

The Influence of the Practical Implementation of the Great Commission Missiological Praxis on Church Growth Among Mainline Churches in the Busoga Region

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Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the influence of the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis on Church Growth among mainline Churches in the Busoga region. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population consisted of 20 church leaders and 100 laity members from 20 mainline congregations in the Busoga region. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. This study employed a fixed sample size of 95 respondents, drawn from 20 mainline Protestant congregations in the Busoga region. From each congregation, a minimum of 5 participants were selected, comprising 1 church minister, 1 lay leader, and 3 committed members actively involved in the church's ministry, particularly in areas of discipleship and evangelism. A pretest of data collection instruments was done in a nearby Buganda region that has similar conditions of church decline to the Busoga region. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS version 22. The results were presented using frequency tables, percentages, and charts. The study found that the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis is not widely adopted among mainline churches in the Busoga region, with many churches practicing it at a minimal level. Despite this, almost all respondents (98.7%) agreed that such implementation is crucial for church growth. Although most respondents (76.3%) had accepted Christ, many (73.7%) indicated that there were no deliberate altar calls for new believers, and 78.9% asserted that the church largely relied on biological growth rather than outreach. Additionally, over half (53.9%) of the respondents were unsure about experiencing God's presence during church Sunday services, with 60.5% further agreeing that they became church members through marriage and family subscription, and a significant portion (82.9%) noted the absence of a systematic training program for new believers. Fulfilling the Great Commission by practically implementing the missiological praxis is crucial for both spiritual and numerical growth of mainline churches in the Busoga region. The more these churches apply the missiological practices, the more they are likely to experience growth and establishment. However, many of the mainline churches sampled in this study appear to neglect this approach, which has negatively impacted their influence on church growth in the region. The Church must actively facilitate the fulfillment of the Great Commission by implementing its missiological praxis. This involves developing strategies to engage members in local congregations, encouraging active participation in church activities, and fostering both spiritual and numerical growth through discipleship and outreach initiatives.

Keywords: *Great Commission Missiological Praxis, Church, Mainline Churches, Busoga Region*

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1. Introduction

The Great Commission, as commanded by Christ, serves as the theological and missiological foundation for church growth, renewal, and establishment. When effectively integrated into congregational life, its elements nurture spiritual maturity, fostering active participation in evangelism and discipleship. This study critically examines the praxis of the Great Commission through the lens of practical theology, building upon Kang's (2016) structured framework while contextualizing its application within the declining mainline churches in the Busoga region.

Kang presents the Great Commission as a dynamic, structured process that guides believers from personal discipleship to active witness that leads to church expansion. This aligns with the mission work of Paul and Barnabas in Derbe, Iconium, and Antioch, which Detwiler (as cited in Harris, 2022) identifies as a model for intentional church planting and growth. However, while a chronological approach offers a systematic framework, it should not be viewed as a rigid sequence. Instead, elements such as authority, evangelism, discipleship, baptism, and teaching function interactively, shaping both individual faith and the Church's trajectory.

Despite its theological strength, the application of this framework in mainline churches, particularly in the Busoga region, has encountered significant challenges. The decline of mainline churches necessitates a reassessment of their commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission through the application of their missiological praxis and elements. Historically, mainline churches have prioritized structured worship and institutional stability over adaptive mission strategies, in contrast to Pentecostal and independent churches, which have embraced flexible, community-centered evangelism, resulting in substantial growth.

This raises concerns about whether mainline churches have adequately integrated the Great Commission praxis and elements into their ecclesial structures. In the Busoga region, economic hardship, cultural shifts, and the rise of alternative religious movements have influenced church engagement. Many mainline churches struggle to retain members, particularly among the youth, due to their limited responsiveness to contemporary spiritual and social challenges. Unlike the early Church, which thrived on direct discipleship and community involvement, many mainline churches today exhibit a passive approach to mission, contributing to stagnation and decline.

Churches must transition from maintenance-driven structures to proactive mission engagement, ensuring that every believer is mobilized for evangelism and discipleship. The fulfillment of the Great Commission is not optional but remains the central mandate for Church renewal and sustainable growth in the 21st century. The researcher discusses each element about its influences on church growth and how it can relate to the prevailing situation in the Busoga region.

