. They did not count the cost. They made sacrifices and were not afraid to lose anything for the sake of Christ. The people the Christians were preaching to saw this commitment, sacrifice and willingness of the church members to the point of even giving up their lives for their faith in Jesus Christ. This was compelling to make the foulest sinner repent and come to Christ. Their faith in Christ was irresistible and contagious because it was genuine, and their commitment was unto death.

This ardent belief of the Christians was a powerful witness that was combined with a drastic transformed life in Christ. The Christians led a high moral life and lived an exemplary life that was fashioned according to the message of the gospel they were preaching. They did not only tell people to do what they were saying, but they themselves lived-out the message of the gospel. This made the early Christians authentic and successful in their evangelistic campaign. Their outstanding moral living was an evangelical tool in itself. Our character speaks loudly for us. So, when Christians went out with dignity, respect and above reproach, their message was received, and they had positive response.

Evangelism was the main channel of witness and was their main source to get the message of Christ, whom they have accepted and was their pride. Green stated that: “in the first two centuries or so of the Church’s existence we find many faults, much which dishonours the name they professed. But we also find an evangelistic zeal and effort, exerted by the whole broad spectrum of the Christian community to bring other people to the feet of their ascended Lord and into the fellowship of his willing servants.”<sup>165</sup> The life and message of the Christians greatly influenced the successful outcome of their ministry. For the Christians the response they received on a whole was considered success. Whatever method they used brought positive result and the

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<sup>164</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Chapter 9.

<sup>165</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 280.

church grew. But we cannot leave out the profound truth that the high moral life of the Christians amidst debauchery and apathy, played a crucial role in growing the church.

Scholars are still emphasising the point that for evangelism to succeed, the life of the evangelist must outwardly portray the message of the gospel. It was this mindset that enabled the church to grow. The early Christians took advantage of their unique situation. At the time people were getting tired of deception and credibility of the existing religions and cults. The people wanted a new way. Christianity offered that way in sincere words and actions that supported the message of the gospel. It may be that the rapid growth of the Church was not because the Christians consciously strategized their evangelical approach, but rather it was the shortcomings and spiritual misdirection of the society that they identified in comparison with the Christian message that prompted them to take advantage of the situation.

Rodney Stark, in his contribution on the reasons for the growth of the early church, came up with some vital findings.<sup>166</sup>For Stark, the growth of the Church could be understood through demographical and sociological models. He argued that through the use of such models, that one can prove that the Church grew on the basis of demographics. Stark believes that factors like increased birth rates, increased survival rates in times of epidemics, liberation of the marginalised such as women, children and slaves, gave rise to a high church growth as it spread throughout the then world. The Christians played part especially in saving lives during epidemics, and in protecting and caring for the marginalised. It stands to reason that these groups are going to join the Christian faith in gratitude. Stark, then went on to combine this with recent statistics and theories on contemporary church movements to substantiate the early church data which he remonstrated from major sources. Again, like Green, Stark believes that the early church evangelism was not structured and strategize at a meeting or on paper. The early Christians took advantage of “an intense community, able to generate ‘invincible obstinacy’....yielding immense religious awards.”<sup>167</sup> These rewards one could attest were evident in the growth of the church, in spite of the militating factors that arose to stall and annihilate the churches progress in its maiden years. All said and done, nothing was able to preclude the church from growing as the Lord intended. It grew beyond expectation.

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<sup>166</sup> Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>167</sup>Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 208.

### 3.3 Evangelism and Church Planting by Euro-American Missionaries

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

Most missionary agencies attribute missions to Jesus' Great Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). Christianity in Africa, "is neither a recent happening, nor a by-product of colonialism, but goes back to the Apostles' very time."<sup>168</sup>

Christianity, according to Prince Conteh:

Came to Africa shortly after the death and resurrection of Christ. Christianity is believed to have been brought to Egypt in the year 42 AD by St. Mark the writer of the Gospel of Mark. In the first six hundred years of Christianity, it spread far and wide in North Africa reaching Morocco. It also reached the Nile Valley to what is present day Sudan, and to Ethiopia. Most likely, by the start of the seventh century, one-third of Africa was Christian.<sup>169</sup>

Byang H. Kato has argued that "although missionaries from Europe and North America brought the gospel to Black Africa in modern times, they are not the first messengers of the gospel to our continent."<sup>170</sup> He tried to prove that the advent of the gospel in Africa predates the coming of western missionaries, by tracing the history of Christianity in Africa to its Biblical roots, citing Africa's relationship with Palestine in Old Testament times and Acts 13:1 in the New Testament. Ancient African Christianity, "survived and produced great religious leaders, thinkers and ideas in the church."<sup>171</sup> Christianity "benefited enormously from African Christians of the first six or seven centuries."<sup>172</sup> Unfortunately, this early rise and success of African Christianity was temporary

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<sup>168</sup>"Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p, n.d, accessed 12 October 2016,

<http://www.alfagems.com/PFDA/Documenti/Missionaries%20and%20Colonialism%20in%20Africa.pdf>

<sup>169</sup> Prince S. Conteh, *Essays in African Religion and Christianity* (Accra: Cynergy Media, 2014), 46. The coming of Christianity to Africa during the first century has been discussed by other scholars, to name a very few: D.T. Adamo and J. Enuwosa, "Missionaries Go Home: The Integrity of Mission in Africa" 1, [http://www.missionstudies.org/archive/conference/1papers/fp/Adamo\\_&\\_Enuwosa\\_Full\\_paper.pdf](http://www.missionstudies.org/archive/conference/1papers/fp/Adamo_&_Enuwosa_Full_paper.pdf).

<sup>170</sup> Byang H. Kato, "Christianity as an African Religion," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 4 no. 1 (1980): 33. See John Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 1-2 for a discussion on the advent of the gospel before missionaries.

<sup>171</sup> Conteh, *Essays in African Religion and Christianity*, 46.

<sup>172</sup> John Mbiti, *Flower in the Garden: The Role of Women in African Religion, in African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society*, edited by Jacob K. Olupona (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1991), 180.

halted "by the founding and rapid rise of Islam in the seventh century. Nonetheless, Christianity survived in Egypt and Ethiopia where it is known today as Orthodox Christianity."<sup>173</sup>

The contemporary missionary enterprise and expansion of the Christian Church has its beginning:

With an evangelical revival movement stimulating Protestant initiatives at the end of the eighteenth century, with Anglican and Roman Catholic missions joining up some decades later. Intensified contact with the non-Western world since the late eighteenth century confirmed in the European mind the idea of the Christianization of those parts of the world which had hitherto been deprived of the message of the Gospel.<sup>174</sup>

The spread of the missionary endeavour into Africa, "which continued throughout the nineteenth century to the present day, may conveniently be dated from 1792."<sup>175</sup> The founding of the first Baptist missionary society in Sub-Sahara, the formation of the first Moravian mission in South Africa, and the freeing of about 1100 slaves from Canada founded Freetown in West Africa, were the three events in 1792 which launched the modern missionary era in Africa, way before the west started fighting for control of Africa.<sup>176</sup>

Contemporary African missions came about "as a form of reparation for the historical injustices committed by Christian nations against" Africans, and "to set free slave children and to make up for the former Slave Trade were leading motives to support African missions."<sup>177</sup> Before the 1800, the main "contact of sub-Saharan Africa with Europe was through the traffic in slaves for the New World."<sup>178</sup> The advent and "expansion of missions into Africa was part of the growing conception of Christian responsibility for the regeneration of African peoples. The anti-slavery issue and the humanitarian conscience also played a vital role in stimulating European interest in Africa and gave an impetus to mission work."<sup>179</sup> By the nineteenth century, there were numerous missionary stations in Africa, but, in spite of this impressive early missionary efforts, the

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<sup>173</sup>Conteh, *Essays in African Religion and Christianity*, 46.

<sup>174</sup>Viera Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa and their Role in the Transformation of African Societies," *Asian and African Studies* 16 no. 2 (2007): 249-250.

<sup>175</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 250.

<sup>176</sup> "Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p.

<sup>177</sup> "Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p.

<sup>178</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 249.

<sup>179</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 252.

penetration of the gospel into the interiors was very limited. In other words, only the coastal areas were getting the good news.<sup>180</sup>

### 3.3.2 Early Challenges to Christian Mission in Africa

According to Pawliková-Vilhanová,<sup>181</sup> the start of missionary activities in Africa were plagued with many challenges, setbacks and tests. As soon as the missionaries arrived, many of the young ones fell victim to the unhealthy tropical climate, some died and those who survived were sent back home for proper treatment. In addition to the health issues, things were also made difficult in many areas where religious challenges were happening because of clashes with Islamic expansion drive. In West Africa, Christianity's advancement into the interior clashed with Islam's expansion in those areas and that created a threat to Christian missions. In many parts of Africa, Islam arrived before Christianity and, ironically in some places, Islam unintentionally prepared the way for Christianity to thrive. Christian missionaries, in their struggle for the spiritual control of Africa, did their best to minimise the strength of Islam by proving that their religion was superior.

The other challenging issues to early Christian missions Pawliková-Vilhanová discussed, were that early missionaries regularly did not succeed overwhelming in their quest of winning souls for Christ. Even with their commitment and passion, early Christian missionaries in Africa had only very little results in converting Africans to Christ. In many parts of Africa, Christian missionary efforts went through a period in which their teachings encountered complete resistance. However, the Europeans did an impressive work in the trading centres along the West African coast line. It was in the coastal communities where freed slaves were settled that Christianity gained souls. Their achievement on the coast was tremendous in the early period of the mission.

### 3.3.3 Early Missionary Evangelisation and Church Planting Strategies

The missionary efforts that were unsuccessful in the beginning of the Christian enterprise in West Africa, later had an impressive advancement and success in other areas. Its worth now to take a critical look at some of the strategies the missionaries used to gain converts.

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<sup>180</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 253.

<sup>181</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 253-254.

### *3.3.3.1 Mission Compound or Mission Station Strategy*

According to Don Fanning,<sup>182</sup> between 1800 and 1914 the missionary approach was to come to a place and purchase a land and to put up buildings that will house all the mission activities within a particular area or region. Most times these buildings include a school, medical centre/clinic, church, and apartments for the missionaries and some local staff. This effort prompted dependency of the African on the foreigner. Because the indigenes needed health, education or a job, they had to depend on the missionaries who had these things and were in a better position to help meet their need than any of the African leaders. Another advantage the missionaries had, they were most times from the same country as the colonialists, which gave them more power and influence. So, the indigenes depended heavily on the missionaries for their livelihood and welfare. Sadly, during the time of Church Planting the missionaries did use the Africans to expedite things. However, little or no power was given to the indigenes, yet the Africans were used in diverse ways to assist the missionaries in their work.

### *3.3.3.2 Education*

Another mission strategy that missionaries from all denominations used to win African converts and to train them for church work was through the means of education.<sup>183</sup> It was believed by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries that by providing education they would also be able to build Christian character in the Africans. In other words, the Gospel and education or training went simultaneously. It was the quest to spread the Gospel and convert the Africans that missionaries were compelled to introduce mission schools and education. The focal point or main desire of mission to Africa was to win “lost souls”, in that regard, great emphasis was placed on religiosity. This was prevalent in all the mission schools. Missionaries established schools because education was considered vital on their agenda and aim. However, religion was always on the forefront of their school administration and teaching. The majority of missions:

Provided only basic education to ensure the inculcation of proper Christian principles and enable Africans attending the mission schools to become good Christians. Denominational rivalry was closely connected with school expansion,

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<sup>182</sup>Don Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," *Trends and Issues in Missions* Paper 6 (2009): 1, accessed 14 December 2016 [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgm\\_missions/6](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgm_missions/6)

<sup>183</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 254-258.

each denomination founded its own school system. Africans were thus provided with several educational options. Missionary domination of the education system was characteristic of all colonized areas, except in Francophone Africa.<sup>184</sup>

The work of evangelization was anchored in the school system where children were shaped and molded into Christians.

### 3.3.3.3 Language

As we know, languages are the greatest means for communicating and being in union with people. Therefore, the language of where one is residing for a short or considerable period of time has to be understood. Therefore, without an understanding of African languages for effective and active communication with the indigenes, it was difficult to engage the Africans in conversion or to get them perform any activity. In that regard, to overcome the language barrier, missionaries were mandated to devote their spare time to learning local African languages of the people they were ministering to minimise cultural misunderstandings and divisions between themselves and their potential converts."

Pawliková-Vilhanová, citing the work of Cardinal Lavigerie states that "to master the local African language, the White Fathers were actually forbidden to speak to each other in anything else after living six months in the country."<sup>185</sup> Indeed, the linguistic work and an in-depth understanding of the recipient language were crucial, because through language it is easier to know and possibly appreciate the host language cultural setting and experience. The Christian missionaries' pioneer work in African languages was very crucial. Local languages which were not yet written had to be learnt and written before any religious instruction and the preparation of religious texts could be done. The first group of Catholic missionaries in different parts of Africa did extremely well in this regard. "Some White Fathers became great scholars and outstanding linguists and their linguistic work laid a solid foundation for all missionaries who came after."<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 257.

<sup>185</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 254, citing Lavigerie. Chapitre de 1874. In Archives des Peres Blancs, B-18, 1; Lavigerie, C. Instructions aux missionnaires, pp. 70-71, 134-135, 145.

<sup>186</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 255, citing E. Diemer, "Essai de Bibliographie des travaux bibliques des Peres Blancs en Afrique," in *Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire* XVII, (1961): 127-134.

#### 3.3.3.4 Literacy Work

For the Catholic missionaries, the teaching of literacy was also of vital concern. In most regions of Africa that were outside the reach of Islam, Africans were introduced to written literature through Christian propaganda. Books written in African language were produced to advance the Christian missions. Through the productions of "alphabet sheets, word lists and grammars, later full-scale dictionaries, textbooks and manuals, translations of portions of the Gospels and later of the whole New Testament, Catholic missionaries helped to create the pre-conditions for the building up of the literary tradition and the written literary language."<sup>187</sup> Missionaries of all denominations spent several years studying African vernaculars and translating sections of the Bible, Prayers and Hymns into African languages. The importance of the Bible in Africa cannot be overestimated. The Missionaries produced written letters and forms of African languages and started producing translated literary works. The natural beginning point was the translation of the Bible, the Gospel of Mark was often the first choice. The publication of the complete Bible or part of it, "and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress from This World to that which is to come* in British Africa, were usually the first major publications in most African languages and in many cases the Bible remained for a long time the only publication that people could read in their mother tongue."<sup>188</sup> Many literacy endeavours were based on the translated portions of the Bible. "Ability to read a gospel used to be a requirement for baptism in many, mostly Protestant, churches and also in the Roman Catholic order of the White Fathers."<sup>189</sup>

Very early in the nineteenth century some Christian missions started publishing newspapers in African languages. Shortly, in addition to publishing educational and religious books, they started producing history and geography books, accounts on African ethnicity and collections of oral literature. By "producing the books which were the first documents of the written form of the language, the missionaries thus created the pre-conditions for the building up of the literary tradition and the written literary language."<sup>190</sup> With the rise of African literatures, Christianization went side-by-side with reading and writing.

With the exception of Swahili and Hausa languages, almost all African languages was first reduced to writing before translation and publication of the Bible could be done. The reduction of

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<sup>187</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 255.

<sup>188</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 255.

<sup>189</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 255.

<sup>190</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 256.

African languages into writing, the translation of the Bible, hymnbooks and prayer books into African languages and the instruction in reading and writing which went with the work of conversion, eventually proved to be equally important as the conversion itself. The literary works of the missionary contributed immensely in laying a strong foundation for African scholarship and training of indigenous.

