

**THE GREAT COMMISSION FULFILMENT AS A CATALYST FOR CHURCH
GROWTH: A CASE STUDY OF THE BUSOGA CONTEXT, UGANDA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Education and Social Sciences in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Conferment of the Master's Degree in Mission Studies of
Kenya Methodist University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a master's degree or any academic award in any other university.

Signature



Date 6TH OCTOBER 2025

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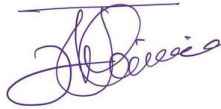
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DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Mary Kadzo Gona and my family for their amazing support and encouragement in my studies and above all for their continued prayers for me throughout my academic journey.

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I am profoundly grateful to God for His guidance, strength, and blessings throughout this academic journey. My heartfelt thanks go to my supervisors, Rev. Fr. Dr. John Njige Njoroge (PhD.) and Rev. Samuel Kathia, for their patient support and insightful guidance. I sincerely appreciate my family, friends, and especially my wife, Mary Kadzo Gona, for their steadfast love and encouragement. Special gratitude goes to Rev. Dr. Denis Muriungi (PhD) and Rev. Anthony Kirunda for continually reminding me of my academic mission. I am indebted to the participants and communities of Busoga region, Uganda, whose cooperation and shared experience form the foundation of this thesis. Lastly, I acknowledge all who supported me through prayers, encouragement, or direct effort; shortcomings remain my own.

ABSTRACT

This study set out to unveil the question of how the Great commission fulfilment as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20, influences the Growth, renewal and establishment of Mainline protestant Churches in Busoga region-Uganda. The passage, often termed as the Great Commission, provides the theological foundation for evangelism and discipleship, yet many mainline Churches appear stagnant both spiritually and numerically. This research therefore sought to interrogate the extent to which the Great Commission is practically implemented within these congregations and how such implementation shapes Church Growth. The main objectives are; first, to evaluate how the practical implementation of missiological praxis influence Church Growth; second, to examine how Great Commission Knowledge among Church leaders and laity impacts Church Growth; and third, to assess the role of evangelical approaches in enhancing the growth and renewal of mainline protestant Churches in Busoga region. It sets on the premise that Church growth is not accidental but a direct result of obedience to Christ's commission, whereby evangelism, discipleship, and community engagement generate both spiritual maturity and numerical expansion. In its theoretical framework, the study is guided by two key theories, the Church Growth theory, which contends the deliberate strategies of evangelism and discipleship foster renewal and expansion within congregations. The study further draws the Missio-Dei theory which emphasizes holistic growth, community transformation, and global mission engagement. The study utilizes a descriptive survey design in its bid to unveil the problem under consideration. The target population comprised 15 Church Clergy and 80 members of the laity drawn from 20 mainline congregations across Busoga region. Data were collected using questionnaires, pre-tested for validity and reliability, and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively through descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS version 24. In its findings, the study established that mainline churches in Busoga region are minimally engaged in the Great Commission fulfilment, a reality that has weaken both spiritual and numerical growth. Regression analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between Church Growth and both the implementation of missiological praxis and the level of Great Commission knowledge among Church leaders and members. However, evangelical approaches such as open-air crusade and media evangelism did not yield a statistically significant impact. The study concludes that biblical knowledge, empowering leaders and members through training, and strategically engaging in discipleship and outreach are critical to revitalizing mainline Churches in Busoga region.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| CG | Church Growth |
| GC | Great Commission |
| NACOSTI | National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| IRCU | Inter-religious Council of Churches of Uganda |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version |
| NIV | New International Version |
| UBoS | Uganda Bureau of Statistics |
| CMS | The Church Missionary Society |
| UJCC | Uganda Joint Christian Council |
| SWOT | Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

The concept of Missio-Dei has been widely discussed by Bosch (2011) as cited in (Bekele, 2021). It presents the God of the Bible as a missionary God. His love for Humanity and the entire creation can be traced back in the story of Creation where everything He created was good. The nature of God is missional, seeking his creation back to Him after the fall of humanity in Genesis 3. The New Testament teachings reveal God's eternal plan of reconciling humanity back to Him through the death of His son Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Before his departure, Jesus handed over the reconciliation ministry to his disciples and the Church as He sent them to the world to fulfil the mandate of the Great Commission. The words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 are said to be the heartbeat of Church growth, renewal and establishment. In all its engagements, the Church's core mandate is the Great Commission fulfilment, winning humanity back to God who is using her as the agent for His Mission in the world. From the testimony grounded in reading Scripture, God often chooses individuals and commissions them as his message-bearers in the world as they fulfil his mission. In the OT, Israel was chosen. Today, the Church is called and sent daily as God's emissary to promulgate God to the world (Kaiser & Peter, 2013). Jesus gave the marching orders to his disciples and to everyone who would come to believe the Good News. When the Church participates in the Great Commission fulfilment, the upshots are disciples of Jesus Christ (Ma, 2022). God desires that the Church grows quantitatively as the Church witnesses and leads the world to Christ. On the other hand, every member that comes to Christ should be consistently fed spiritually on God's word to become devoted disciples, hence qualitative growth. In this thesis, the yard stick for measuring spiritual growth among congregational members will be the quality of lifestyle lived and how each member is able to duplicate themselves through witnessing to non-believers.