1.1 Problem Statement

Recent data indicates a notable decline in membership among mainline churches in the Busoga region. The 2024 Uganda National Housing and Population Census reveals that Catholics now constitute 37.4% of the population, down from 39.3%, and Anglicans have decreased to 30% from 32% over the same period, which case applies to all other mainline churches. Conversely, the Evangelicals have grown from 11.1% to 14.7% in the last decade (African Press, 2024). While churches are expected to thrive through active participation in the Great Commission fulfillment as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20, mainline churches in the Busoga region continue to experience a steady decline in membership, which has become a growing concern, and it's largely attributed to the church's neglect of its participation in the Great Commission fulfillment. Instead of prioritizing discipleship and outreach ministries, these churches have shifted their focus to financial and structural growth, leading to spiritual stagnation and a mass exodus of members to Evangelical Charismatic Churches.

The lack of active participation in the Great Commission fulfillment has weakened church growth, suggesting a critical gap in discipleship and outreach efforts within mainline churches. There is limited understanding and practice of the Great Commission among leaders and members. As a result, while large church buildings have been constructed, they often lack an active, spirit-filled congregation, and many are at risk of becoming empty or closing down. Additionally, church leadership has not effectively integrated the Great Commission into its strategic priorities, leaving members without proper discipleship and growth opportunities (Nile Post, 2024). Therefore, the study sought to assess the extent to which the Great Commission fulfillment can influence church growth among mainline churches in the Busoga region, Uganda.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

To evaluate the influence of the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis on church growth among mainline churches in the Busoga region.

1.3 Research Questions

How does the practical implementation of the Great Commission, as missiological praxis, influence church growth among mainline churches in the Busoga region?

2. Literature Review

2.1 All Authority

The Great Commission is rooted in Jesus' declaration of divine authority, which empowers the Church's mission of evangelism, discipleship, and expansion. When the Church and believers recognize and operate under this authority, they act with boldness, ensuring effective outreach and church growth (Keener, 2013; Wallace, 2014). A disciple's journey begins by acknowledging Christ's reign over both the world and their personal life, which sets the foundation for spiritual transformation and witness. Faith in Jesus gives believers a new identity, leading to a changed life that draws others to Christ. Without this recognition, religious efforts become mere moral exercises (Kang, 2016). To be born again is to accept Jesus as Lord, acknowledging His suffering, death, and resurrection as the means of reconciliation with God. True faith, as James 2:17 affirms, must be accompanied by actions. Jesus' command to "Go therefore" links His authority with the Church's mission, demanding believers' allegiance to make disciples, not just converts (Hunsberger, 2017).

His authority extends over heaven and earth, calling believers to step out of their comfort zones. For church renewal, especially in the Busoga region, where mainline churches face membership decline, reclaiming the Great Commission through Christ's authority is crucial for their growth as they enter into the surrounding communities with the Good News. When believers and leaders operate under this conviction and divine mandate, they are empowered to witness effectively, moving beyond passive faith to active witness, ensuring that Church discipleship produces committed believers rather than mere converts, leading to both spiritual revival and numerical growth (Harris 2022). This approach fosters spiritual revival, deepens community impact, and strengthens the Church's presence in society. By anchoring their mission in Christ's authority, mainline churches in the Busoga region can counter decline, restore growth, and build a thriving faith community that effectively reaches the lost.

2.2 Go therefore...

The command “Go therefore” (Matthew 28:19) is a direct call to active outreach, urging believers to take the Gospel beyond their local circles. By intentionally reaching new communities, the Church expands both spiritually and numerically, following Christ's example of establishing faith communities across cultures (Fairchild, 2022). The verb “go” sets believers in motion, meaning that only those who recognize Christ's authority are truly equipped to witness. While often interpreted as a command, the Greek translation suggests “as you are going,” implying that every believer must engage in mission wherever they are (Parker, 2018). This approach integrates faith into daily life, ensuring continuous outreach and discipleship. Church growth thrives when believers embrace this lifestyle of witnessing. As they engage with communities, they reveal God's love through actions and teachings, impacting lives much as Jesus did (Mathews, 2025). The Great Commission is not merely for missionaries but for every believer, calling them to touch lives and bring transformation. The Church must always be in motion, reacting to opportunities to reach the lost and disciple new converts (Amelia, 2024).

In the Busoga region, where poverty, corruption, violence, and teenage pregnancy contribute to church decline, this element and principle are crucial. The Church must actively engage with the community rather than waiting for people to come to it. By addressing social challenges through reconciliation, integrity, discipleship, and advocacy for the marginalized, the Church can restore its influence and attract new members (Harris, 2022). Just as Jesus met sinners where they were, the Church must adopt a proactive approach, reaching people in their realities rather than expecting them to seek the Church (Roxburgh & Alan 2010). The essence of “Go therefore” in the Great Commission is not just movement but a continuous lifestyle of outreach. For the Church in Busoga to reclaim this principle and actively embrace and participate in this element of the Great Commission, it needs to reverse the decline in church membership in its congregations. By actively engaging with the community and addressing real-life struggles, the Church becomes a beacon of hope and transformation. As believers go and witness, they bring about revival, ensuring both spiritual renewal and numerical growth.