#### *3.3.3.5 Acculturation*

Africa cultural contacts with Europe and America were no doubt piloted by Christian missions and were mostly intended to change African societies. Thus, for Africans, the missionaries represented the first and most vital aspect of Western interaction. Western Christian missionaries came with their cultural values and had no doubt about the superiority of their culture. Missionaries provided a civilization and culture intended to conquer African cultures. The acceptance of Christianity also came with acculturation into Western civilization, ideas and technology. In spite of the teachings and words of the nineteenth-century missionary thinkers and theorists, Christian missionary enterprise was of vital significance in the Westernization of the Africans. Missionaries built churches and schools patterned in line with European conventions, and they imposed the practices and ethos of the Western Christian civilization on the Africans.

In Christian mission stations, which were used from time to time as a refuge for freed slaves, with their own schools, churches, hospitals, stores, and plantations, missionaries employed a firm scrutiny over the religiosity of their African converts, banishing polygamy, dancing, singing, ancestor-worship and many other African customs.

The settlements founded in several regions in Africa by Catholic and Protestant missions were increasingly developed as self-supporting economic sites, where the values of hard work might be learnt along with the abstinence from temptations, such as polygamy and customs that were connected with traditional African life and religion. The order of religious service used the missionaries, though written in African languages, were duplications of the liturgy of their home churches, sated with hymns and European mannerisms. The African Christian was then seen as the person who abandoned his or her customs.

As stated earlier, the missionaries brought with them their cultural values which influenced all their activities in Africa. They mostly established boarding schools because of the belief that in the boarding school environment which is far removed from the traditional African cultural

influences, Christian converts would more easily give up all or most of their cultural beliefs and practices. The school system propagated Western ethos and aspirations. European schoolmasters provided a complete culture model, including church attendance, Christian morality, table manners, and much more which led to the separation and estrangement of the Africans from their families and their cultures. The acculturation dictated by the missionaries had the effect of destroying the ethnicity of their African converts, some missionaries were certain that African converts could only become true Christians if they became Europeanized and as such, they endeavoured to produce black Europeans. Unfortunately, Africans who attended these mission schools became a new élite who were unable to identify completely with their African culture. In some instance, the first converts arose from among the lowest stratum of the society or from among liberated slaves. Upon conversion, they assumed a new status often evident by the clothes they wear, the schools they attend and the persons and groups they associate with. The incursion and imposition of Western cultural norms, lifestyles, practices and beliefs discourteously ruined most African cultures. The stranglehold on the African convert was so strong that the African convert was made to adopt European names which created in the mind of the African Christian that everything African contradicts the faith, therefore must be repudiated. This view hindered the gospel work in Africa. The banning of polygamy caused the chiefs and the powerful in the African society to reject Christianity, thus limiting its influence to the commoners. Hence, the missionary's failure to transform whole cultures with the power of the gospel as it did initially in Europe. Until today, a large number of Christians still subscribe to some of their traditional beliefs and practices.

#### *3.3.3.6 Commerce*

The rapid growth of Western commercialisation from the end of the eighteenth century, and eventual political supremacy in Africa corresponded with an immense Christian missionary enterprise. The association of civilization with commerce became the familiar features of humanitarian and missionary consideration given that it was generally believed in the abolitionist, humanitarian and missionary circles that in addition to the popular civilizing urge which commerce would give to the African, justifiable commerce would rob the slave trade of its grip on several parts of Africa.<sup>191</sup>"Traffic in tropical produce and other commodities should replace the trade in

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<sup>191</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 252.

slaves to the benefit of both Europe and Africa."<sup>192</sup> The task of leading Africans on the path of civilization by the expansion of moral and religious instruction and converting the pagans to the true religion fell on the newly established mission societies.

### 3.3.3.7 Indigenous Church Strategy

At the end of World War II, the world political atmosphere changed.<sup>193</sup> During this time, colonised countries were demanding their independence from Europe and expelling missionaries from their countries. Unfortunately, in most instances independence from colonial powers did not come through peaceful negotiations. Colonised countries had to resort to violence to gain liberation. As such, missionary work was shattered in Africa.

The agenda for liberation, was that indigenes should officially take charge and control of all national institutions and leadership. Seeing how the wind of change was sweeping across the continent, the missionaries had no choice but re-strategize their evangelical and church planting approach to that of an Indigenous Church Strategy.<sup>194</sup> Fanning went on to state that:

The indigenous policy began in the mid-nineteenth century when Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson developed the three-self formula. "They believed that young churches should be self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing from their inception." If the missionaries spoon-feed the nationals would create "rice Christians" people who converted only for the benefits they received. The more that was given to the nationals the more was expected, but the quicker "results" could be tabulated for supporters. Sadly, when persecution came the "rice Christians" vanished.<sup>195</sup>

In view of this, missions started rethinking their heavy financial support of all their ministries, namely schools, clinics, hospitals, and churches. So, during the 1960s missionaries started divesting or handing over their investments and properties to national church organisations. No doubt the transition from heavy subsidy to fully indigenous support was more than difficult for the Africans to manage which festered scepticism, suspicion and distrust against the missionaries.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup>Pawliková-Vilhanová, "Christian Missions in Africa," 252, citing T.F. Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London, 1839), 3.

<sup>193</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 2.

<sup>194</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 2.

<sup>195</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 2.

<sup>196</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 2.

The indigenous strategy, Fanning posited: “emphasized the need for true conversion, which was reflected by the willingness of local Christians to support the work of the church. The foreign mission, they said, is like scaffolding. When the construction is finished, the scaffolding is removed. In many mission settings, however, what was built is unable to stand without the support of the scaffolding.”<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless with the wave of nationalism that swept through the world it was inevitable that the missionaries must go since in a way, they had outlived their welcome. Thankfully, the indigenous strategy did work for the most part, even beyond what was deemed possible.

### 3.3.4 Reactions and Responses to Missionary Evangelism and Church Planting in Africa

The strategies and outcome of Western missionaries' endeavours are still debatable. According to Lamin Sanneh, the role of missionaries in evangelization has been overemphasised: "If we assess the effectiveness of Western missions by statistical standards of horizontal spread, they would fail abysmally. The most spectacular gains by Christianity occurred by other hands or after the formal withdrawal of missionaries."<sup>198</sup>

Another critical look at the reaction of the Africans to early Christian missions:

#### 3.3.4.1 African Religion is a God Given Heritage

The African traditionalists the missionaries met perceived African Religion as a way of life. For them there is no clear division between religion and culture. More importantly, they believed that their religion and culture originated from God, and cannot be parted with or replaced.<sup>199</sup> African Religion is the heritage into which the traditionalists were born, and was maintained by God and influenced by the ancestors. African Religion “emerged from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present generation” and was practised in various forms and intensities in African

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<sup>197</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 2-3, citing M. Pocock & Van Rhee, *The Changing Face of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 285.

<sup>198</sup> Lamin Sanneh, "The Horizontal and the Vertical in Mission: An African Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 7 (1983):165.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1989a), 1-2; Vincent Mulago, "African Traditional Religion and Christianity," in *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1991), 127; L. Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 4-14.

homelands and settlements.<sup>200</sup> For these reasons, to completely give up their God-given heritage in favour of a foreign culture, as the missionaries required, seemed a very difficult task, and was tantamount to losing their entire heritage, identity, and place, both spiritually and physically within their religio-cultural community. This is why the African Christians today “do not always adhere to religious and ritual demands that are formulated and expressed by the leaders of their churches.”<sup>201</sup> Even long after their conversion to Christianity; the African traditional worldview persists in the lives of Christian converts. Many continue to seek help in times of crises through ancestral worship. Others through culture embedded in traditional practices engage in ancestral worship because the African Religion is perceived as a way of life.

### 3.3.4.2 Christianity is Imperialistic and Insensitive

For a majority of the traditional Africans, Christianity was considered the white man's religion that brought new teachings and a new way of life, and attempted to deliberately destroy African culture.<sup>202</sup> This concept has plagued Christianity<sup>203</sup> since its advent into Africa and still abound in the continent.<sup>204</sup> Even now “that the age of foreign missions in Africa”<sup>205</sup> is over, Christianity is still “stigmatised throughout Africa as the white man's religion.”<sup>206</sup> Kato has argued, “to claim that Christianity is a white man's religion only because white missionaries brought the gospel two hundred years ago is not historically accurate.”<sup>207</sup> As much as Kato's argument is solid, the bringing of the gospel to modern Africa by western missionaries is not the main reason why, for centuries now, African traditionalists still dub Christianity the white man's religion.

Christian missionaries to Africa were/are blamed for their cultural insensitivity to African values which resulted in the transplantation of “an ethnocentric form of Christianity.”<sup>208</sup> Successive missionaries attacked African culture, and required a complete abandonment of African culture

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<sup>200</sup> J. O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites* (London, Longman, 1979), 111.

<sup>201</sup> Magesa, "African Traditional Religion and Christianity," 7

<sup>202</sup> J.A.D. Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 110

<sup>203</sup> Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone*, 110.

<sup>204</sup> J. V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision: Christian Presence Amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 14, 16); T. Mofokeng, "Black Christians, the Bible and Liberation," *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa* 2 no. 1 (1988):34; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 212.

<sup>205</sup> John Mbiti, *The Crisis of Mission in Africa* (Mukono: Uganda Church Press, 1971), 1.

<sup>206</sup> Dick France, "Questions Concerning the Future of African Christianity," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 3 no. 1 (1979):34.

<sup>207</sup> Kato, "Christianity as an African Religion," 35.

<sup>208</sup> Keith E. Eitel, "Contextualization: Contrasting African Voices," *Criswell Theological Review* 2 no. 2 (1988):324.

and practices.<sup>209</sup>The missionaries presented Christ "as the answer to the questions a white man would ask, the solution to the needs that a Western man would feel, the Saviour of the world of the European worldview, the object of the adoration and prayer of historic Christendom."<sup>210</sup>

Attempts were not made to answer the needs of Africans yet the missionaries enforced on Christian converts, a complete break from the African beliefs and culture that met those needs. For example, the AOG missionaries to West Africa enforced "a complete break with the past through the burning of medicine and charms...a symbol of complete rejection of the old way and of complete dependence upon God through Christ and the Holy Spirit...members were prohibited from using charms or making sacrifices."<sup>211</sup>

Although the destruction of religious artefacts is found in the Bible (e.g., Acts 19:18-19a), the African traditionalists believed it emanated from the white man.<sup>212</sup>In modern times, cultural insensitivity is also displayed in the production of religious pictures, and films that are found almost everywhere in Africa portraying Jesus as a white man, from a white mother, and as the leader of white disciples.<sup>213</sup>

Another factor was the colonial mentality of European superiority which caused a lack of adaptation and a failure to dialogue with Africans, to listen, accept, trust and share. So, it fostered anti-European feelings among them and in many cases was the immediate reason why the African pastor, followed by his flock, left the mission church. The demonization of all things African with respect to religion bruised the African ego and fostered resentment towards Christianity in some circles.

#### 3.3.4.3 *Christianity is Novel and Inadequate*

For the African traditionalists, the Christian teaching about the death of Christ as a sacrifice for the propitiation of sin was strange and contradictory. Missionaries condemned human sacrifice as sinful and inhumane. The Africans then asked: "If human sacrifice is ungodly and inhumane, why did a loving and faithful God, savagely offer his own son as a sacrifice?"

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<sup>209</sup>Gilbert W. Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 192; Alie, *A New History of Sierra Leone*, 110.

<sup>210</sup>Taylor, *The Primal Vision*,16.

<sup>211</sup>Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone*, 192.

<sup>212</sup>Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 113.

<sup>213</sup>Taylor, *The Primal Vision*,13.

This problem is not, however, confined to African traditionalists. Even in the west, some Christians have challenged the rationale about the sacrificial death of Christ. Some western Christians, including members of the clergy, no longer believe that a loving God could have offered his son as sacrifice for the sin of humankind. African Christians are not alone, “no people, ancient or modern, have found the whole of Christian thought congenial, or absorbed it painlessly into their own culture.”<sup>214</sup>

The Christian teaching about the mediatory role of Jesus did not sit well with the traditionalists. The question was and continues to be asked “How could Jesus be the only mediator for every race on earth?” For the traditionalists, Jesus was not part of their culture and did not know them. The ancestors were their mediators because they were still part of their community, and knew them very well. Christ was seen as a stranger; and as such, cannot serve as a mediator for people he did not know.

Most African religionists felt that Christianity did not cater to the African spiritual appetite. The absence of protective charms and important African rituals like sacrifice, made Christianity less attractive and fulfilling, and created a spiritual void for the African. So, when the African Religionists feel that they cannot venerate their ancestors and cannot worship God through ways that are fulfilling according to their standard, they would not go for anything less. In a spiritually charged African traditionalist cosmic view; one is vulnerable without spiritual protection. Therefore, Christianity without the demonstration of supernatural power does not appeal to the religious African traditionalist.

#### *3.3.4.4 Positive View*

Contrary to the experience and views of the traditional Africans about missionary Christianity, some people are with the opinion "that the missionaries did great good in Africa, providing crucial social services that would have otherwise not been available to the Africans:"<sup>215</sup>

- They spread faith in Jesus and baptized many converts who would follow him in loving anyone.

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<sup>214</sup>Edward Fashole-Luke, *An African Indigenous Theology: Fact or Fiction* (University of Aberdeen n.d), 2.

<sup>215</sup>"Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p, n.d, accessed 12 October 2016, <http://www.alfagems.com/PFDA/Documenti/Missionaries%20and%20Colonialism%20in%20Africa.pdf>

- Among African religious beliefs, culture and traditions they despised and demoralized, there were twins' murders and human sacrifices.
- They fought slave trade which was later abolished and equality and liberty for all was encouraged.
- They improved communication and transport which in turn led to the opening up of Africa's hinterland.
- They put an end to inter-tribal or inter-village wars and established a stable and peaceful society under one leader (centralization).
- They paved the way for the improvement of agriculture through establishing experimental farms and plantations where better crops, methods and equipment were introduced.
- They established hospitals and clinics which offered modern medicine plus research in tropical diseases like malaria, small pox, yellow fever and sleeping sickness which had claimed many lives.
- They introduced the European system of management and styles of dress and architecture which have been adopted by many people in Africa today. Mission stations developed into towns.
- They studied African languages and translated the Bible into various of them.
- They established printing presses and published books and newspapers.
- They opened up primary and secondary schools as well as training colleges for teachers and trade schools for craftsmen. Africans emerged as doctors, lawyers, clerks, as well as catechists and priests who played a great role in spreading Christianity. In technical schools, carpentry and brick laying skills were obtained.
- In societies that were traditionally male-dominated, female missionaries provided women in Africa with health care knowledge and basic education.
- They contributed to the rise of nationalism through education where a new African elite, educated mainly in English and French, emerged and started demanding for independence.
- They provided official languages that connect Africans to the international community with ease. As a result, most Africans are fluently bilingual or can more than two languages.

### 3.4 Evangelism and Church Planting by Neo-Religious Movements

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

In the previous section, the researcher looked at the advent and growth of early missionaries' endeavours in Africa. Yes, there are many lessons to learn through their evangelism and church planting strategies which are yet to be discussed in detail later. Now is the time to turn to evangelism and church planting strategies from postcolonial era to present.

