

APPROACH OF THE GREAT COMMISSION MOVEMENT OF NIGERIA TO  
EVANGELISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON CHURCH GROWTH

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## ABSTRACT

The 21<sup>st</sup> century church is observed to be moving in a very slow pace. Churches are springing up weekly in the streets but what is the mode of the growth? Members of those churches were either once members of a mainline denominations or from another church around. When members go out for evangelism, they wonder what to say and how to conclude. Some even end up in argument and do not see people coming to faith and then frustrated. The study adopted both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary sources included participant's observation by researcher and oral interview of churches in partnership with Great Commission Movement of Nigeria. The secondary sources include library research, vis-a-vis reading, theological journals, periodicals, books, commentaries dictionary and internet. Certain churches were selected from among the partnering churches as samples of the study. The study reveals that the approach the missionary organization use in evangelism is effective in church growth in the target area of the partnering churches. The major approach is the training of the lay people in evangelism and making use of a little booklet called "the four spiritual Laws". This booklet contains all a person needs to know within a short period to accept Christ and without arguments. The other way is to have a target area of operation with target audience. The effective follow-up of new converts within 48hrs is a good approach. It is in the light of the afore mentioned facts, the study states categorically that, the churches should partner with missionary organizations that specialize on evangelism and discipleship. Churches should also develop the lay people by training them to be effective in reaching the target area with the good news of the Master. The mission agencies are to promote their activities among churches either by church visitation or publicity on the mass media.

The Great Commission Movement of Nigeria in partnership with some churches in Nigeria has been making ways in the area of evangelism. The main goal is to win people to Christ, build them up in faith, train those converts and existing ones on the how to do evangelism and send them out to do the same. The idea of target area and target audience is a good way to reaching the community fast and easy. The one on one approach to interact with the contact at any level is most effective way to establish the contact in faith. The small group and the mass evangelism methods are ways the Great Commission Movement use but in all it end up in one on one approach. After solid foundation has been made with the contact, he is now introduced to the larger Christian body—the church.

The organization has been in Nigeria for 46 years and its impacts has not been felt so much in the south west Nigeria. Much is not known about the organization among many denominations in for the fear of sheep stealing. More work is to be done by spreading the tentacles of the organization. Other denominations need to networks with other para- church organizations in their area of specializations.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

Evangelism and church growth are paramount in the mind of God, so the church obeying the risen Lord must grow in accordance with the Great Commission ( Matt. 28:18-20). The approach to evangelism also matters in reaching out to the lost and to be able to win them and introduce them to the church for church growth. If the method is weak, the converts are not properly disciple. Converts, if any, are directly introduced to the church and takes longer time to grow, if not become problematic to the church later. There are evidences of churches springing up all around the streets but it may either be as a result of birth rates or members of another church who just

moved into that area and the programme or activities of the this new church is attractive to them and so join the church.

The Great Commission Movement of Nigeria as a mission agency in Nigeria has been in existent for 46 years now. The work they do in partnering with some churches has had impacts in church growth and planting. Yet the organization is not well known in some parts of Nigeria. There is the need for her to spread her tentacles to other areas to make her impacts felt in Nigeria and beyond.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above discussion concerning the approach of the Great Commission Movement of Nigeria to evangelism and its impact on church growth, the following recommendations will be very necessary to improve church growth in Nigeria. They are as follows;

1. There is the need for partnering and networking between churches and Para-church organizations. Each of the Para-church organizations specializes on certain areas and they can be more effective in partnering with churches to aid church growth.
2. There should be basic training for the lay people on the how to's of evangelism. When they are well equipped, they will be bold to go out witnessing and make it a way of life.
3. There is the need to go back to discipleship. The fact that churches are no longer involved in discipleship or do less does not make the room for church growth. When we return to in-depth discipleship, those disciples will be involved in planting churches.
4. The Great Commission Movement of Nigeria staff should ear mark a period to visit churches and create awareness among them of the opportunities they that exist

partnering with her and the materials and tools available for the church for evangelism and church growth.

5. There is the need to work on the attitude of church pastor and members, towards evangelism. Evangelism is both the responsibility of the pastors and the lay men and women and it should be a lifestyle.
6. The priority of the church must be properly aligned. There have been misplaced priorities in the church today, “majoring in minor and minoring in major”. Focusing on thing on building cathedrals with the pews empty on weekly services rather than the major responsibility to “go and make disciples.... Matt. 28 19.
7. Efforts should be made to present the gospel to people in a culturally relevant manner. When this is done, it makes the gospel to make meaning to the listener and get clear understanding of what it entails to be a member of a local church.
8. Much research should be done to know the impact of the campus ministry arm of the organization is making on church growth in Nigeria and beyond.
9. There is the need for churches to plan and budget for evangelism in their annual budget.
10. Pastors must plan, preach and teach on evangelism to the whole congregation occasionally to keep reminding them of their responsibility to the Master.
11. Pastors too must be active in witnessing and not abandon it solely in the hands of lay people.
12. The church should wake up strategic discipleship. The Great Commission Movement uses the disciples to reach target areas. One of their slogan is” think globally and act locally.”