Churches that embody this “going” command of the Great Commission tend to grow both spiritually and numerically by reaching those beyond the church walls and engaging them in meaningful discipleship. The mainline Church in the Busoga region must always be in motion to fulfill the Great Commission basis. When the Church is growing, the result is growth and expansion. A reemphasis on the original imperative intent of the Great Commission heightens

all of these as it places the contribution to the fulfillment of the Great Commission within the capacity of every believer (Amelia, 2024).

2.3 Baptism

Baptism, as emphasized in Matthew 28, is a vital component of the Great Commission's fulfillment, affirming a new believer's commitment to Christ and integrating them into the Church. It serves as both a public declaration of faith and an evangelistic tool, making the beginning of a lifelong discipleship journey (Pettengill, 2024). As an initiation into God's family, baptism symbolizes transformation, offering believers a sense of belonging and empowering them to actively participate in church life (Zimak, 2024). While it is a significant means of grace, it should not be imposed but rather embraced as an outward expression of inner faith (Health & Gordon et al., 2011). Consequently, baptism becomes both a spiritual initiation and a relational bridge, growing the Church. Beyond symbolizing resurrection life, baptism also signifies a believer's acceptance of Christ's suffering, deepening their devotion and commitment to witnessing (Connor, 2010).

Churches that prioritize baptism often experience growth, as it strengthens faith, fosters unity, and encourages active participation (White, 2023). Baptized believers become ambassadors of the Gospel, sharing their transformation stories, which in turn attract others to faith (Following the Truth, 2024). The Church in the Busoga region should not just stop at infant baptism but disciple the members to become devoted Christians who participate in the Great Commission fulfillment. Baptism plays a crucial role in church growth by creating committed disciples who contribute to the mission and unity of the church. With the declining church membership that is evident, emphasizing baptism can reinforce the church's role as a transformative agent in the community. By baptizing new believers and equipping them to share their faith, the Church fosters spiritual renewal and numerical growth, reversing membership decline and strengthening the Church's impact on society.

An increasing number of baptisms each year is a clear indicator of a growing and vibrant congregation. A rising baptism rate reflects the Church's effectiveness in evangelism, discipleship, and community outreach. It signifies that more people are accepting Christ, committing to the faith, and becoming active members of the Church. Additionally, a steady increase in baptisms suggests that the Church is successfully nurturing new believers, strengthening its foundation, and ensuring long-term sustainability through continual spiritual renewal and expansion. Baptism in any local congregation is a sign of a church that is reaching out to the community with the Gospel message, leading the lost to Christ, and baptizing them as an initiation ceremony into the Christian family of God.

2.4 Teaching Them

Teaching plays a crucial role in fulfilling the Great Commission by nurturing discipleship and fostering spiritual maturity within the Church. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands His followers not only to "make disciples" but also to teach them His commandments, emphasizing an ongoing process of spiritual growth. Teaching helps internalize Christian values, strengthens believers' faith, and equips them to actively participate in mission work, thereby expanding the Church's influence (Bekele, 2021). By integrating structured learning and practical application of biblical teachings, the Church cultivates both spiritual and numerical growth. Teaching is the process of passing on Christ's teachings to empower new believers with the truth of the Gospel. Implementing teaching as part of the Great Commission ensures that members are not

only knowledgeable but also capable of witnessing their faith authentically (Pettengill, 2023). When churches prioritize teaching, they foster deep spiritual transformation, encouraging believers to engage with others and strengthening the church community. This aligns with the early Church's catechesis, which included memorization of scripture, prayer, and participation in sacraments as essential components of Christian formation.

The Church in the Busoga region must embark on structured catechism programs to empower members with biblical truth for both spiritual and numerical growth. Catechesis, rooted in New Testament teachings, involves evangelism, outreach, generosity, and fearlessly sharing the Gospel. Effective catechesis helps Church leaders identify weak areas, address contextual challenges, and build a strong foundation for sustainable growth. Holy scriptures should guide these teachings, forming a basis for doctrine and Christian living. The early Church used creeds, liturgy, and communal discipleship to ensure believers remained rooted in faith, which the modern Church must replicate to counter heresies.