In general, colonialism gave way to independence and indigenous churches arose out of missions, and Africans were able to distinguish between true biblical teachings and European garbage and manipulation of the Bible.<sup>216</sup>After independence, there was massive church growth and Christianity became the majority faith tradition in most sub-Saharan countries. Certainly, African Christians claimed the Bible as their own, and African Catholics highly esteem the sacraments. Africans turnout in huge numbers for Sunday services which were influenced and characterised by African culture and worldview. Both male and female served in different and various ministries within the church and community. New infrastructures were built, and educational and medical facilities responded well to the needs of the people. Christianity enjoyed a lot of public attention, respect, esteem and buoyancy. It was realised that a fuller Christian way of life was vital and relevant to the advancement of a better society. The Africans were now convinced that the African Church had much to offer to the whole world.

Unfortunately, serious problems of "secularism, continuous fragmentation among denominations, need for a deeper incarnation of faith in the African personality, lack of true spirituality in many leaders reflected in an exaggerated preoccupation with money, power and sex"<sup>217</sup> infiltrated the African Church.

#### 3.4.2 African Church Evangelism and Planting after the early missionaries

Fanning<sup>218</sup> stated that in the 1960s and 1970s, major shifts in Christian evangelism and church planting strategies started. He went on to say that in the first place, work was focused on the transition from missionary patterned ministry to indigenous control ministry. The missionaries did not teach about the development of local Christian leaders. For instance, a majority of American

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<sup>216</sup>"Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p.

<sup>217</sup>"Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p.

<sup>218</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 3.

pastors never trained their converts for mission and ministerial work because they were not thinking or motivated to have indigenes to replace them. Also, most missionaries had little or no training in missions. Missionaries unprepared went on missions believing that things would fall in place whilst in the field like the way things worked in their home churches. This background was a recipe for disaster, failure and frustration.

#### *3.4.2.1 Evangelism and Church Planting Strategies*

As missionaries were struggling to decipher how to put into action the “indigenous” policy that their mission agencies were enforcing, Fanning tells us that Donald McGavran's research into Church growth was a key element in changing the methods that missionaries use to focus their ministry on specific people groups and his research work sparked the Church Growth Movement.<sup>219</sup>Fanning went to say that:

McGavran rejected the popular view that mission was primarily education, evangelism, medicine, famine relief, world friendship, etc., but rather the goal of the Church should always be to disciple the peoples of the world. His passion for the Great Commission and the application of research, including statistical methods, to derive the best methodology for a given people group inspired thousands to travel to Pasadena to study under his tutelage. One of the major tenants of the Church Growth movement is seeking the objective of a People Movement Approach, instead of individual decisions. McGavran shows how that group decisions or people movements is the natural way of growth throughout most of history around the world. Admittedly this pattern is often unfamiliar to Western missionaries who come from an individualistic society, unique in the world.<sup>220</sup>

As most converts were generally non-literate and under educated, decisions were made by the group, not by individuals. Fanning went on to reiterate five great advantages to understanding and applying church growth principles McGavran postulated, which the researcher will reproduce as was found in Fanning's work:<sup>221</sup>

- Permanent churches deeply rooted in the soil of the culture, which are independent of and not dependent upon Western support. Thus the new churches are freed from bonds to

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<sup>219</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 3.

<sup>220</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 3.

<sup>221</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 4.

another culture and have the spiritual authority and motivation to multiply themselves. Since it is their church, not that of the foreigner, they are willing to endure persecution.

- Churches are naturally indigenous being immersed in their own culture so they can easily cloth all their activities in their cultural ways. Being excited about their own kind of Christianity they become vibrantly evangelistic.
- "Spontaneous expansion of churches" is natural because it is linked with growth points among their own people, which are not broken when they become Christians. Only moderate assistance of outside is needed usually in the area of training.
- A People Movement may be created in nearby cultures through cultural bridges that may exist to other communities. As communities are convinced about Christ by bridging to another community may produce another people movement where multitudes turn to Christ together.
- Movement provides a sound pattern of becoming Christian because biases are gone and changes in the lives of Christians can be demonstrable and infinitely reproducible (McGavran, 2003, p. 184). People become Christian as a wave of decisions for Christ sweeps through the group's minds, involving many individual decisions, but being far more than merely the sum of individual commitments. "This may be called a chain reaction. Each decision sets off others and, the sum total powerfully affects every individual. When conditions are right, not merely each subgroup, but the entire group concerned decides together" (McGavran, 2003, p. 178).

Fanning went on to state that "McGavran had considerable criticism of evangelistic methods that focused on getting 'decisions,' yet little or no fruit ever resulted."<sup>222</sup> Although Fanning did not give us documentary proof, he states that "Ray Comfort, likewise, has documented the same lack of results in his study of American evangelistic efforts which are part of the "baggage" that American missionaries take with them to the field."<sup>223</sup>

Fanning believes that McGavran's answer to evangelism and church growth would be to not simply preach for "decisions" but in consonance with the Great Commission, to make faithful disciples. Only faithful disciples that can "produce a church that multiplies itself spontaneously

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<sup>222</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 4.

<sup>223</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 4.

within a culture. ... Repentance goes deeper than a decision; it is a permanent change wrought by God's Spirit. We are born all over again. Few purely intellectual decisions in any culture lead to permanent, obedient discipleship."<sup>224</sup> McGavran is accredited for helping "stem the tide toward the social concern priority back to a confrontational evangelism and aggressive disciple-making focus."<sup>225</sup>

Fanning<sup>226</sup> citing the work of John Slacks, provided the conclusions that the application of the Church Growth data Slack's research with the congregations of the Southern Baptist Convention produced as follows:

- New units grow faster than established churches.
- Aging within a church almost inevitably ushers in a "come-oriented" ministry in contrast to a "go-centered" ministry.
- Older churches do not start as many new churches as do younger churches.
- Churches and church planting drift upward on the economic scale.
- The longer a church is in a community, the less like that community the church becomes.
- Existing, established churches have normal plateau and ministry limits.
- Only as a church effectively expands its discipleship base will it sustain infinitely reproducible church growth and church planting.
- More baptisms and greater membership growth occur in zones or areas that are farther from the existing church and its come-oriented activities.
- The difference between so-called "responsive" and "non-responsive" peoples is not in the average number of baptisms per church but in the number of new units -- churches -- that are started.
- Churches in resistant cultures tend to begin as or soon become cosmopolitan rather than community. In resistant cultures, community churches have far greater influence on the culture than do cosmopolitan churches.

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<sup>224</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 5, citing D. A. McGavran "A Church in Every People," in M. Crossman (ed.), *Worldwide Perspectives* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publications, 2003), 184.

<sup>225</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 5.

<sup>226</sup>Fanning, "Church Planting Movements," 5.

- As beginning models of church planting, training, and materials are repeated and age, they become hallowed -- and almost "unchangeable" -- patterns even when and if they are no longer relevant.
- If a lost person or people group is illiterate and poor, the chance of their being evangelized decreases proportionately to the heights of their illiteracy and the depths of their poverty.
- Training in most theological programs has become more academic than functional.
- Bible teaching, including the Sunday School and other forms of discipleship, to be effective, must be done in the context of evangelism.

Although these conclusions were meant for the Southern Baptist Convention of the USA, the missionaries of all denominations sent overseas are from this type of church and easily carry these baggage with them. Criticism of this movement stems from the foundations being primarily based on statistics and social behaviour rather than theology, and also the principle of more numerical growth being equated to evidence of correct analysis.

#### *3.4.2.2 Missionary Evangelism and Church Planting Problems*

J. D. Payne after a survey of the present North American missionaries' evangelism and church planting strategies, discloses two unhealthy influences on missionaries and church planters termed paternalistic and pragmatic ecclesiologies which were also common during the early missionary era as follows:<sup>227</sup>

##### *3.4.2.2.1 Paternalistic Ecclesiology*

Paternalism is the philosophy that maintains the belief of one group dominating another. In this philosophy, there is a superiority-inferiority relationship between the two groups. The inferior group depends on hugely on the superior group. For paternalism to be effective and work well:

The dominant group is seen as the source of vitality, sustenance, and provision. Rather than the two groups existing in an interdependent relationship to accomplish a greater good, an unhealthy co-dependent relationship exists whereby the domineering group feels empowered and self-sacrificial because they are "emptying" themselves on behalf of the inferior group. On the other hand, the inferior group feels wanted and is grateful for the other group's sacrificial giving.

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<sup>227</sup>J. D. Payne, "Ecclesiology: The Most Critical Issue in Church Planting Today," accessed 15 November 2016, <http://northamericanmissions.org/files/cp-and-ecclesiology.pdf>.

Rather than the relationship beginning like a parent-child relationship with the plans to quickly assist the child in becoming an adult, paternalism creates and maintains an indefinite parent-child dynamic.<sup>228</sup>

Payne went on to state that,<sup>229</sup> paternalism was a prevalent tradition in missionary work in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, mainly outside of North America which unfortunately continued into the twenty-first century. Missionaries would leave European and North American countries and go to foreign nations to evangelise and plant churches, many missionaries quickly found themselves dealing with a clash of cultures. For instance, upon arrival in rural China or Africa, many missionaries with very little training in, and exposure to cross-cultural ministry normally resorted to evangelism, discipleship training, liturgies, education, and church patterns and organization that they were familiar with from where they came.

From that time to the present, Western ethnocentrism is still a dominant factor in missionary work. Euro-American missionaries seldom valued/value on-western cultures and the Euro-American worldview was/is seen as supreme. Colonialism was a vital political tool which the church embraced as an appropriate method for missionary work. "After all," many reasoned, "We have the gospel and our societies are not as bad as the heathen societies in the East. They need the gospel and they need to be educated so their societies will be civilized like us."<sup>230</sup>

With the Euro-American style of missions being a prevalent expression with the missionaries, unfortunately, the methods and means of communicating the gospel and teachings of Christ were very Western. Instead of relaying the gospel to the people through contextual methods familiar to them, and allowing the churches planted to be indigenous churches, missionaries acculturated people in Euro-American culture, mindset and way of life. Obviously, this approach hampered the dissemination of the gospel every time the converts began to believe that to be a Christian a person had to forgo his or her culture and become a European or an American. Instead of allowing the gospel message to change Africans and their cultures, missionaries gave the people the gospel together with Western civilization as a part of their task toward the transformation of the societies they were ministering.

Payne went on to state that:

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<sup>228</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>229</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>230</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

As churches were planted both the churches and their leaders were taught Euro-American definitions of the local church. It was common for organization and structures, liturgies and music, teaching and preaching methods, and leadership development and theological education to look very much like those found in Western nations. Once such culturally specific paradigms were in place, it was difficult for national believers to operate and facilitate such approaches to the Christian life.<sup>231</sup>

Because the converts were not trained in the Western philosophies behind the patterns, structures and in the leadership skills required to maintain western practices, the missionaries not too long realised that the converts were ignorant and were unable to do ministry in the Western way. As a result, the paternalistic approach became necessary to sustain churches in the “proper” way. Paternalism as applied to a church planting context consists of three components:<sup>232</sup>

- What are our preferences to doing church the “right” way?
- What is a model of church to support our understanding of the “right” way?
- What is the biblical support for our determined model of church?

In explaining these components, Payne stated that:

The development of a paternalistic ecclesiology usually starts with the desires of the church planters. Some feel confident that they know what is “best” for a church, “After all,” they speculate, “We have been believers for several years. We know the problems that many churches face; therefore, we are going to plant churches as we prefer and obviously without those problems.” This rationale, however, assumes too much. The church planters are confident that they know what is the church based on the fact that they have had much experience being a part of churches. Second, though not to denigrate or negate experiences and wisdom gained through the years, some church planters fail to remember that there will never be a perfect church this side of heaven. It should be remembered that if the Apostle Paul planted churches with problems (e.g., the Church at Corinth), contemporary church planters must realize that even their best efforts will not avoid all problems. Third, and most obvious, is the fact that any theological method that begins with one’s culture, rather than the Bible, is a poor approach to understanding the church.<sup>233</sup>

After beginning with the misplaced culture of the missionaries, missionaries following a paternalistic ecclesiology, usually decide upon a particular model of church life to support their cultural partiality. Instead of permitting the expression of the newly planted church to develop in

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<sup>231</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>232</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>233</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

its context, the paternalistic ecclesiology imposes a preferred look of church administration and structure on the people. For instance, if the missionaries "believe that age-graded Sunday School classes are the best approach because such divisions worked well in their home church, then they will attempt to use such a paradigm with little regard for the fact that the people may be very resistant to adults and children being separated for Bible study."

As the preference and model of church are already determined, the use of scriptures become secondary in paternalism which make it likely for poor biblical interpretation to be used instead of a healthy biblical interpretation guiding the understanding of the local church. In paternalism, there is a strong possibility that missionaries "see" what they already want to find in the Bible regarding their ministry. Paternalistic ecclesiology stifles indigenous churches from their God-given cultural expressions. Thus, being forced to worship, sing and act like Westerners. Though Africans culturally express themselves differently and storytelling times are not age graded. All sit together to share in the lessons. Children are able to enjoy and retain the stories as much as adults. In fact everyone enjoys the lessons from the least to the oldest. Sometimes even the young take turn in telling stories. No wonder many Africans develop great oratory skills.

#### *3.4.2.2.2 Pragmatic Ecclesiology*

The other unhealthy influence on today's missionaries according to Payne is "Pragmatic Ecclesiology." Christians are expected to be pragmatic to some degree. Missionaries would love to know what is working and what is not working to reach people with the gospel and see the burgeoning of churches all over the world. It is realistic that if much of the Lord's resources are used in attempting to reach a certain unsaved people with the gospel and there is no positive response, then it is wise to ask the question: "Why?" and to reconsider existing evangelistic methods in light of the present context. Pragmatism can be useful and a valuable thing.

In contrast, pragmatism, can be unhealthy if taken too far. In a sense the word, pragmatism is the principle which teaches people to "use whatever means necessary to accomplish the task" at hand or worse, the spiritualized version of pragmatism advocates, "If the means used to accomplish your tasks are working, then obviously God's blessing is upon you and He is pleased." It is clear to see how pragmatism can be taken to the extreme and result into an ideology lacking biblical perspectives.

Payne, went on to state that a pragmatic ecclesiology as applied to a church planting context consists of three components:<sup>234</sup>

- What is working to plant churches?
- What is the cultural context of the people group?
- What is the biblical support for our methods?

This contemporary way of planting church begins with the question: "What works to plant churches?" Usually, the concept of 'what' is understood as a particular method or model of church. Here the church planter begins by examining the globe for a system that has proven itself effective in planting churches."<sup>235</sup>

A pragmatism usually used whenever one hears church planters say, "Well, we're going to plant a postmodern (or cell, house, seeker, purpose-driven, Reformed, contemporary, etc.) church, because pastor has seen it work well in his area."<sup>236</sup>

After discovering a specific method or model, the church planters traditionally attempt to make the model fit in the cultural context of the people they are ministering to. In most situations, this approach does work to evangelise people with the gospel and establish churches. Payne citing Stuart Murray stated that: "Murray warned against this approach when he wrote, 'Church cloning, by replicating existing patterns, may be successful in the short term, but this runs the risk of consigning both planting church and church planting to longer term irrelevance.'"<sup>237</sup>

As Payne rightly stated: "Wise church planters understand that a biblical ecclesiology does not allow for the satisfaction of the planting of *a* church, but rather the transformation of a society, as people become followers of Jesus. Fulfilling the Great Commission is a marathon and not a sprint."<sup>238</sup>

A problem with the theological approach of finding biblical support for situations is not with the fact that the church planters are looking for biblical evidence for their work. On the contrary, the problem is that the desired biblical support is support for the paradigms or models which have been used by other "successful" church planters. These paradigms or models may have

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<sup>234</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>235</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>236</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>237</sup>Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1998), 136.