Research done on membership tendency reveals a continuing decrease in membership among mainline protestant Churches in the world. The Anglican, the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Episcopalian Churches, and the kindred denominations recorded net annual membership decline for generations. With a few exceptions, the decline continues to this date. This has been the case over the past five years, where mainline Christian denominations in the western world have experienced a drastic decline in membership. In the United States, for instance, the percentage of adults identifying as Christians decreased from 65% in 2019 to 64% in 2022. Similarly, in the recent past, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) saw a loss of about 30% of its congregation and closed 12.5% of its Churches between 2000 and 2015. The United Methodist Church also experienced a 16.7% decrease in membership and closed 10.2% of its Churches in the same period (Profilbaru, 2019). According to Mabry-Nauta (2015), on a daily average in America 9 congregations close their doors as members continue to exit Church Congregations.

In Europe, the decline is also evident. The Church of England, for example, has faced significant challenges, with only 1.7% of the population attending Church services. This has led to numerous Church closures and a re-evaluation of the Church's role in the Society while in Germany, it's reported that 50% of the German population confess no belief in God. The once known places of worship in Europe are now galleries, bars and boutiques (The Guardian, 2025). The decline in mainline protestant Church membership globally indicates a weakening Church struggling to engage and fulfil the Great Commission. Spiritual and Numerical Growth is unattainable for congregations that fail to live out their mission and purpose within their communities (Nel & Schoeman, 2015).

According to the 2022 census data, 85.3% of south Africans identify as Christians. However, there has been a notable decline in membership among mainline Christian denominations, such as methodists, Anglicans, Catholics, and Dutch Reformed Churches. Conversely,

African indigenous Christian groups, like the Zion Christian Church, and Neo-Pentecostal movements have seen significant Growth. As seen among the western countries, some mainline protestant Churches in South Africa have closed down due to Church membership decline (The Conversation, 2024). Hendriks and Erasmus (2010) note that in the year 1991, the mainline protestant Church membership of South African people was about 54.4% of the entire population. Nevertheless, this membership has drastically lessened by 44%, from 54.4% to only 10.4% functional members. Although all Churches in South Africa are encountering membership decline, the mainline protestant Churches are being affected the most as the case globally.

During the 18th century (1844 and 1846) when the pioneer missionaries arrived in East Africa, Christianity started growing rapidly as people embraced the message of the Gospel from the missionaries. Over the past few years, mainline protestant Churches membership trend in East African countries has been experiencing decline as indigenous Churches experience numerical growth. The rate of Church membership growth in Kenya has been impressive specifically during the missionary era. Church numerical growth was evident in the early 1900s as it clocked 53% of the entire population (8.6 million) in 1962. In the post-colonial era, indigenisation of Church leadership after independence significantly led to Church numerical growth where the current Christian population in Kenya is estimated to be about 80% of the entire population (Pew Research Centre, 2010). However, as the Church in Kenya continues to experience exponential growth, the mainline Churches are being disposed to a gradual decline in their membership even in areas where the Churches had been indigenised previously. The current trend of mainline protestant membership decline in Kenya is said to be due to the spontaneous movement of members from mainline Churches to the upcoming evangelical Churches. According to Bernard and Dickson (2014), Pentecostal charismatic congregations started in the cities of Kenya, but have now found their way to

rural areas. Recent studies show that the highest membership composition of the Charismatic Pentecostal congregations especially youths were previously committed members of the mainline Churches. The charismatic Churches seem to be offering what the mainline Churches are lacking.

Christianity in Uganda experienced significant Growth when the Christian missionary society missionaries arrived in the 19th century, especially in the Buganda region, where the Church of England became known as the Church of Uganda. The faith later spread to other regions, including Busoga in Eastern Uganda, where the Gospel was widely embraced, leading to rapid Church Expansion. In Uganda, Land was freely donated for Church construction, and the Christian faith was strengthened by historical events such as the martyrdom of Ugandan Christians under Kabaka Mwanga II in 1887 (Bamwoze, 2019). However, in recent years, mainline protestant Churches in Uganda, particularly in Busoga region, have experienced a decline in membership. Meanwhile, Islam and Pentecostal charismatic movements have gained traction, attracting former mainline Church members. Bamwoze (2019) attributes the decline in Church membership due to the Church's failure to actively engage in the Great Commission fulfilment, focusing instead on biological growth rather than discipleship and reach out. The researcher agrees with Bamwoze, emphasising that Church leadership lays a crucial role in guiding and inspiring congregations toward fulfilling the Great Commission. As Maxwell (2019) asserts, "everything rises and falls on leadership," implying that effective Church leadership is crucial in steering congregations toward fulfilling the Great Commission. To reverse the decline, Church leaders must prioritise evangelism and discipleship, using resources effectively and aligning annual budgets to mission-oriented activities. Church leaders must work toward restoring a sense of mission within congregations, as healthy Church growth requires both numerical increase and spiritual depth. McIntosh et al. (2016) warns that growth without genuine discipleship leads to superficial faith. Nel & Schoeman