Churches that emphasize continuous teaching create a culture of accountability and active participation, essential for vibrant church growth (Svajda, 2023). Neglecting teaching has contributed significantly to church decline, as members lack a strong doctrinal grounding, making them susceptible to false teaching and spiritual complacency. Without structured discipleship, believers struggle to uphold and spread their faith, weakening the Church's influence in the community. Teaching as a praxis of the Great Commission is an essential element that strengthens discipleship, sustains evangelism, and ensures long-term church growth. In the Busoga region, neglecting this praxis has led to a decline in membership and spiritual weakness. By reestablishing robust Bible study programs and structured catechism, the Church can equip its members with a firm biblical foundation, protecting them from misleading theologies and preparing them for mission work. Through consistent teaching, the mainline church in the Busoga region will not only retain members but also attract new believers, leading to natural growth beyond boundaries and restoring its influence in the community.

2.5 Obedience

Emphasizing obedience as a central praxis of the Great Commission plays a vital role in church growth by fostering a culture of actionable faith. True discipleship, as opposed to mere conversion, nurtures spiritual maturity and longevity in faith, making the Church a transformative force within the community. Obedience to Christ's commands, love, compassion, and service create a welcoming environment that attracts both new believers and strengthens the commitment of existing members. This commitment leads to an organic cycle of discipleship, where obedient believers become active evangelists, thereby ensuring continual church growth (Culver, 2023). Obedience is a natural outcome of sound biblical teachings. According to David Bosch, discipleship is not confined to the church or classroom but is a lived experience through daily fellowship with Christ.

This is best exemplified in the servant posture of Jesus, who obeyed the Father completely. True teaching, therefore, is not merely about knowledge acquisition but knowledge applied in obedience (Platt, 2023). As believers actively express their love for God and others through service, they embody the essence of discipleship, leading to church growth (Disciple Nations Alliance, 2023). The mainline church in the Busoga region has experienced decline and membership loss, contributed by the neglect of this principle. When obedience is not

emphasized, faith becomes passive, reducing the impact of the Church in transforming lives and communities. A lack of committed discipleship leads to spiritual stagnation and an inability to effectively evangelize and retain members. This has resulted in dwindling congregations and a weakened presence of the Church in the region.

Restoring obedience as a core value will help counter this decline by rekindling spiritual fervor and commitment among believers. By fostering a culture where disciples are taught to obey and actively engage in evangelism and service, the mainline church in the Busoga region can reverse membership loss and decline. An obedient congregation will become a witness to the surrounding community, attracting new members through their transformed lives and impactful service. In this way, obedience to the Great Commission is not only a biblical mandate but also a practical solution to church decline, ensuring both spiritual depth and numerical growth among mainline churches in the Busoga region. When disciples are taught, they obey; when they obey, they go and witness to the lost world, and this gives a positive response to the Church's growth.

2.6 Make

The command to make disciples in the Great Commission fosters church growth by creating a self-replicating, transformative Christian community. Disciple-making extends beyond initial evangelism, involving a lifelong process of guiding believers in faith, equipping them with Christ's teachings, and encouraging them to mentor others. This cycle of discipleship leads to exponential church growth as each disciple continues the process, ensuring spiritual maturity, resilience, and mission-oriented living (Christian Today, 2023). Through strong Christian communities that promote faith development, accountability, and outreach, disciple-making strengthens church cohesion and extends the Gospel's influence (Ng, 2023). Making disciples is the core mandate of the Great Commission. A disciple acknowledges Christ's authority, receives teachings and baptism, and ultimately goes out to evangelize others. The mainline church in the Busoga region must invest in believers who can replicate themselves as disciple-makers.

The Great Commission is incomplete without disciple-making, which goes beyond social action to form devoted followers of Christ. Evangelism should integrate both community engagement and Gospel proclamation to create lasting disciples (Newbigin, 2012). The Church must ensure that evangelism is not reduced to philanthropy but remains deeply rooted in Gospel teaching and discipleship. Ignoring disciple-making in the Busoga region has highly contributed to the church's decline. The Church has more converts who have become Christians through family association but have not been converted into disciples of Jesus. McClung (2011) asserts that Jesus built the Church through disciple-making by investing in a few individuals who then continued His mission. A disciple-making movement requires dedication and commitment from church leaders, as well as investment in training resources. The process includes baptism and teaching obedience to Christ's commands. Baptism integrates new believers into the Christian community, where they can be nurtured and trained in faith (The Lead Pastor, 2023). Effective disciple-making equips believers to not only deepen their faith but also actively participate in mission and evangelism.