<sup>238</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

genuine biblical foundation, but for church planters supporting a pragmatism, they have not interacted with and digested the Bible. Rather, they have invested time wrestling with how to make the paradigm of church "work" to produce the desired results in their situations.<sup>239</sup>

#### 3.4.2.2.3. *Biblical Understanding of Ecclesiology*

After discussing the above unhealthy applications to evangelism and church planting, Payne went on to state that in all of the Bible, there is no single authorization to go into the world and plant churches; yet, clearly there is a biblical pattern set forth in the Bible to plant churches. The Matthean version of the Great Commission is to go into the world and make disciples (Matt28:19). Although there is no command to plant churches, Payne argues that:

Clearly what follows in the passage, and throughout the rest of the New Testament, is that the "baptizing" and "teaching them to observe" is to take place within the context of the local expression of the Body of Christ, the church. Biblical church planting is *evangelism* that results in churches. It is a means of seeing people come to faith, being baptized, and being taught. It is a means of fulfilling the Great Commission. Just as the Bible does not offer us a concise definition of church planting, it also does not offer us a concise statement defining the church.<sup>240</sup>

Regardless of the arguments presented for the church; without the assembling together of the converts into a fellowship of people of like precious faith, no individual believer could keep the faith alive alone without being a part of a body. Therefore, it stands to reason that church planting was what Jesus had in mind when He instructed His disciples to make disciples of all nations. How else could the converts survive, develop and grow if they were not gathered into fellowship of churches for constant nurturing, teaching and discipling? After all Jesus looked forward to a body of believers that He could call His very own.

In light of all of the biblical information that are available, church planters are privileged to find a healthy biblical understanding of the nature and function of the Christ's church. A biblical perspective as applied to the idea of church planting, starts with the Bible.

Payne went on to describe a theological method for developing a biblical perspective in planting churches, which the researcher is going to reproduce as follows:

People enter into the Kingdom as Its citizens upon their confessions (Matt 16:15-16) and immediately receive a great responsibility as Kingdom citizens (Matt

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<sup>239</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>240</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

16:18-19). Along with such a calling comes a Kingdom ethic that surpasses anything of this world (Matt 5-7). This ethic quickly redefines how we are to live in response to God (Matt 22:37-38), other Kingdom citizens (Matt 18:15-20; 22:39), and those outside the Kingdom (Matt 22:39; 28:18-20). The environment in which the Kingdom citizens are to live out this new ethic is within the community/fellowship (i.e., local church) of other Kingdom citizens. In addition to the Matthean references just listed, the Bible lists many metaphors and actions of the Apostolic Church to describe the Church with words and concepts such as branches (John 15), kingdom of priests (1 Pet 2), temple (1 Cor 3:16), sheep (John 10), bride (Eph 5), salt (Matt 5:13), light (Matt 5:14), body (1 Cor 12), fellowship (1 John 1:7), and a community (Acts 2:44; 4:34).<sup>241</sup>

After gaining and implementing a healthy understanding of the doctrine of the Church, church planters must then decide how to proclaim the message of the gospel, which is to "make disciples," and what it means to be a Kingdom citizen i.e., "teach them to observe", to the people in their particular contexts:

Wise is the church planter who studies the culture of the people in order to communicate effectively the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27). It is after a healthy understanding of the Church and the culture of one's ministry context, that the church planting team should begin to look at what is working to reach people with the gospel and plant churches. Church planters should study the methods and models used by others, but methods and models are culturally specific and are not universally translatable. "Effective" methods and models need to be examined by church planters and sifted for their golden nuggets of truth that can then be applied to their own ministry contexts. It is through much prayer and trial and error that church planters will begin to see an expression of church take shape that is culturally specific to the people to whom they are called to serve. When the church planting team begins with a healthy understanding of the Scriptures, they will do a much better job at laying a foundation for healthy discipleship and numerical growth in the days ahead.<sup>242</sup>

### *3.4.3 African Pentecostalism and Evangelistic and Church Planting Strategy*

The advent of Pentecostalism into Africa dates back to the early twentieth:

The first Western missionaries arrived on the continent in the 1910s. Missionaries from the (American) Assemblies of God Church first arrived in Liberia in 1914 and in Burkina Faso in 1921. British missionaries arrived in Nigeria and Ghana in the 1930s. Another very early presence is to be found in South Africa starting from 1908. The first Pentecostal communities date from these times, be it local groups linked to western Churches, those which became autonomous Churches or indigenous Churches influenced by Pentecostal missionaries.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>242</sup>Payne, "Ecclesiology," n.p.

<sup>243</sup>Cédric Mayrargue, "The Paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa," IFRI (2008): 3, accessed 5 November 2016 <http://www.ifri.org/downloads/notemayrargueuk.pdf>

Pentecostalism represents the fastest growing Christian denomination in Africa, but it is also the "most complex and socially visible strand of religion in Africa, not only because it is still evolving and changing rapidly, but the proliferation of division and innovation is dizzying."<sup>244</sup>

Pentecostalism in Africa developed through many channels, which has prompted some to once again use the plural, *Pentecostalism* reference to the numerous, sometimes mutually exclusive, facets.<sup>245</sup> Ukah went on to identify three distinct Pentecostal groups although some of them overlap at important points, as follows:

- Classical/Mission Pentecostal Churches
- Indigenous/Independent Pentecostal Churches
- New Pentecostals/Charismatic churches/Ministries

African Pentecostalism is very similar to the classical/Mission Pentecostalism of the twentieth century which is a brand of evangelical Christianity:

That seeks to lay emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in all its operations. Unlike classical Pentecostalism, which is commonly defined in terms of the doctrine of the 'initial evidence' – of speaking in tongues – African Pentecostalism must be seen as a much broader movement that operates in a much broader context, and one that manifests all three waves outlined above. Individual and personal experience in conversion as accompanied by baptism with the Holy Spirit (which is sometimes accompanied by speaking in tongues) and embodied in the performance of extraordinary miracles is very much central to their teachings. Emphasis is on the working of the Holy Spirit in the human being and all the operations of the believers. Pentecostalism, with its theology of the resurgence of the charismata in the life of the church today, has given birth to the renewal vigour in worship, renewed interest in realising spiritual gifts in congregational life, and new motivation for evangelism and missions.<sup>246</sup>

Pentecostals in Africa are evidently very mission-minded and are renowned for using aggressive methods of evangelism and winning lost souls.<sup>247</sup> In Pentecostal strategy, evangelism takes

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<sup>244</sup>Asonzeh Ukah, "African Christianities: Features, Promises and Problems," 7 accessed 10 November 2016 at <http://ubm.opus.hbz-nrw.de/volltexte/2008/1729/pdf/diss.pdf>

<sup>245</sup>Asonzeh Ukah, "African Christianities: Features, Promises and Problems," 7.

<sup>246</sup>T.D. Mashau, "Ministering Effectively in the Context of Pentecostalism in Africa: A Reformed Missional Reflection," *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 47 no. 1 (2013): 4-5 accessed 5 November 2016 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v47i1.84>

<sup>247</sup>Mashau, "Ministering Effectively in the Context of Pentecostalism," 5.

precedence. And in their theology, evangelism means to go out and win lost souls "for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>248</sup> This approach to mission involves:

Personal witnessing, crusades and large tent campaigns wherein healing is promised. Many thousands of African preachers from the Pentecostal circle emphasise the manifestation of divine power through healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues and other Pentecostal phenomena. Exorcism and protection from evil are amongst the most prominent features of the Pentecostal gospel and are the most important of their evangelism and church recruitment tactics.<sup>249</sup>

In Pentecostal strategy people are promised greater protection from a greater God who loves them and can set them free from every work of Satan. Hence, the demonstration of divine power is the cornerstone of Pentecostal theological practices.

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<sup>248</sup>Mashau, "Ministering Effectively in the Context of Pentecostalism," 5.

<sup>249</sup>Mashau, "Ministering Effectively in the Context of Pentecostalism," 5.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FORMATION OF ALL NATIONS FULL GOSPEL CHURCH

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The conversion of a young Methodist believer in 1972 set the researcher on a spiritual path that has become a global phenomenon. The researcher's commitment to evangelism which was fueled by a strong passion for soul winning led to the formation of the World Reconciliation Evangelistic Ministries Incorporated – 1978.

As an itinerant evangelist the researcher led many souls to Christ. But the question which remained unanswered was, what happens to the souls after conversion: if they are not cared for? This revelation led to a change in ministry strategy which became the driving force for All Nations Full Church.

In 1981, the researcher migrated to Canada as a “reverse missionary” to evangelise Canadians. This led to the formation of the All Nations Full Gospel Church in Toronto, Canada.

All Nations became a church planting movement that has planted twenty-eight (28) churches across Canada and two (2) in United States of America; two (2) churches in Europe; one (1) in Asia and Eighty-eight (88) in Africa.

#### *4.4.1 How it All Began*

The researcher was invited out by friends one evening, during the Holy Week Celebrations in April 1972. Their wanderings led them to the Easter House Party of the Scripture Union of Ghana, which was conducting a crusade from Good Friday to Easter Sunday at the Seventh Day Adventist School Park in Koforidua, Ghana.

It was at the crusade that the researcher though an ardent churchgoer accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Saviour. That decision turned the researcher's life around and set him on the path of a spiritual journey that has touched multitudes on all Continents.

On that Good Friday, the researcher decided to respond to the altar call given by the preacher to accept Christ. As the decision was being made, the researcher heard a voice, saying, “Do not join them! You are too young to commit your life to Christ. If you do, you will miss out on all the fun you could enjoy in life as a young person. You will be miserable in life if you make the decision to commit your life to Christ at these early years of your life”. Then another voice said, “No you are not too young to commit your life to God. You

will not be miserable, for in Me you will have joy, peace and fulfillment in life”. The two competing voices kept ringing loud and clear in the head of the researcher. In the end the researcher accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour with the commitment to serve Christ with all his ability and might. And thus, began an exciting spiritual journey.

#### *4.1.2 The Call to ministry*

Immediately after accepting Jesus, the desire to see Jesus consumed the researcher. Hence the prayer, “Lord please reveal Yourself to me”. One night just before dawn the Lord granted the researcher’s prayer request by opening the eyes to see the judgement day. The world was doing business as usual. However, without warning, the heavens tore open and an archangel sounded a long trumpet blast that caught everyone’s attention. The world came to a standstill and everyone looked up. Lo and behold, the Lord Jesus was returning with a multitude of angels and a host of others. There was a great earthquake with people running helter-skelter trying to hide from His presence. Many running to the mountains and begging for an avalanche to bury them, so they could hide from His presence. The mountains spoke and said to them, “We do not kill anymore, so no more avalanches”. They ran to the sea and begged to drown in order to hide from His presence. But the sea spoke and said, “No more drowning because we do not kill anymore”. The sea gave up the dead in it and the four corners of the earth came together like one piece. Regardless of where one stood, one could see the far corners of the earth. There was wailing and gnashing of teeth. It seemed like only a handful of people were truly ready to meet their God. Everyone else begged for a few seconds to put things right but it was too late.

Finally, the Lord descended to the earth and humanity was gathered into two groups; Believers and Unbelievers. The Unbelievers were gathered together like one would gather sticks and tie them up. They were gathered and tied together to be thrown into hell. The Lord Jesus sat on a huge judgement throne and a big book was placed before Him by an angel. He leafed through the pages and stopped. Then He called out the name of the researcher who stepped forward from among the crowd and stood before the Lord. The Lord read from the book what was written about the researcher, the calling and purpose in life. The Lord pointed out to the researcher the multitude that had been gathered together like sticks of firewood to be cast into the lake of fire and said to the researcher, this was

your purpose in life – to reach as many of those unsaved multitude as possible but you took interest in engineering instead of ministry.

That divine encounter left no doubt in the mind of the researcher, the will of God, the purpose and the pursuits in life that would please God. That divine encounter that happened in 1973, sparked an unquenchable fire for soul winning in the heart of the researcher and shifted the focus from engineering to ministry with emphasis on soul winning. As the researcher was ending the engineering programme, it became apparent that life after schooling must be devoted in its entirety to ministry. That became a burden that drove the researcher to seek God one afternoon before writing the last paper of the Mechanical Engineering Programme. Alone in a classroom at the Accra Polytechnical Institute now Accra Technical University, preparing for the final paper the researcher wanted a confirmation from God. Should the pursuit of ministry be immediately after writing the last paper or work for a few years before embarking on ministry. The prayer was “Dear God, I know you have called me and there is no question in my mind about that. Nevertheless, that I may know whether Your will for me is to step into ministry after writing the last paper tomorrow or wait for a few years before stepping into full time ministry. Also, Lord, to prepare effectively for the type of ministry that You have called me to carry out for you, I desire to be trained by this famous American Evangelist, Dr. Morris Cerullo. Therefore, if it is your perfect will for me to begin ministry immediately after school, may you clearly reveal this so as not to have any doubts about your perfect will in this matter ever again”.

#### *4.1.3 The Confirmation for Ministry*

As soon as those words were uttered in prayer to God, an awesome presence filled the place and the researcher began to tremble and cry in the awesomeness of the presence that filled the classroom. Then a gently wind blew across the classroom. The wind carried an aerogramme or an air letter card which was used in those days to write overseas letters. The researcher burst into tears as God had undeniably showed that it was His perfect will to pursue ministry immediately after completing studies in Mechanical Engineering.

The researcher picked the aerogramme lettercard and wrote a letter to the American Evangelist. After the researcher wrote the letter requesting the American Evangelist to

adopt and train him for the ministry, a new reality dawned on the researcher about life! What about the necessities of life? Who would provide these things? What about money for rent? What about money for daily upkeep? Then fear set in, to the point where the researcher tore the letter into pieces. As soon as the letter was destroyed the wind blew again and carried another aerogramme or an air letter card and dropped it before the researcher as at first. That episode caused the researcher to tremble and shake like a leaf in the wind. With tears and trembling, the researcher surrendered totally to the will of God regardless of the potential hardship ahead. The researcher picked the air letter card, wrote the Evangelist knowing it was the Lord's perfect will to begin ministry after the final paper the next day.

#### *4.1.4 The Itinerant Evangelist Begins Ministry*

With that resolve, ministry started in earnest right after college in 1978. Due to the vision of a global ministry and the desire to reach multitudes around the world, the chosen name for the ministry was "World Reconciliation Evangelistic Ministry". In obedience to the will of God the ministry was launched without fanfare, people, money, material support nor any organization behind it. It was a step of faith into the unknown. Shortly after, a response was received from the American Evangelist who offered a full scholarship to his School of Ministry in San Diego, California, U.S.A. However, the lack of resources made it financially impossible to purchase an air ticket to go to the school. The Evangelist offered a second scholarship to his African campus School of Ministry in Nairobi, Kenya and again lack of finances caused the researcher to forfeit that opportunity as well.

All who knew the researcher advised that the approach was wrong; that the first few years should be used to work to acquire the necessities of life before ministry. Apart from the researcher's parents giving their blessings, all friends and acquaintances were against the step taken. The researcher then decided not to take offerings to avoid being misconstrued that money was the motive for ministry. Yet by faith, God Almighty sustained the researcher and granted grace to become an effective evangelist. Ministry was first and foremost on the basis of personal evangelism. Witnessing to people on the streets, in their homes and just about everywhere and anywhere people gather or could be encountered with the gospel. Ministry also took place in schools, hospitals, prisons, public transport,

churches, as well as organizing mass crusades to reach the lost. All this was done without taking offerings but freely working that men and women would be saved. In spite of no financial support for the ministry, the researcher saw hundreds and hundreds of people accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour on account of the ministry.

#### *4.1.5 God's Heartbeat for Converts*

One evening after preaching on a train from the Tema Harbour to Achimota in Ghana and seeing everyone accept Jesus, the researcher was in a joyous mood. But while basking in that euphoria on the way home, just a few yards to the house, there was an audible voice so clear that for a moment the researcher thought someone behind spoke those words. The voice asked, "Who gives birth to children and does not care for them and expect them to survive?" After turning and seeing no one on the footpath, the voice continued "I like your zeal, I like what you do for Me, the preaching and getting people saved. But if you do not care for the souls that get born again, they will not survive, they will die. So, if you come to heaven and never meet any one of them in heaven you should not be surprised!" That completely overturned the researcher's theology.

Having been taught that it was more important to get a person to say the sinner's prayer than to belong to a church or denomination; simply leading people to Christ has been the foundation of the ministry. After this personal encounter with the Lord, the researcher was beginning to understand the depths of God's love for His children. Those who turn to the Lord through evangelistic outreach should not be abandoned to fend for themselves in the faith. Rather, there should be a comprehensive programme that begins from decision to consolidation to discipling to disciple making. The researcher calls it the Christian life cycle or ministry life cycle – Decision – Consolidation – Discipling – Disciple-making.

***Decision*** entails the means by which a person is reached with the gospel in such a way as to move that individual to make a decision to follow Jesus. Or to make a decision to accept Jesus as Lord and personal Saviour.

***Consolidation*** entails the immediate follow-up necessary to ensure the new believer continues in the faith. This involves basic foundational teachings to ground a person in the

faith. This may include personal visits to encourage the new believer to keep on with the faith.

**Discipling** is the whole gamut of the Christian life which involves membership within a Christian body of believers where constant nurturing through teachings and practising faith lead to growth in the Christian life as a mature disciple of Christ. Thus, becoming a healthy member of the body of Christ.

**Disciple-making** is when a healthy member of the body of Christ or the church is now producing after his or her kind. Making disciples now becomes the natural function of a healthy Christian.

#### 4.2 Organising Fellowship Groups

With this new conviction, the researcher set out to consolidate the converts by organizing bible studies and prayer meetings for them. This was the best that could be done due to the previous held position of just getting people to say the sinner's prayer only. Crusades would be organised and converts would be gathered into Fellowship groups for Bible Studies and Prayer Meetings. By so doing, the converts were tracked and kept in the faith more effectively than previously where they were just instructed to pick any of the Bible believing churches from the list given to them. By keeping the converts in the fellowships and discipling them, many remained in the faith and continued on to become not just mere soulwinners but fulltime ministers of the Church of Jesus Christ.

This approach led to the founding of eight (8) fellowships in Achimota, Aboabo, African Motors Technical Training School (Accra), Agogo Community Health Nursing Training School, Begoro, Huhunya and Koforidua. These were interdenominational fellowship groups that were para-church associations called the World Reconciliation Evangelistic Ministries Inc. Meetings were held on Sundays at 4:00pm – 6:00pm: Bible Studies; Thursday at 6:30pm – 8:30pm. Prayer meetings; every last Friday of the month: 9:00pm - 6:00am -All Night Prayer meetings.

The Bible Studies was held in a discussion format with the leader being a facilitator to encourage the discussion. Chairs were arranged in a circular format to study scriptures together. From time to time a seminar would be organised on a topic. Converts would then

sit in a regular classroom or church arrangement with the leader standing before the class to teach on a topic.

However, the Bible discussions offered converts opportunities to ask questions about the passages being discussed and attendees would be encouraged at the end to memorize verses of scriptures. This led to the consolidation of converts, helping many to remain in the faith way beyond the conversion experience. However, the parachurch fellowship didn't go far enough. Since the fellowship was not a church, communion was not administered at the meetings and converts were not baptised.

Furthermore, the leaders of the ministry did not have any ministerial training and were not ordained. Hence, the need to encourage members of the fellowship to belong to churches where they could access the sacraments of the faith such as baptism, communion, solemnization of marriages and so forth. Nevertheless, due to the evangelistic zeal of the founder of the World Reconciliation Evangelistic Ministries, the fellowships grew very rapidly at the various centres.

Outreach involved house to house witnessing, street evangelism, open-air crusades, preaching on buses, trains, schools, prisons, hospitals and dawn broadcast. Dawn broadcast was done in the early morning hours in the neighbourhoods without public address systems. A song or two may be sang to wake up people in the early morning hours between 4:30am to 6:30am while people were still on their beds. After they are awoken by the song, the gospel would be preached to them. Many a time people would open their windows to listen to the gospel. It was effective in "catching" souls for the kingdom. The preacher would preach for about thirty minutes (30 mins) and conclude with an altar call. Then move to another location every 30 mins till about 6:30am.

#### 4.2.1 Conflicts with Churches

As the fellowship grew, members were put in conflict situations. Their love for Christ and zeal for the things of God were noticeable by their pastors. Thus, fellowship members were given responsibilities in their churches. These assigned responsibilities conflicted with fellowship meetings thus causing their commitment to the fellowships to wane or in some cases stopped attending altogether. Those who refused to take up responsibilities at their

churches were cautioned by their pastors and leaders to desist from attending the fellowship because the founder was young and without formal ministerial training. Though these souls came to Christ through the evangelistic efforts of the researcher.

Thus, a careful consideration of the need for a church instead of a para-church group made more sense as the attacks increased. Nevertheless, the will to start a church could not be mustered and the prospects of such a move was extremely scary considering the huge backlash the founder faced from churches and fellow Christians for starting a fellowship. In the nineteen seventies (1970s), the prevailing practice in Ghana was to become a freelance evangelist or work for an established denomination. The practice of starting churches was widely accepted if initiated by either the African Indigenous Churches (A.I.C.) or established denominations like the Baptists, Assembly of God, just to name a few.

Majority of the African Indigenous Churches mixed their faith with traditional practices thus adulterating the gospel message. AIC's syncretic practices made them unappealing to the educated but the uneducated and traditionalists flocked to them. However, mainline churches started by European Missionaries or foreign missionaries like the Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, SDA, Roman Catholic and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church had respect among the educated whereas AICs did not. This was a major concern in the mind of the researcher whether to launch a church or remain a fellowship. However, the incessant attacks on the fellowships by some clergy left no other option but to launch a church. It was during this momentous decision-making time in the life of the researcher that the opportunity to migrate to Canada to join the fiancée came up.

#### 4.3 A Missionary to the Western Hemisphere

In May 1981, the founder left the shores of Ghana to join the fiancée Rose Boateng in Toronto, Canada. The night before the journey the founder sought the face of the Lord in prayer. Unsure and uncertain about life overseas caused the founder to cry out to God for direction for ministry and life in North America. It was almost like the Jacob wrestling experience. The founder prayed until God unequivocally spoke, saying, "Your life is in exchange for many souls. I am taking you to North America to set a fire that will keep my children's faith alive. For many people travel to that part of the world and the cold reception

they get from the churches turn them away from the faith and from Me. Therefore, go and establish a place of worship where everyone feels welcome and accepted. I will give you a large work and put resources in your hands to work in Africa and other developing countries because the Western churches have curtailed their missionary work for Me.’’

With this inspiration the researcher asked the Lord to use the researcher’s life to reciprocate the lives of Western missionaries that paid the ultimate price of losing their lives for God in Africa. With that resolve the African missionary set out to be used of God in the Western world as a reverse missionary.

#### *4.3.1 Landing at Toronto Airport*

As the African Missionary to the Western Hemisphere stepped out of the airport, the spiritual darkness hanging over the City of Toronto could be felt. The African Missionary said, “Though Africa is called the Dark Continent, there’s more of God’s light over there than in North America.’’ Then the African Missionary prayed and said, “Lord use my life to bring Your light to this City”. As soon as the African Missionary could retrace his steps back to the apartment the street ministry began. The African Missionary would go out to the business centre of the City of Toronto to witness to people about Christ.

The ministry was at the Eaton Centre Mall and extended a few blocks up Yonge Street and Dundas Street to Bloor Street and Yonge Street. Thousands of gospel tracts were distributed. Some received it gladly. Others took it without knowing what it was but upon realizing what it was, a gospel tract, threw it away. Some simply refused to accept the tract while a few others made derogatory remarks. One spat on the African missionary. This act rejoiced the evangelist’s heart greatly because of being “counted worthy to suffer for Christ’s sake.”

After a few months living in Downtown Toronto, the researcher moved to East York where again street evangelism picked up in earnest. Every Saturday the African missionary would stand at the intersection of St. Clair Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue distributing tracts and sharing the gospel with whosoever would listen. When the reversed missionary won two converts to the Lord, permission was sought from the Superintendent of the apartment building to begin a Bible Study in the unit where the researcher lived. Permission was granted, and fellowship meetings began with the converts. Shortly after,

others joined through personal evangelism. But, the new work in the East ceased when the family moved to the West. The Jane and Finch area in the West was bustling with many immigrants making evangelism a lot easier than any of the places in the City of Toronto encountered so far.

#### *4.3.2 Disheartened Moment*

One day as the African Evangelist was riding on the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) bus, the urge to get up and preach the gospel to the riders was almost irresistible. That had been a practice in Africa that whenever the evangelist travelled whether on buses or trains the gospel would be preached to the passengers. As the evangelist was contemplating the next move; a voice was heard, saying, “Get up and preach!”. Another voice countered by saying, “Do not preach!” As this tussle was going on in the mind, finally the preacher heard a voice saying, “look up above your head!” The evangelist looked up and saw the posted City By-law forbidding any solicitation on public transportation. What a discouraging moment for the evangelist.

Fear struck the heart of the evangelist that caused the entire body to tremble as the thought of not being able to preach freely to the people, like back home in Africa, became a reality. For days that episode cast a long shadow of gloom and doubt in the mind of the evangelist as to the way forward with evangelism in the city of Toronto and Canada in general. The people seemed cold towards the things of God. Many had no interest in spiritual matters whatsoever. Materialism and the pursuit of wealth were the drive of many. Strangely people could play music and even sing at bus stations and public squares freely, so the preacher wondered why the gospel could not be preached freely in similar manner? Nevertheless, the African missionary to the West kept going out on the weekends with a few of the converts to distribute tracts and to share the gospel one on one with any willing soul. The passion to reach Canadians with the gospel was fueled by the preacher’s conviction that if the white missionaries died in Africa in their efforts to share the gospel with Africans then the preacher would go out every Saturday to share the gospel regardless of weather conditions. True to this commitment the evangelist went out in blizzard conditions to distribute tracts and people would scream saying, “Man is too cold; get out of here.” In Toronto the weather could be cold with the temperature in double digits below

zero in the winter. This did not deter the preacher as the passion was for God to use an African to reciprocate the people of the Western Hemisphere through reverse missionary endeavours.

Thus, with intense evangelism in the Jane and Finch area of Downsview in the City of North York many converts were brought to the saving knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These converts were invited to fellowship meetings which were held regularly. Weekly meetings were held in the apartment to nurture and disciple the converts for the Lord.

#### *4.3.3 Venturing Out*

In 1985, the World Reconciliation Evangelistic Ministry of the Toronto was incorporated to give legitimacy to the ministry. By this time over twenty souls met regularly in the apartment, so the evangelist decided to take the meetings to the Yorkwoods Gate Community Centre. This move made it more attractive to people as more and more attended the meetings. On Sunday mornings most of the converts would be taken to the church the missionary attended. Converts would be picked up for Church. The evangelist picked them from their apartments and returned them to their homes after the service. It got to a point where it would take three or more trips each Sunday to cart all the converts to church. But on Sunday afternoons they would gather for Bible Studies and fellowship meetings at the Yorkwoods Gate Community Centre.

The growing conviction about training for ministry, especially after the completion of a diploma in Electronics Engineering from Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology, drove the evangelist to begin studying and preparing himself theologically for effective ministry. The African Missionary obtained a Diploma in Practical Pastoral Theology from the Church Alliance Bible Extension Institute, and was ordained at the Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana in the United States of America on 24th July 1986, at the International Conference of the Evangelical Church Alliance. As soon as the preacher returned to Toronto, Ontario, Canada an announcement was made to provide holistic ministry to the members by launching the All Nations Full Gospel Church.

Out of about fifty (50) fellowship members, about thirty-six (36) decided to join the new church. Service time moved from Sunday evenings to Sunday mornings at the

Yorkwoods Gate Community Centre. However, the policy of the Community Centre was that individual community programmes have priority over religious programmes. In addition, the Centre was not accessible on public holidays since the staff would not work on holidays. Such closures affected the regularity of church services, so in December 1986 Church moved to the Faith Lutheran Church on 96 Hucknall Road, at the entrance of York University. Sharing facilities with the Faith Lutheran Church gave All Nations Full Gospel Church the opportunity to develop a holistic ministry and grow rapidly.

The name of the ministry was officially changed from World Reconciliation Evangelistic Ministries to All Nations Full Gospel Church of Toronto in 1986. All Nations Full Gospel Church was able to meet multiple times in the week which it couldn't do before it moved to 96 Hucknall Road to share facilities with the Faith Lutheran Church. Meeting times were as follows:

Sunday Service:

Sunday School: 1:00pm – 1:55pm

Worship Service: 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Mid-week Service:

Bible Study: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Friday Prayer Meeting:

All Night Prayer: 9:00pm – 5:00am

Meetings were also held at 41 Franca Crescent in Etobicoke to augment services at the Lutheran Church as follows:

Daily morning prayers: 6:00am – 7:00am

Sunday morning activities: 9:00am – 11:00am

Choir rehearsal

Intercessory prayer

The Choir rehearsed in the basement while the intercessory team prayed in the living room every Sunday morning.

## **Retreats**

There were regular retreats for the leaders on Victoria Day weekends and for all members on Thanksgiving weekends at various retreat centers in Ontario.

Leaders' retreats focused on leadership development whereas general retreats for all members focused on teaching, prayer, healing, breakthroughs and salvation.

The Church grew rapidly filling the sanctuary to capacity with the overflow crowds using the fellowship hall as well as the hallways. Loud speakers were extended to the auxiliary sitting areas outside of the main sanctuary. The Lutheran church provided an office space for the pastor which helped with counseling of members and non-members who sought for spiritual counseling. When the Church moved in December 1986 to the Faith Lutheran Church the membership was about forty-six (46). But by the time the Church moved to a larger facility on Steeles Avenue in December 1989 the attendance was about one hundred and fifty (150). The Church outgrew the facilities of the Faith Lutheran Church necessitating a move to a large facility. However, it became apparent that getting a larger place of worship in commercial areas was going to be an expensive proposition. Secondly, some residential communities didn't welcome large gatherings of immigrants in their neighbourhoods which sometimes resulted in opposition to requests for amendments or change of use applications made to the City Hall. Therefore, All Nations Full Gospel Church leadership decided to look for facilities in industrial areas.

This led the Church to 4267 Steeles Avenue West in North York, Ontario. It was a 10,000 square foot industrial warehouse with offices already done but a vast warehouse space to be renovated to accommodate a sanctuary and other facilities for church ministry. Unfortunately, the adjoining residential neighbours objected to the change of use application from a warehouse to a place of worship made to the City of North York. Finally, the compromise was for the landlord to erect a non-see-through-fence to block the view of worshippers from seeing through the neighbours' backyard. The move to 4267 Steeles Ave. West enabled the Congregation to grow and expand the ministry.

Leadership development classes on Mondays at 6:30 – 8:30pm was introduced. This helped to fulfil the mission statement of raising leaders for the Body of Christ. The leader's classes became the foundation for the All Nations Bible College. A Christian

bookstore ministry was also launched. This helped the congregation to become avid readers of Christian literature thus deepening their knowledge and Christian experience.