Without a focus on forming committed disciples, many churches have prioritized conversions without ensuring continued spiritual growth. This has resulted in a weak foundation, leading to disengaged members and dwindling congregations. Restoring the practice of disciple-making

among mainline churches will help these churches counter their decline through membership loss by creating strong, committed believers who, in turn bring others to Christ. By investing in disciple-making, the Church can build a sustainable cycle of faith transmission, fostering growth. Through this, the church will not only regain lost members but also establish a thriving Christian community reared to carry out Christ's mission until His return. The Church should invest more energy and finances in disciple-making for her growth and establishment.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey design. The target population was 20 Church leaders and 100 members of the laity from 20 mainline congregations in Busoga region. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. This study employed a fixed sample size of 95 respondents, drawn from 20 mainline protestant congregation in Busoga region. From each congregation, a minimum of 5 participants were selected, comprising 1 Church minister, 1 lay leader, and 3 committed members actively involved in the Church's ministry, particularly in areas of discipleship and Evangelism. A pretest of data collection instruments was done in a nearby Buganda region that has similar conditions of Church decline to the Busoga region. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS version 22. The results were presented using frequency tables, percentages, and charts.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Reliability Statistics

A pretest of data collection instruments was done in a nearby Buganda region that has similar conditions of Church decline to the Busoga region. The results are provided in Table I.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

| Instrument | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------------|------------------|
| Questionnaires | 0.922 |

According to Table 1, the questionnaires used had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.922, which was greater than 0.7. This meant that they were reliable to be used in the main study.

4.2 Response Rate

This study targeted a total sample size of 95 respondents, and about 76 responded to the issues under investigation. The results are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Response Rate of Instrument

| Response | Respondents Questionnaires |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Returned | 76 |
| Total Expected | 95 |
| Percent Return Rate | 80 |

Table 2 shows that an average of 80% of the respondents' questionnaires were returned. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) assert that a return rate of 70% of the sample population is adequate to speak to the populace, subsequently prompting a legitimate speculation of the examination findings. Therefore, 80% reaction rates were, in this way, considered a good representation of the sampled respondents.

4.3 Practical Implementation of the Great Commission Missiological Praxis on Church Growth

The objective was to assess how the practical implementation of the Great Commission's missiological praxis impacts church growth. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including ANOVA and linear regression, were used to analyze the respondents' opinions. Table 3 presents questions designed to evaluate how the Church's engagement in the Great Commission's fulfillment influences its growth. These questions measure the extent to which the implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis, as stated by Jesus Christ, affects church growth and establishment.

Table 3: Influence of the Great Commission missiological praxis on Church Growth

| Statement | SD% | D% | N% | A% | SA% | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| I have believed in Christ as my Lord and Personal saviour | 0.5 | 2.6 | 1.3 | 76.3 | 19.7 | 4.13 | 0.550 |
| I became a Church member through family and marriage subscription | 3.9 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 60.5 | 34.2 | 4.20 | 0.849 |
| The Gospel Message is best delivered through lifestyle and preaching | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.9 | 65.8 | 30.3 | 3.38 | 0.565 |
| It's only Born-Again Christians who should preach the Gospel to others | 10.5 | 3.9 | 10.5 | 69.7 | 5.3 | 3.55 | 1.038 |
| There are deliberate altar calls for those who want to get saved at every Sunday service | 3.1 | 73.7 | 5.3 | 7.8 | 10.1 | 2.61 | 1.096 |
| Every Church member is encouraged to deliberately preach to non-believers in the community. | 0.1 | 36.8 | 9.2 | 44.7 | 9.2 | 3.26 | 1.063 |
| New members are welcomed into the Church through well-defined procedures, and their commitment is recorded. | 5.2 | 23.7 | 10.6 | 53.9 | 6.6 | 2.43 | 0.854 |
| The Church has an organised training program for new converts. | 2.6 | 82.9 | 11.8 | 2.6 | 0.1 | 2.14 | 0.482 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| The Church regularly receives teachings on Spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit | 0.0 | 0.0 | 55.3 | 40.8 | 3.9 | 3.49 | 0.577 |
| My Church congregational membership has greatly increased over the previous 5 years | 22.4 | 59.2 | 9.2 | 5.3 | 3.9 | 2.09 | 0.941 |
| An increase in Church membership has been seen mostly through biological growth | 0.0 | 13.2 | 0.0 | 78.9 | 7.9 | 3.95 | 0.459 |
| The Church has experienced spiritual growth through charismatic worship and preaching in the previous years | 2.6 | 47.4 | 13.2 | 30.3 | 6.6 | 2.91 | 1.073 |
| I usually experience God's presence during our Sunday services | 1.3 | 15.8 | 53.9 | 25.0 | 3.9 | 3.14 | 0.778 |
| There are deliberate planned Church baptisms for both old and new members of the congregation | 0.0 | 52.6 | 19.7 | 11.8 | 15.8 | 2.91 | 1.133 |