It was at 4267 Steeles Ave. West that the Cell Ministry or Home Fellowship ministry was launched. The Congregation continued to grow. It soon became apparent that the congregation must have its own building. Many properties were considered but the Congregation settled on 4401 Steeles Ave. West which was an industrial building. The property was purchased at the cost of four million, three hundred thousand Canadian dollars (\$4.3M) on a four and half (4.5) acre land. Extensive renovations were made to the twenty-five thousand square feet (25,000 sqft) industrial building.

Initially the renovations were limited to the Sanctuary since the building had nice offices which also accommodated the Children's ministry. Later on, the facilities were upgraded with a mezzanine floor put in at the south east corner of the property for additional classroom and storage facilities. The property at 4401 Steeles Ave. West has become the headquarters of a global church with para church ministries.

#### 4.4 All Nations Full Gospel Church Toronto

##### 4.4.1 All Nations Full Gospel Church Mission Statement:<sup>250</sup>

1. To create a spiritual family where everyone feels loved and accepted (Eph 1:6).
2. To provide a place of worship where everyone's talents, gifting and abilities are utilized (1 Pet 4:10).
3. To create a house of prayer for all nations (Isa 56:7, Mk 11:17).
4. To train and raise leaders for the Body of Christ (2 Tim 2:2).
5. To fulfill the Great Commission through Church planting (Matt 28: 18-20).

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<sup>250</sup> Mission statements are not exclusive to churches or religious organisations. Schools, educational institutions, businesses, social clubs have a *mission statement* that outlines the organization's purpose, identifies the scope of its operations in terms of the kind of product or service it provides, its regular patrons or business, and its area of doing business. See Jeffrey Abrahams, *The Mission Statement Book: 301 Corporate Mission Statements from America's Top Companies* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1999). Most churches have a Handbook, Constitution or Book of Discipline containing their Mission Statements. According to MISSIONSTATEMENTS.com, a website that lists church mission statements, "A church mission statement defines the leadership's vision of congregational purpose and tells you if their vision is in line with God's purposes for your life," [http://www.missionstatements.com/church\\_mission\\_statements.html](http://www.missionstatements.com/church_mission_statements.html).

#### 4.4.2 All Nations Philosophy of Ministry<sup>251</sup>

The above five points in the Mission Statement became ANFGCI ministry philosophy.

I. To create a spiritual family where everyone feels loved and accepted (Eph 1:6).

The church in the Western world is closed in to people of another race that one is made to feel unwelcome. Because it is an individualistic culture it is not open and friendly. The unfriendly attitude can only be overcome by teaching members to love one another as Christ commanded His disciples to do in John 15:17, “These things I command you, that you love one another. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Individualism in the Western world has crippled relationships to the extent that many have very few or no friends. So unless the church obeys the command of the Lord to go beyond the false sense of security many have shrouded themselves in, you cannot provide ministry that meaningfully impacts them. So All Nations designed small fellowships to get members to relate to one another and build a bond of love with one another.

2. To provide a place of worship where everyone’s talents, gifting and abilities are utilized (1 Pet 4:10).

It is important that we recognize that each member has something unique to contribute to the body. No member of the human body is useless nor irrelevant. Every member of the human body has a unique role to play whether within or without. “For in fact the body is not one member but many. But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. But now indeed there are many members, yet one body” (1 Cor 12:14, 18, 20). We know that from the hair on the head to the sole of the foot each member of the body has a unique role to play that enables the body to function effectively and productively. Therefore, All Nations encourages all members of the church to get involved in ministry. Emphasising 1 Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the

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<sup>251</sup> Church Philosophy of Ministry "is more specific than the biblical purposes of the church. All churches should share the biblical 'givens' —the marks and duties of the church. All churches are called to worship God, to build up the saints, to witness to the nations, and so on. But a philosophy of ministry makes the church distinct, describing a vision for the church that is specific and unique to that congregation. It is more specific than a church’s denomination," <http://static.squarespace.com/static/5315f2e5e4b04a00bc148f24/t/54107961e4b033b71bbfe15c/1410365793033/Ministry+Design+Philosophy+of+Ministry.pdf>. See J. Hampton Keathley, III's article at: <https://bible.org/article/biblical-philosophy-ministry>;

manifold grace of God. “Each member is reminded that as good stewards it is required of us to be faithful in utilizing the gifts that God has given to us to serve His church.

3. To create a house of prayer for all nations (Isa 56:7, Mk. 11:17).

One can feel the heartbeat of God for world evangelization in the prophesy of Isaiah 57:6, “Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. “This heart cry of God was reiterated by Christ as He cleansed the temple and reminded the religious leaders of His day that the purpose of the temple was a house of prayer for all nations, "Then He taught saying to them, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves!” (Mk 11:17). All Nations believes that prayer is essential to church ministry and every individual, as such must be made available to all believers. Therefore, ANFGC has daily morning prayers, and extended prayer on Friday nights.

4. To Train and Raise Leaders for the Body of Christ (2 Tim 2:2).

The Master Plan for world evangelization that Jesus laid for the church involved training leaders; the twelve, the seventy and many more: Therefore, for the church to fulfil its mandate of going to all the world with the gospel would require the training and raising of leaders as instructed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. “Leadership development is critical to sustaining and growing the ministry as demonstrated by the Apostle Paul in Ephesus (Act 19:9-20). Paul used the School of Tyrannus to teach and raise leaders. The results were more than remarkable where in two years... “all who dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. “At ANFGCI, leaders are trained to serve in all capacities of ministry. From being a greeter at the door to being in the pulpit or being sent out as a church planter.

5. To fulfill the Great Commission through Church planting (Matt 28: 18-20)

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.’ As already discussed above, ANFGCI believes that this command does not just form part of Jesus’ last words to His disciples but expresses all He wants them to do for Him on earth. Therefore, obeying the Great commission means a lot to Jesus than all the monies and sacrifices we can give Him.

So, with this ministry philosophy, the founder began ministry with great passion and zeal to convert the multitudes of sinners to the Lord. Then to see many in the meetings say the sinner’s prayer, delight the heart until the Lord asked, “Do you expect uncared for babies to survive and live?” That opened the eyes to the Lord’s heartbeat concerning evangelism and how converts are handled in a way never seen before.

That brought the understanding that the Lord was interested in us bearing fruits that remain, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you” (John 15:16).

When it became apparent to the researcher that the Lord was not just interested in only getting many to say the sinner's prayer who may never become disciples; it prompted the examining the ministry in the light of the Scriptures and caused the alignment of ministry practices in line with the Scriptures.

Then the researcher asked in what ways can the souls being led to Christ become disciples? It is like a woman who gives birth to a baby. There is tremendous joy that a child has been born. But the mother does not walk out of the hospital’s maternity ward just happy that she has brought forth a new life into the world without that child. She takes the child home to nurture and to raise that child into manhood. No wonder the Apostle Paul says of the Galatians, “My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you.”

Paul describes the responsibility preachers have toward the souls that are birthed into the Kingdom through their ministries. Our job is never done until Christ is formed in them. That calls for a home where nurturing of the babe in Christ can take place. That spiritual home is the Church of Jesus Christ. Where through preaching, teaching and fellowship they are developed into mature disciples for Christ. As Paul says the things you have heard and learned from me, these are to be committed to faithful men to continue in the ministry. These scriptures

made the researcher take a close look at the Great Commission passage and realized that the end of conversion is discipleship. The Christian life begins with conversion but ends with discipleship.

Evangelism is a tool to win the lost, but after that teaching with the aim of nurturing and grooming into disciples can only be done in a structured manner. The church remains the most effective vehicle for making disciples for the Lord Jesus. Therefore, when souls get saved, they must be brought to the church for development. Hence church planting is the most effective way to consolidate, keep and disciple new believers. As such, All Nations developed a church planting strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission.

#### 4.5 Expansion and Church Planting in Canada

(a) Though the vision from the beginning was a global ministry that would reach the uttermost parts of the world with the gospel, the first church plant did not happen by human design; but by a strange set of circumstances. As the Church grew and increased in number, many travelled long distances to attend the services in Toronto. One day after the service, members from Hamilton, Ontario were returning home when they had a car crash that almost resulted in the death of the driver. The driver who was their leader had moved from Toronto to Hamilton and was the one who started inviting people to the services in Toronto. When the founder visited him at the McMaster University Hospital, the Lord said. “To minimize such exposure to danger, organize a church in this City for them.” When the accident victim was discharged from the hospital and was well enough to be on his feet, a church was organized in Hamilton for these members. Space was rented from the Church of Ascension Anglican congregation in the City of Hamilton for the services.

(b) The second church plant resulted from some members of the Toronto branch relocating to Ajax, Ontario due to cheaper accommodation.

(c) The third church was also occasioned by a couple moving from Toronto to Ottawa for further studies.

This pattern repeated itself many times. However, in many instances it was a strategic decision to plant a church in certain locals and cities based on several factors such as demographics, nucleus of members in the area, a dynamic member who moved to a new

place or an independent church planter initiating a new work and asking to join the fellowship.

All Nations Full Gospel Church of Toronto was later renamed All Nations Full Gospel Church with its Headquarters Church in Toronto and twenty-four (24) branches across Canada. Below is the list of cities in Canada where All Nations Full Gospel Church has been successfully planted.

1. Ajax, Ontario
2. Barrie, Ontario
3. Calgary, Alberta
4. Cambridge, Ontario
5. Edmonton, Alberta
6. Gatineau, Quebec
7. Halifax, Nova Scotia
8. Hamilton, Ontario
9. Kitchener, Ontario
10. London, Ontario,
11. Markham, Ontario
12. Montreal, Quebec
13. Oakville, Ontario
14. Ottawa, Ontario
15. Peterborough, Ontario
16. Quebec City, Quebec
17. Regina, Saskatchewan
18. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
19. St. Catharines, Ontario
20. Spanish Mississauga, Ontario
21. Spanish Toronto, Ontario
22. Vancouver, British Columbia,
23. Windsor, Ontario
24. Winnipeg, Ontario

All Nations Full Gospel Church believe that the Great Commission remains relevant today and that Church Planting is the most effective way of fulfilling it, is what underpins and drives the ministry. This conviction caused leaders to be trained and sent out as church planters. As with the work in Canada, members moved to the United States of America (USA) and other parts of the world to live or work. They gather souls and a church planter is sent to lead the work and to plant the church. Thus, All Nations Full Gospel Church driven by the Great Commission given by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ has become a Church planting movement.

#### 4.6 All Nations Full Gospel Churches International

From the Church in Toronto, church planters were trained and sent to other cities to evangelize, to win souls and to plant churches. As a result of the evangelistic outreach. Today the church planting effort has yielded one hundred and ten (110) churches in fifteen (15) countries on five (5) Continents. All Nations Full Gospel Churches International (ANFGCI) has the responsibility to manage the international churches which are in the following Countries and Continents.

#### **North America**

1. **United States**
  - a. Dallas, Texas
  - b. Dayton, Ohio
  - c. Detroit, Michigan
2. **Central & South America**
  - a. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
  - b. San Jose, Costa Rica
  - c. Vitoria, Espirito Santos, Brazil
3. **Europe**
  - a. Oslo, Norway
  - b. Coimbra, Portugal
4. **Asia**
  - a. Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines

5. **Africa**

a. **Angola**

i. Luanda, Angola

b. **Ghana**

i. Agogo

ii. Agona Asante

iii. ANU Church (City Campus)

iv. ANU Church (Main Campus)

v. Asankragwa

vi. Barekese

vii. Bawdie

viii. Bogoso

ix. Effiduase

x. Koforidua

xi. Kumasi

xii. Offinso

xiii. Samreboi

xiv. Sowutuom

xv. Sunyani

xvi. Taifa

xvii. Tesano

xviii. Teshie

xix. Yirase

c. **Ivory Coast**

i. Bahwonbli

ii. Guede

iii. Kahiblee

iv. Klaon

v. Kphablee

- vi. Seinzibly
- vii. Touapleubli
- viii. Toulepleu
- ix. Toyebli

d. ***Liberia***

- i. Bain-Gowee
- ii. Barker Farm/Wkenlah
- iii. Catholic Com. Monrovia
- iv. Dewobee
- v. Dubuzon/Zodru
- vi. Duwehn Town
- vii. Ganta
- viii. Ganta /Zangba St.
- ix. Kaylay/Guede
- x. Loguato
- xi. Mount Barclay
- xii. Pipeline 4 Houses Rd
- xiii. Pipeline, Monrovia
- xiv. Sanniquellie
- xv. Tonzolomon
- xvi. Yekepa/Jacob Town

e. ***Sierra Leone***

- i. Kabala

f. ***South Sudan***

- i. Ahuu
- ii. Akeu Yic
- iii. Angol
- iv. Ayai
- v. Aweil Town, Gabat

- vi. Aweil Town, Riang Makuei
- vii. Gok Machar
- viii. Goranyen
- ix. Jaberona
- x. Kongder
- xi. Mabior Aweng
- xii. Mabior Ngor
- xiii. Mabior Rit
- xiv. Machar Anyuon
- xv. Majak Bol
- xvi. Majook Deng Dut
- xvii. Malek Alel
- xviii. Malual Loch
- xix. Maluil Akong
- xx. Marial Baai
- xxi. Marol Buol
- xxii. Mathiang Riang
- xxiii. Mayom Adhal
- xxiv. Mayuier
- xxv. Nyamelelldit
- xxvi. Nyamlel
- xxvii. Pannyor
- xxviii. Pan-tit
- xxix. Pelhyiik
- xxx. Pethdit
- xxxi. Riang Achol
- xxxii. Rumrak

#### 4.7 All Nations Full Gospel Church's Church Planting Strategy

All Nations Church Planting Ministry embraces the following strategy:

- Each Pastor takes a young person under his or her tutelage

- These are individuals who have the call of God upon their lives and are willing at some point to be in ministry. They are called ministers-in-training (MIT)
- They are trained for three years
- The training may sometimes consist of assisting the Pastor directly or in some other leadership capacity.
- The role of the founder is to meet with them monthly by teleconferencing due to MIT being at different locations.
- The founder gives them reading assignments covering various topics.
- The topics are discussed together; students share what they learned.
- MITs do a book report and send them in to be graded
- In the monthly meeting by phone, the founder speaks to them about ministry
  - What to know
  - What to do
  - What to avoid, etc.
- Once a year they meet for a weekend where the founder takes them through a weekend of intensive training.

The schedule for that weekend is

- Friday evening 7:00–9:00pm
- Saturday 9:00am–6:00pm
- Sunday 10:00am–12:00pm (during which they watch the leader conduct a service)

How the Plan Works and some projections

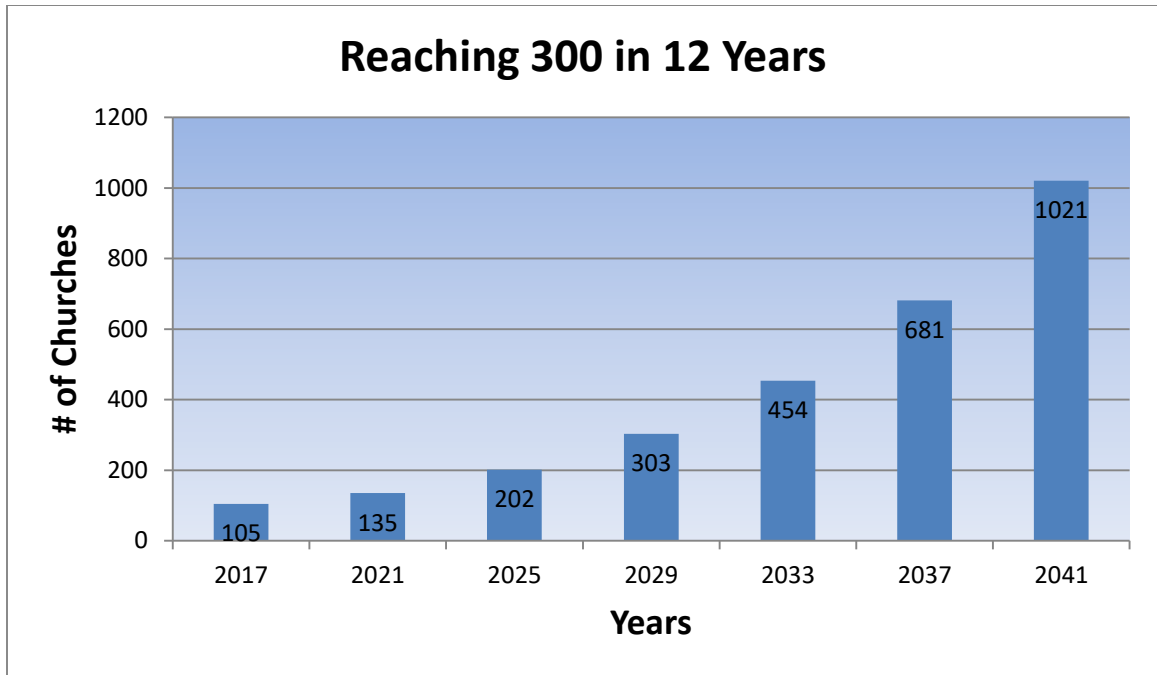
- 2005 – 2008 Number of churches 27
  - Number of Ministers-in-Training – 27
- 2009 Church Planting Year
  - 13 New Churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2009 = 40
- 2009 – 2012: 40 Ministers-In-Training
- 2013 Church Planting Year
  - 20 new churches are planted

- Total number of churches by 2013 = 60<sup>252</sup>
- 2013 – 2016: 60 Ministers-In-Training
- 2017: Church Planting Year
  - 30 new churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2017 = 90
- 2017- 2020: 90 Ministers-In-Training
- 2021: Church Planting Year
  - 45 new churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2021=135
- 2021-2024: 135 Ministers-In-Training
- 2025 – Church Planting Year
  - 67 new churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2025 = 202
- 2025 – 2028: 202 Minister-In-Training
- 2029: Church Planting Year
  - 101 New churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2029: 303
- 2029 – 2032: 303 Ministers-In-Training
- 2033 Church Planting year
  - 151 New churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2033 = 454
- 2033 – 2036: 454 Ministers-In-Training
- 2037: Church Planting Year
  - 227 New churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2037 = 681
- 2037 – 2040: 681 Ministers-In-Training
- 2041 – Church Planting Year
  - 340 New churches are planted
  - Total number of churches by 2041= 1021

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<sup>252</sup>This plan was put in place in 2005. In 2005 the church had 27 churches: Ministers are trained for 3 yrs. The church assumes that 50% of the ministers in training will be ready for the assignment in 3 yrs.

Figure 1. Membership Projection



By the Year 2041 with the help of God ANFGI will plant 1021 churches worldwide.

#### 4.8 All Nations Full Gospel Church Affiliates

In addition to All Nations Full Gospel Churches International, ANFGC has two affiliates to assist with fulfilling its mandate to reach the nations of the world with the Gospel and love of Christ.

1. All Nations International Development Agency (ANIDA)
2. All Nations Charitable Properties (All Nations Full Gospel Church of Canada)

##### *4.8.1 All Nations International Development Agency (ANIDA)*

ANIDA is a non-governmental organization (NGO) established by All Nations Full Gospel church as a practical demonstration of Christ’s love and compassion for humanity.

ANIDA focuses on Women’s empowerment, needy children, education and other humanitarian deeds. ANIDA established the All Nations University College in Ghana, a fully accredited University with four schools. They are School of Engineering, School of Humanities & Sciences, School of Business and School of Allied Health Sciences.

Through the four (4) schools thirteen accredited programmes are run;

#### I. School of Allied Health Sciences

1. Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical
2. Bachelor of Science in Nursing

#### II. School of Business

1. Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting
2. Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Finance
3. Bachelor of Business Administration in Entrepreneurship
4. Bachelor of Business Administration in Human Resource Management
5. Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing

#### III. School of Engineering

1. Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering
2. Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
3. Bachelor of Engineering in Electronics and Communications Engineering
4. Bachelor of Engineering in Oil and Gas Engineering

#### IV. School of Humanities and Sciences

1. Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies with Business Administration
2. Diploma of Arts in Biblical Studies with Business Administration
3. Service courses in Mathematics, Physics, English, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology and Sociology

ANIDA runs a Women's Development Centre (WDC) in Ghana. The WDC has been developed to support the full participation of Women and girls in every aspect of society through training and educational Programmes, effectively addressing gender inequality, and empowering women. The WDC is a community partnership center promoting high levels of confidence among women, to attain self-sufficiency and access to opportunities for further personal and business growth.

Women who attend the programmes offered at the WDC have the opportunities to develop their lives, attain literacy and entrepreneurial skills, enhance their academic qualifications and engage in life-long learning. The WDC functions as a teaching, meeting and communication center, where women obtain a variety of training, information and empowerment services including assistance in getting business start-up grants. The WDC

runs a Hairdressing School that offers training to women who become hairdressing professionals. Certification is provided through the National Vocation Training Institute (NVTI).

### **The Silent Cry**

Many children go to bed hungry with hunger pangs that fill their eyes with tears. ANIDA provides over 500 children with food, clothing and education that hopefully will lift them from poverty. Thus, breaking the cycle of poverty for them and their children. Some of the children sponsored by ANIDA have completed University education or other tertiary level education. In Ghana ANIDA sponsors 300 children from new-borns to those at the secondary and tertiary levels. In Jamaica ANIDA sponsors 200 children from new-borns to secondary school level.

A new After School Programme has been launched in Jamaica. The After-School programme seeks to help struggling students with their school assignments or homework and also keep school children from getting into trouble after school.

### **Project NOAH**

NOAH is Neighbourhood Outreach and Help project. This is usually run through All Nations Full Gospel Churches. These churches operate foodbanks for the poor and needy in the neighbourhoods they are located in. Families that cannot make ends meet access food on a weekly basis and sometimes clothing as needed. ANIDA sends relief to South Sudan, Haiti, Ghana and other places as practical demonstrations of the Gospel of Jesus.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

In this first section dealing with the evangelistic and church planting of the early church, the church today through Luke's Acts of the Apostles is given a depiction of how the gospel message spread during the inception of the early church. Acts provides us with a relevant evangelistic paradigm the church today cannot afford to down play. In Acts we find the account of the growth of the church, and in the epistles, especially Paul's, we find blueprints on how to plant and maintain a church. So, in reading and understanding both Acts and the Pauline Epistles, we encounter a pattern that churches of today that are interested in evangelism and church growth can follow. A model

that has been termed as “Early Church Pattern of Church Planting.”<sup>253</sup> According to this pattern, there are three major biblical passages that provide an overview for the church:<sup>254</sup>

- In Acts 13:1-14:28 - Evangelism took place, and local churches were established, and leaders were trained.
- In 1 Timothy 3:14-16 - Establishing churches was the crux of the Pastoral Epistles.
- In Ephesians 4:11-16 - The saints were equipped for the work of ministry.

In each of these major areas, several functions take place which have been labelled as the three Es - Evangelism, Establishing, and Entrusting:<sup>255</sup>

- In Evangelism - The Gospel is preached in communities, and among family and friends as the Holy Spirit uses believers to proclaim the word of God. The church also serves as part of and a witness in the community as it seeks the welfare and safety of the people by serving in various ways.
- Establishing - The church is established through faith by growing in relationships, teaching, and ministry. New believers are taught the first principles of Christianity through a caring community of believers. Every member of the group knew that they belong to a community in which their gifts and abilities are contributed to the advancement of the gospel and community.
- Entrusting - The church identifies leaders, trains and sends them to provide leadership and spiritual guidance to the established community. These leaders based on their gifts are further trained to efficiently lead in planting new churches and leading group of churches.

The unstructured expansion of the gospel, through the early church pattern of church planting, is different from the normal and traditional expansion we see today that is highly structured, controlled and organized by a religious institution. As noted above, evangelism in the early church was not based on a planned, organised order to follow as today, but ingenuity as led by the Holy Spirit enabled the Christians to propagate the gospel contextually that touches on the “Life Situation” of the people they witnessed to. This pattern helped the audience to understand and

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<sup>253</sup> "Early Church Pattern of Church Planting."

<sup>254</sup> "Early Church Pattern of Church Planting."

<sup>255</sup> "Early Church Pattern of Church Planting."

relate to the message. The message in other words, was proclaimed in the people's thought patterns and worldview. The Christians were living with their audience side by side, so they knew their thought patterns and ideologies.

It is impressive the way the early church ministered to their Jewish family. Jesus, his disciples and other followers deviated from the traditionally held interpretation of scriptures and the theological understanding of the time and was able to faithfully preserve Israel's faith as Christianity's foundation. It is more remarkable how such a new order and dispensation in the midst of strong opposition and treachery survived and grew into the world's largest religion.

The early church also succeeded in evangelism because the evangelists were willing to understand the thought patterns and culture of the day, and translated the gospel in ways that met the thoughts and needs of the people which possibly saved the Gentile mission from the fate of the Jewish one. We can say that the church today is not as connected either with the culture or its own gospel. Does the church understand the mind of the congregation and culture of the people it ministers to? Does the church leadership adequately understand the different religious theologies of people outside the church building - work places, homes, media, and universities? If we are capable of using the gospel contextually to effect change in our people will that be satisfactory? Although, scholars vary slightly in their understanding of how evangelism was done in the early Church, but here are some similarities that the NT and early Church Fathers writings contain:

First, evangelism in the early Church was undoubtedly and absolutely focused on the person of Jesus Christ. Christ was the message and he was what the early Christians proclaimed. The church preached about the Risen Christ at every available opportunity and at every place and community. Everything was done in the name and glory of Christ. Even at death, Christ was acknowledged. No one was encouraged to attract self-glorification. Christ was the one deserving praise and honour. However successful and gifted a member is, the glory must be given to Christ. He is the source of their success. The message must be based on him who is in control. Although the early Church Fathers developed and refined that theology, ultimately leading to the need for a permanent and closed canon, their theology was constantly focused on understanding who and what Jesus was and how the church could be best served for the furtherance of the gospel. This focus of the church was constantly challenged by the heresies which were propagated to stall the developing theology. In spite of this distraction and challenge, the early Church did not waver but stayed focused and preached the same message of Christ.

Second, evangelism was done as a community responsibility. It was the duty of each member to evangelise. Even outreach done by individuals was done in the name of the Body of Christ. This approach portrayed unity and support from members. Through evangelism, people of all background, ethnicity and status, were brought into the church where they experienced the love of Christ through the relentless caring of their new found community members. This was not what they were used to. The marginalised was not cared for by the non-Christians. Now, the Christians brought every status and level of people without discriminating.

Apart from the social communal experience, the church participated in the fellowship of the Lord's Supper. As part of that fellowship, they met together as one body to worship and partake of the Eucharist and to serve one another. This was in keeping with the command of Christ for believers to meet together and commune as stated in the Book of Acts: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47).

The success of the Christians no doubt provoked the envy of the unbelievers. However, in spite of the treachery of the unbelievers to dishonour and prevent these fellowships from continuing, the early Christians were not degraded. They held firm their belief and commitment which helped them to grow. They did not allow the plans and atrocities of the unbelievers to kill their spirit and determination. They progressed in the midst of the challenges and distractions. Their faith grew stronger and firmer in Christ. The early Church grew because the members served as a source for faithful witness and a safe haven for the people against an antagonistic world. People did their utmost to be a part of the Christians where there is love and safety. They became a family in Christ.

Third, evangelism was not only a strategy but also a way of life. It was a Christian's duty and call to proclaim the message of Christ, but it was also through the Christian's faithful and moral lifestyle that the gospel was made alive in the community. They lived an honorable life and dealt with others with compassion and love. Pagan worldview, practice and morality were

condemned by the Christians. The Christians did not participate in any of the debauchery and immorality of the non-Christians. The Christians followed the high moral ground of Jesus because a Christian was a moral and ethical person, and this was extremely attractive to the non-Christians and the new converts. Even in times when the Christian is unjustly and cruelly treated, he or she does not retaliate but shrugged it off because the courage and power of Christ in him or her. The Christians sincerely proclaimed and lived-out the commands and teachings of Christ. However, it should be stated that not all the converts held and maintained their new found faith. Some backslid and some continued to struggle in staying faithful and holding on to the faith. So in order to keep the converts and members guided and held together, the church hence developed rites and confessional statement. But on a whole, the Christian was a set apart and different person because when any person comes to Christ, he or she becomes a new creature. The Old life of sin and unbelief is gotten rid of and a new transformed life begins.

In that regard, it was evident that the life of the Christian spoke loud in their witness. So the message of the gospel was also presented through the Christian high moral life in Christ. They shared the good news through a joy in being a sincere Christian. One may add, that the Christians lived out their decent and moral life out of obedience to the great commandment and commission to make disciples of the world. The early church could not be barred from sharing such a wonderful message. The world needed to know about Christ.

To be a Christian meant to share the message. “The rapid expansion of the Christian faith is itself a testimony to the fact that evangelism was the task of every Christian....Witnessing the Gospel was not the work just of professional, full-time missionaries. Because all Christians were baptized into Christ, all Christians were taken up in the missionary endeavour.”<sup>256</sup>

Fourth, to be a Christian called for a drastic change in spirituality and worldview. The Christian was called and set apart, which meant that he or she must live differently than a non-Christian. However, to be in harmony and supportive the Christian supported the non-Christian in matters that would not taint he or her Christian ethics or faith. At most times, the Christian had to go his or her way to avoid being tainted.

The early Church fathers documented extensive and theological explanations and admonitions. Every so often, these were in response to the prevalent false teachings both within and without the church. The writings were also part of developing a theology of difficult questions

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<sup>256</sup>Weinrich, *Evangelism*, 65.

on who Christ is, the doctrines of the Trinity, salvation, and the church. This was done because people needed to understand what constituted true Christian teaching and belief in the midst of false preachers with contrasting messages about Christ. Also, to prevent the propagation of unauthenticated scripture, the early Church Fathers ensured people understood what the proper canon of scripture, and the correct interpretation was of and how to live out the Christian doctrines and beliefs. The early Church was confronted by numerous heresies. As such the quest for right belief shaped what the Christian faith should be and how Christians were to live out this faith. In addition, persecution and marginalisation made it difficult for the Christians to maintain unity and consistency. In that regard, learning instruments like catechisms were developed to teach new converts and to also teach those in the faith.

Finally, the scriptures and in some cases the rituals of Judaism though redefined in a Christian context were used by the early Church to evangelise and brought lost souls to Christ. Many centuries of Jewish worldview and rituals were now contextualised as Christian. The early Christians practically remained faithful to their Jewish heritage in several ways. The established network of Jewish communities provided financial support, shelter and a ready audience for a growing church. The early Christians also took advantage of the Roman facilities and infrastructures like their advanced network of city transport, and legal systems. That is why, with all these benefits, when Christianity burst onto the scene, it was because it offered an appeal to a wide range of society that was looking for answers to their very important questions of life and death. The non-believers could not find sincere and satisfactory answers in the existing religions. Christianity was able to fill the void and provided succour for them. The people experienced true love and acceptance.