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Not Sure, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

The survey results indicate that a significant majority of the members from the Mainline Churches in the Busoga region have confessed Christ as their personal savior: 0.5% strongly disagreed, 2.6% disagreed, 1.3% were not sure, 76.3% agreed, and 19.7% strongly agreed. The high level of belief, reflected in a mean of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.55, suggests that these church congregations are well-positioned to disciple and mobilize their members as agents of the Great Commission, fostering church growth. Regarding church membership through family and marriage affiliations, 3.9% strongly disagreed, 1.3% disagreed, and none were unsure. Meanwhile, 60.5% agreed and 34.2% strongly agreed. This shows that church membership in the Mainline Church in the Busoga region is predominantly influenced by family and marriage connections, with a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.849. This trend suggests that the Church can effectively use family ties as a key strategy for outreach and discipleship.

None of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the notion that the gospel is best delivered through lifestyle and preaching. However, 3.9% were uncertain, while 65.8% agreed and 30.3% strongly agreed. This reflected a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.849, indicating strong support for the idea that lifestyle and preaching are effective methods for delivering the gospel message. Regarding who should preach to others, 10.5% of respondents strongly disagreed that only born-again Christians should preach, while 3.9% disagreed. Additionally, 10.5% were unsure, 69.7% agreed, and 5.3% strongly agreed. This indicates that a significant majority of members in the mainline churches in the Busoga region believe that the Gospel should be shared by those who have accepted Christ as Lord, with a mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.038.

Among those surveyed, 3.1% strongly disagreed, and 73.7% disagreed with the presence of Sunday altar calls for those seeking salvation. Additionally, 5.3% were unsure, 7.8% agreed, and 10.1% strongly agreed. The majority denying the presence of such altar calls suggests that this opportunity is not commonly practiced, with a mean of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 1.096. It was observed that 0.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that every church member is encouraged to reach out to non-believers in the community, while 36.8% disagreed and 9.2% were uncertain. On the other hand, 44.7% agreed and 9.2% strongly agreed. This suggests that spiritual leaders in the Busoga region are somewhat moderate in their encouragement of members to evangelize, with a mean of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 1.096. Regarding the induction of new members into the church through a specified process and indicated commitment, 5.2% of respondents strongly disagreed, and 23.7% disagreed. Additionally, 10.6% were uncertain, 53.9% agreed, and 6.6% strongly agreed. This suggests that the mainline Church in Busoga has a defined process for inducting new members and indicating their commitment, with a mean of 2.43 and a standard deviation of 0.854.

Of those interviewed, 2.6% strongly disagreed and 82.9% disagreed that there is a systematic training program for new people in the Church, with only 2.6% agreeing and 0.1% strongly agreeing, resulting in a mean of 2.14 and a standard deviation of 0.482. Additionally, regarding teaching about spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, 55.3% were unsure, 40.8% agreed, and 3.9% strongly agreed, with a mean of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 0.577. Regarding the increase in church membership over the past five years, 22.4% strongly disagreed and 59.2% disagreed that membership had increased in their congregations. Only 5.3% agreed and 3.9% strongly agreed, while 9.2% were unsure. This indicates that most mainline churches in the Busoga region have not experienced growth, with a mean of 2.09 and a standard deviation of 0.841.

Regarding the increase in church membership, 13.2% disagreed that it has occurred mostly through biological growth, while 78.9% agreed and 7.9% strongly agreed. This indicates that the primary means of membership growth in mainline churches in the Busoga region is through members having children, with a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.459. The results in Table 3 showed that 2.6% of respondents strongly disagreed, 47.4% disagreed, 13.2% were unsure, 30.3% agreed, and 6.6% strongly agreed that the Church had experienced spiritual growth through charismatic worship and preaching in previous years. This suggests that most Sunday services in mainline churches are still practiced traditionally, with a mean of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.073.