In the second section, Euro-American missionaries did not bring God to Africa. Contacts with the gospel had long been established through the encounter of the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip as well as through the apostle Mark. Besides Africans are very spiritual in their traditional and cultural practices. The Africans knew God, albeit a non-Trinitarian God. Missionary or contemporary Christianity got its mandate from the Jesus' great commission to, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). The contemporary missionary enterprise and expansion of the Christian Church into Africa effectively started with the Protestant missions by the end of the eighteenth century. Different denominations trickled in with their varying brands of evangelism.

In general, all denominations have similar strategies to convert and retain the Africans. Most of the strategies were helpful to physical and welfare needs but were detrimental to the emotional disposition of the African. Whatever conclusion is drawn from early missionary evangelism, the Christian church, especially in sub-Saharan Africa owes a lot to the missionaries. It has been argued that:

The evangelising mission essentially had nothing in common with the conquest and the monopolisation of raw materials. Whereas military men and merchants were involved in this imperialistic work, the missionaries instead came to live with their African brothers and sisters to give them God's good news, revealed in Jesus Christ as a Trinity of love, creating all humans in his image and likeness. While soldiers and merchants did violence to Africa, stripped it and left it for dead, the Gospel missionary went there to care for it, to raise it and to re-establish it with his dignity, on the road of a history to be built together, as a history worthy of God and worthy of the new man which in his turn the African has become.<sup>257</sup>

As such, there are several factors we can extract from missionary evangelism that are relevant for our mission today. There are also lot of lessons to learn in order to avoid old pitfalls.

In the third section that focused on evangelism and church planting by neo-Christian groups, we learnt that the attainment of independence and the exit of a majority of the early missionaries gave rise to the implementation of an indigenous policy in missions that witnessed major shifts in Christian evangelism and church planting strategies in Africa. In this early period, work was focused on the transition from missionary patterned ministry to indigenous control ministry. The missionaries did not train local Christian leaders to take over from them because they were not thinking or motivated to have indigenes to replace them. Also, because most missionaries had little or no training in missions. The indigenous policy geared toward a key element in changing the methods that missionaries use to focus their ministry on specific people groups. Evangelism and church growth by missionaries were no longer to preach for "decisions" but in consonance with the Great Commission, to make faithful disciples. Only faithful disciples that can "produce a church that multiplies itself spontaneously within a culture. ... Repentance goes deeper than a decision; it is a permanent change wrought by God's Spirit. We are born all over again.

African Pentecostalism also had their evangelism and church planting strategy which was based on personal witnessing, crusades and large tent campaigns wherein healing was promised.

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<sup>257</sup>"Christian Missionaries and Colonialism in Africa," n.p.

The manifestation of divine power through healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues and other Pentecostal phenomena were emphasised. Exorcism and protection from evil are amongst the most prominent features of the Pentecostal gospel and are the most important of their evangelism and church recruitment tactics. This strategy resulted in many converts that account for the credit of Pentecostalism as the fastest growing Christian denomination in the world. A status that early missionary Christianity did not achieve.

The fourth section which is the heart of the thesis describes how one man's encounter with God changed the lives of so many people on five continents. Starting from a humble beginning with accepting Christ at a crusade in 1972 to entering into full time ministry after completing an engineering programme. The passion for the lost was fueled by the revelation of the judgement day that clearly gave focus and direction in life to the researcher. After preaching for decisions in the early part of ministry; the focus shifted from decisions to consolidation to discipling to disciple-making. Armed with that approach to ministry the move to North America was perfectly timed. But more so as the researcher sought to be used of God to recompense the Western world for their years of missionary work in Africa. Toronto was the stage prepared for such global ministry that has touched five (5) continents already.

ANIDA, the humanitarian arm of the ministry reaches out to children, women and needy. An NGO that has established an accredited University that has a Christ-centered approach to higher education. In July 2017, the University launched Ghana's first satellite.

The All Nations Full Gospel Church model of ministry follows the Great Commission for making disciples of all nations using church planting as the vehicle and end of the soulwinning enterprise of the Church of Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Introduction contained the matters that set the pace for the entire study. This is followed by "Review of the Literature" that produced a study of past and present academic works on the biblical foundation of the Great Commission, its mandate and implications for evangelism and Church Planting. The Exegetical Insight of Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 28:18-20 that studied these passages contextually using exegetical methods to understand them in the light of the Great Commission. It was discovered that the both passages fit in the Great Commission's paradigm. They both contain an imperative command to "go." The command to go in both cases denotes a call to mission which involves God's ultimate plan for the inclusion of all nations into his agenda. In the case of Abram, he must first bless his own people, and his people would in turn bless the other nations. Jesus blessed the disciples and they in turn through the dissemination of the Gospel have blessed the then nations. It is an ongoing responsibility. Both targets are inclusive in nature – "all nations."

The "Evangelism and Church Planting from the Early Church to the Present," was divided into three sections. The first section focused on the evangelistic campaign of the early apostles leading to Paul's evangelistic and church planting exploits as recorded in the NT and in the writings of the Church Fathers. In this section, we saw how Luke's reporting of the work of the Holy Spirit through the Acts of the Apostles provides the church today a picture of how the Gospel spread in the beginning and offers a pattern that we can follow today. It was noted that Acts provides the narrative and the Epistles reveal how to go about establishing a church. In both Acts and Paul's letters in particular, we find the Early Church Pattern of Church Planting to follow. Three key passages that provide an overview of this pattern for the church:

- Acts 13:1-14:28: Evangelize, establish local churches, and train leaders.
- 1 Timothy 3:14-16: Establish churches (the center of the pastoral writings).
- Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 2:2: Equip the saints for the work of ministry.

It was through this pattern and process that the agenda for the early church's mission was founded. The early church's evangelistic agenda was characterised by spontaneity. Such spontaneous expansion of the Gospel resulted in a positive outcome and a healthy and progressive church.

Although scholars slightly differ on their various understanding of evangelism in the early Church, but they share the following affinities that are found in the NT and in the patristic:

- Evangelism in the early Church was clearly and definitively centered on the person of Jesus Christ.
- Evangelism was part of a communal experience of the Church.
- Evangelism was not necessarily a strategy but rather a way of living.
- Being a Christian meant a fundamental and perhaps radical change in worldview.
- Evangelism in the early Church used what had come before. It used the Scriptures and in some cases the rituals of Judaism in a Christian context.

The first section, "Evangelism and Church Planting by Euro-American Missionaries," took into consideration the coming of early Euro-American missionaries to Africa and their evangelical and church planting strategies. It was concluded that Euro-American missionaries claimed to have gotten their mandate from Jesus' great commission to, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). Missionaries did not bring God to Africa. The Africans already knew God, who was not a Trinitarian God.

The contemporary missionary enterprise and expansion of the Christian Church into Africa effectively started with the Protestant missions by the end of the eighteenth century. Different denominations trickled in with their varying brands of evangelism.

In common, all denominations had similar strategies to convert and retain the Africans. Most of the strategies were helpful to the physical and welfare needs but were detrimental to the emotional disposition of the African. Whatever conclusion is drawn from early missionary evangelism, the Christian church, especially in sub-Saharan Africa owes a lot to the missionaries. In that regard, we have several valuable factors to be deduced from missionary evangelism that are relevant for today's Christian mission. A lot of lessons to learn to avoid old pitfalls.

In the second section is a study of "Evangelism and Church Planting by Neo-Religious Movements." Here it was found out that the attainment of independence, and the exit of a majority of the early missionaries gave rise to the implementation of an indigenous policy in missions that witnessed major shifts in Christian evangelism and church planting strategies in Africa. In this early period, work was focused on the transition from missionary patterned ministry to indigenous control ministry. The missionaries did not train local Christian leaders to take over from them because they were not thinking or motivated to have indigenes to replace them. Also, because most missionaries had little or no training in missions. The indigenous policy geared toward a key element in changing the methods that missionaries use to focus their ministry on specific people

groups. Evangelism and church growth by missionaries were no longer to preach for "decisions" but in consonance with the Great Commission, to make faithful disciples. The lesson is that only faithful disciples that can produce a church that multiplies itself spontaneously within a culture.

African Pentecostalism also had their evangelism and church planting strategy which was based on personal witnessing, crusades and large tent campaigns wherein healing was promised. The manifestation of divine power through healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues and other Pentecostal phenomena were emphasised. Exorcism and protection from evil are amongst the most prominent features of the Pentecostal gospel and are the most important of their evangelism and church recruitment tactics. This strategy resulted in many converts that account for the credit of Pentecostalism as the fastest growing Christian denomination in the world. A status that early missionary Christianity did not achieve.

In the fourth section is the study of the Formation of All Nations Full Gospel Church (ANFGC). The founder of ANFGC has revealed that the ministry of the church from its inception was based on the mandate of the Great Commission. It revealed that the church began with the desire to get many sinners to pray the sinner's prayer because of the belief that once a person accepts Christ as personal Saviour he or she has made it to heaven. Little did the leader know that the Great Commission calls for disciples and not converts, which can be made over one simple emotional appeal, but disciples are made by nurturing, teaching, training, correcting, encouraging and so forth and that require accountability in a church setting. That realization made the leader begin to create silos for the harvest and that silos is the church setting. So, evangelism must lead to the birth of churches else the harvest is lost for good.

Like the early church and patristic strategies, ANFGC Evangelism is definitively centered on the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is ANFGC focus and he is what is preached. No matter the circumstances, the church's witness is to the resurrected Christ as Lord and Saviour. The church's message serves all persons, in all walks and stations of life. In everything and in all ways, Christ is preached, because the Christian message is about Christ.

Again, like the early church, evangelism in ANFGC is part of a communal experience. There are not just individual Christians in the church, every member is a part of the Body of Christ. Through the church's evangelistic endeavours, converts gain full membership into the Body of Christ, regardless of their background, ethnicity or social standing. This communal bond was evident not only socially but also spiritually through the participation in the Lord's Supper.

Through fellowship, the church gathers as a body of believers to worship and partake of in the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion in keeping with the command of Christ Himself to gather and commune. Like the early church, ANFGC grew because the faithful and dedicated Christians are the stewards of faithful witness and defenders against a hostile and unchristian community. Brothers and sisters look out for one another. In joy and in sadness they stay together as part of the Body of Christ.

Because evangelism was not necessarily a strategy but instead a way of life, it is through ANFGC's members way of life that the Gospel is personified. Members are taught to live a true and faithful Christian life and to treat others, irrespective of religion or social status, with compassion and love. When one accepts Christ, he or she becomes a new person with a new lifestyle that calls for certain morality and ethics stance.

Through the early Church it was learned that being a Christian means a fundamental and perhaps radical change in worldview. ANFGC teaches that as a Christian, one is called to live differently than the non-Christian around him or her. Not everything in the society is evil or unchristian. So, Christians are to discern what is required of them and what is in conflict with their Christian worldview. Christians are in the world but not of the world. Evangelism in the early Church used what had come before. It used the Bible and in some cases the rituals of Judaism in a Christian context. Contextualisation of the Bible message plays a vital part in ANFGC ministry. Leaders are taught and trained to bring the message of the gospel to the understanding and level of their audiences.

In terms of the Euro-American missionaries' endeavours, learning from their evangelism and church planting mistakes and setbacks, the ANFGCI is sensitive to the African culture. The gospel is explained to be understood from an African perspective. The indigenisation of the gospel takes forefront. Jesus preaching was highly indigenised and contextualized. His parables are applications were directed to an agrarian community.

ANFGC owes its success in evangelism and church planting to the organisation's understanding and implementation of the mandate contained in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-20; Lk 24:47-49; Jn 21:21-23; Acts 1:8). The Christian Church in her efforts to fulfil the mandate of the Great Commission has expended great energy and resources towards world evangelisation. Nevertheless, the results have not always been great despite the massive crowds that sometimes flock to such evangelistic crusades.

The reason for this shortfall is that seeking to fulfill the Great Commission without the planting of local churches is like giving birth to a baby without a family. Church planting ascertains a foundation for making and multiplying disciples among various peoples in the world. As such, the Great Commission finds fulfilment in the context of the local church. In other words, one of the most effective ways to fulfil the Great Commission is through evangelisation that results in Church planting. Unfortunately, it seems many who are interested in church planting do not know this very important factor. ANFGC prides itself in fulfilling the Great Commission which accounts for the mission's success.

The founder was so motivated to get people to accept Jesus as Lord and personal Saviour that ministry took place on buses, trains, in market places, schools, prisons, hospitals, and anywhere a crowd could be found. Mass crusades were organised within limited budget and personal evangelism was a staple on a daily basis. After preaching, converts would be admonished to read the Bible every day; starting with the Gospel of John and to attend a church of their choice from a list of evangelical churches to choose from. That ended the evangelist's responsibility before God and human because a soul has made it to heaven. With zeal many people were led to Christ and that brought great satisfaction in ministry. Until one day after preaching on a train and getting everyone to say the sinner's prayer that the unthinkable happened that changed the life course of ministry forever.

The researcher was basking in the glow of that tremendous response to the preaching when all of a sudden, he heard an audible voice was heard from behind saying: "Who gives birth to children and does not take care of them yet expects them to do well?" That certainly changed the perspective of ministry from preaching for decisions to disciple-making. In May 1981, the founder migrated to Canada as reverse missionary. Through personal evangelism and street ministry, a congregation was raised in the City of Toronto where hundreds of worshippers attend every Sunday.

The first attempt to obey the Great Commission to make disciples was to initially organise Bible Study groups instead of churches. After a while the researcher was concerned about members going to different churches, imbibing different theological persuasions and clashing at fellowship Bible Study with divergent positions. It became apparent that the best way to avoid theological confusion was to provide holistic ministry for the converts. Meanwhile the founder was studying and preparing for theologically for effective ministry.

As proven in this study, ANFGC is based on the Great Commission mandate. The church began with the desire to get many sinners to pray the sinner's prayer because of the belief that once a person accepts Christ as personal Saviour he has made it to heaven. Little did the leader know that the Great Commission calls for disciples and not converts. Converts can be made over one simple emotional appeal but disciples are made by nurturing, teaching, training, correcting, encouraging and so forth but that requires accountability in a church setting. That realization made the leader begin to create silos for the harvest and that silos is the church setting. So, evangelism must lead to the birth of churches else the harvest is lost for good.

For the very last time, it is imperative to Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- A Church Planting movement flows from the Great Commission
- The Great Commission clearly shows that evangelism is the means to reach the unconverted, but church planting is the goal or end because that makes discipling possible.
- An understanding of the church's missions must be the starting point
- Disciples are to be made in the church – not in a Bible School

1Timothy 3:14-15: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

For a group or church to be successful in planting churches

- They must identify a soul winner
- Must train the soul winner
- Must empower the soul winner to participate in ministry
- Must release the soul winner to start a new work

To plant a new Church in an unfamiliar setting

- The church needs a nucleus – Christians who are willing to embrace the vision
- A leader who will lead the nucleus
- A leader who will work hard and not be afraid to make sacrifices

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**APPENDIX**

**Thesis Fieldwork Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is written for the Doctoral Thesis: "A Historical and Theological Study of Evangelism and Church Planting based on the Great Commission with Special Reference to All Nations Full Gospel Churches International."

Respondent's Name..... Age..... Gender.....

Level of Education

Name and location of church.....

1. When did you become a member of ANFGCI?

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2. Apart from being a member; do you play any other role in the church?

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3. How did ANFGCI start in your area?

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4. What motivated the founder of your branch to come to your area?

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5. How was the message received initially?

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6. Can you explain the general Mission Statement of ANFGCI?

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