Regarding whether members experience God's presence during Sunday service, 1.3% strongly disagreed, 15.8% disagreed, and 53.9% were uncertain. Meanwhile, 25% agreed and 3.9% strongly agreed. These results indicate that most members attending Sunday services in mainline churches in the Busoga region are unsure if they experience God's presence, with a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.778. Of those questioned, 52.6% disagreed that there were deliberately planned church baptisms for both old and new members of the congregation, while 19.7% were uncertain. Only 11.8% agreed and 15.8% strongly agreed. This indicates that most respondents denied the existence of planned baptisms, with a mean of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1.133. The average mean for the responses was 3.14, with a standard deviation of 0.818, suggesting that implementation of the missiological praxis of the Great Commission fulfillment has a significant influence on church growth in the Busoga

region, as the church adopts and practices these discipleship mechanisms for growth and establishment.

Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of the results of the influence of the missiological praxis of the Great Commission fulfillment on church growth among mainline churches in the Busoga region, whereby most of the respondents indicated that most of the missiological praxis was not highly practiced among the mainline churches, as shown in the bar graph below. The results shown in Figure 1 indicate that the respondents consider the missiological praxis of the Great Commission to be significant in influencing church growth, as they are practically implemented in the Great Commission's fulfillment by the church. Specifically, out of the 76 respondents, 75 (98.7%) agreed that the practical implementation of the Great Commission's missiological praxis is highly significant in influencing church growth and establishment, while only 1 respondent (1.3%) disagreed.

Figure 1: Influence of the Great Commission Missiological Praxis on Church Growth

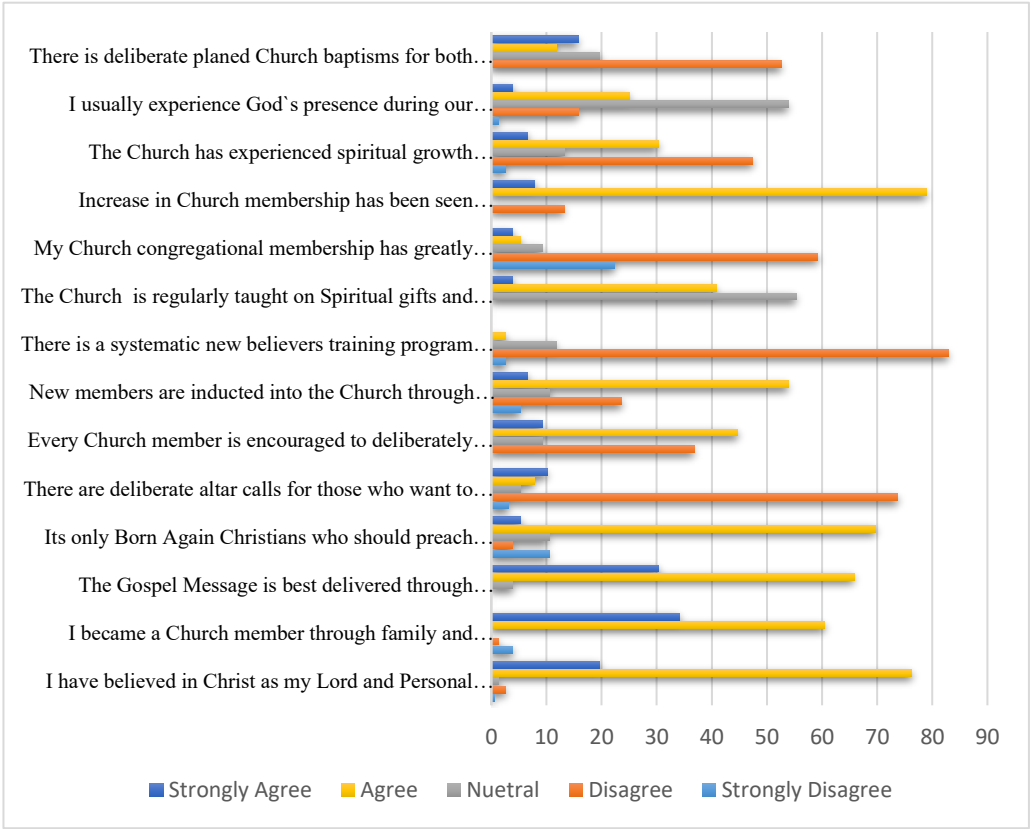


Table 4: Regression Analysis Results on the Relationship Between the Great Commission Missiological Praxis Implementation on Church Growth

| Model Summary | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Model | | R | R ² | Adj. R ² | Std. Error | | |
| 1 | | 0.276 ^a | 0.076 | 0.64 | 21.368 | | |
| ANOVA ^a | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | |
| 1 | Regression | 0.2787 | 1 | 0.2787 | 6.104 | .016 ^b | |
| | Residual | 0.63788 | 74 | 0.0457 | | | |
| | Total | 0.91658 | 75 | | | | |
| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
| | | Beta | | | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | | 0.841 | | 0.076 | | 8.273 | 0.000 |
| Missiological praxis | | 0.057 | | 0.047 | 0.276 | 2.471 | 0.016 |

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth and Establishment

b. Predictors: (Constant), fulfilment of the Great Commission through practical implementation of the Missiological praxis.

The regression results in Table 4 show a significant association between the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis and church growth [$F=6.104$, $P<0.01$]. These findings indicate that fulfilling the Great Commission through its implementation significantly influences church growth in the Busoga region ($B=0.276$, $P<0.001$). This means that for every increase in the fulfilment of the Great Commission through its missiological praxis implementation, there is a corresponding increase in church growth of 0.276 units. With $R^2 = 0.0762$, the model explains 8% of the variation in church growth, leaving 92% unexplained, indicating other factors influencing church growth are not included in the model. The model equation is $Y=0.841+0.276X_1$, where Y represents church

growth and X1 represents the fulfillment of the Great Commission through practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis.

Since the p-value of 0.01 is less than 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant relationship between the fulfillment of the Great Commission through its practical implementation and church growth. The results demonstrate that fulfilling the Great Commission through the practical implementation of its missiological praxis plays a crucial role in enhancing and influencing holistic church growth. This suggests that fulfilling the Great Commission positively impacts church growth and involves more than just making and sending disciples; it requires integrating the Great Commission's praxis into the church's life and norms. This aligns with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 28:18-20, where He instructed His disciples to make disciples, teach them all He taught, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Therefore, for the Church to effectively fulfill the Great Commission, it is essential to practically implement its missiological praxis, as it significantly contributes to Church growth.

The findings revealed that 98.7% of respondents rated the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis by the Church highly. They agreed with the researcher that fulfilling the Great Commission through such practices should be a key tool for church leaders to influence both numerical and spiritual growth. This perspective aligns with the leadership style of Jesus Christ as discussed in the literature review. However, respondents noted that church leaders in the mainline churches in the Busoga region have performed below expectations in engaging their congregations with the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis. This suggests that church leaders in the Busoga region need to better fulfill the Great Commission mandate through practical application to effectively influence church growth and integrate these practices into church life.

This corroborates the regression results, which showed a statistically significant relationship between the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the practical implementation of its missiological praxis and church growth. These results align with Detwiler (1995), who highlights the importance of this chronological approach to the Great Commission, as demonstrated in the mission work of Paul and Barnabas in Derbe, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:21-23), which led to church growth. Therefore, the church must consider the practical implementation of missiological praxis in fulfilling the Great Commission.

4.4 Summary of the Results

The study found that the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis is not widely adopted among mainline churches in the Busoga region, with many churches practicing it at a minimal level. Despite this, almost all respondents (98.7%) agreed that such implementation is crucial for church growth. Although most respondents (76.3%) had accepted Christ, many (73.7%) indicated that there were no deliberate altar calls for new believers, and 78.9% asserted that the church largely relied on biological growth rather than outreach. Additionally, over half (53.9%) of the respondents were unsure about experiencing God's presence during church Sunday services, with 60.5% further agreeing that they became church members through marriage and family subscription, and a significant portion (82.9%) noted the absence of a systematic training program for new believers.

The findings show that while some efforts have been made, the lack of a robust, passionate application of missiological praxis is limiting the potential for spiritual and numerical church growth among mainline churches in the Busoga region. The findings further revealed that

church growth can be positively and significantly influenced by the fulfillment of the Great Commission through practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis ($B = 0.276$, $P < 0.001$). Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship between the practical implementation of the Great Commission and church growth. For every increase in the practical implementation of the missiological praxis, church growth could rise by 27.6%. The regression model of F-statistics = 6.104, which was significant ($P < 0.01$ and $r^2 = 0.0762$), explained 8% of the variation in church growth, and ANOVA analysis further affirmed a strong relationship between the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis and church growth.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the study is that fulfilling the Great Commission by practically implementing the missiological praxis is crucial for both spiritual and numerical growth of mainline churches in the Busoga region. The more these churches apply the missiological practices, the more they are likely to experience growth and establishment. However, many of the mainline churches sampled in this study appear to neglect this approach, which has negatively impacted their influence on church growth in the region.

6. Recommendations

The Church must actively facilitate the fulfillment of the Great Commission by implementing its missiological praxis. This involves developing strategies to engage members in local congregations, encouraging active participation in church activities, and fostering both spiritual and numerical growth through discipleship and outreach initiatives.

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