(2015), affirms that engagement in the Great Commission results in renewal and sustainable Church development. Keller (2022) highlights the importance of evangelism as an expression of God's love, warning that Churches lacking an outward mission risks stagnation. Wright (2023) reinforces this, stating that mission is central to the Church's identity, aligning with God's desire for reconciliation and redemption. Given the ongoing membership decline among mainline Churches in Busoga region, this study aimed to assess the Impact of the Great Commission fulfilment on Church Growth in the Region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Recent data indicates a notable decline in membership among mainline Churches in 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, a downward trend which 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 fulfilment as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20, Mainline Churches in Busoga region continue to experience a steady decline in Membership. This has become a growing concern, which is largely attributed to the Church's neglect of its participation in the Great Commission fulfilment. Instead of prioritising discipleship and outreach ministries, these Churches have shifted their focus to financial and structural growth, leading to spiritual stagnation and mass exodus of members to Evangelical Charismatic Churches. The lack of active participation in the Great Commission fulfilment has weakened Church growth, suggesting a critical gap in discipleship and outreach efforts within mainline Churches. There are 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, this study seeks to assess the extent to which the Great Commission fulfilment can influence Church Growth among mainline Churches in Busoga region, Uganda.

1.3 The purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess how the Great Commission fulfilment influences Church Numerical and Spiritual Growth.

1.4 Study objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives.

- i. To evaluate the influence of the Practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis on Church Growth among mainline Churches in Busoga region.
- ii. To assess the role of the Great Commission Knowledge among Church leaders and members on Church Growth among mainline Churches in Busoga region.
- iii. To examine how the Evangelical Approaches to fulfilling the Great Commission influence Church Growth among the mainline Churches in Busoga region.

1.5 Study Research questions

- i. How does the practical implementation of the Great Commission, as missiological praxis, influence Church Growth among Mainline Churches in Busoga region?
- i. What role does the Great Commission Knowledge among Church leaders and members play in influencing Church Growth among mainline Churches in Busoga Region?
- ii. How do the Evangelical Approaches to the fulfilment of the Great Commission influence Church Growth among mainline Churches in Busoga Region?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to missiological and ecclesiological scholarship by examining the link between the Great Commission and Church Growth in Busoga region. It provides a contextualised framework for sustainable evangelism and discipleship, addressing gaps in existing literature on mission strategies in African contexts. Academically, the study advances radical theology by analysing how sociocultural and religious dynamics impact evangelistic effectiveness. It establishes a foundation for further research in Church renewal, missional leadership, and community-based evangelism. Its findings will inform theological education and pastoral training, equipping the Church with evidence-based strategies for fostering sustained Church Growth in evolving ministry contexts.

1.7 Justification of the Study

The decline of mainline protestant Churches in Uganda, driven by the rise of Pentecostal evangelical Churches and Islam, threatens their sustainability and spiritual influence. Many UJCC member Churches are experiencing stagnation due to limited engagement in the Great Commission, leading to membership decline. This study assesses how fulfilling the Great Commission can influence Church Growth in Busoga, serving as a representative case for UJCC Churches nationwide. By analysing numerical and spiritual decline, it proposes strategies for revitalisation. Through field research and systematic data collection, the study provides practical solutions for Church leaders and scholars, fostering renewed commitment to mission and evangelism in the 21st century.

1.8 Assumption of the Study

This study was guided by several key assumptions that underpin its methodology and interpretation of findings. First, it was assumed that all respondents provided honest and thoughtful answers to the survey and interview questions. Their integrity and willingness to share accurate information were essential to ensuring the reliability of the collected data. It

was also assumed that questionnaires as the research instrument was a valid and reliable tool for measuring the Great Commission influence on church Growth. The tool was carefully designed to capture the relevant dimensions of discipleship, evangelism, and Church participation, and it was presumed that they would yield consistent and meaning results. The study further assumed that the selected sample of respondents comprising clergy, lay leaders, and congregants from mainline protestant Churches in Busoga region, was a representative of the wider Church population in the area. Finally, it was assumed that external factors such as political, social, and economic influences did not significantly distort participants` views of the role of the Great Commission in Church Growth, allowing the researcher to focus primarily on the internal Church practices and leadership dynamics.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study was focused on assessing the influence of Great commission fulfilment on Church Growth limited to mainline Protestant Churches in Busoga Region. It targeted only Church spiritual leaders and Church members of all whom participate in the Great Commission fulfilment and excluded other leaders and members of mainline protestant Churches from other regions.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The study faced several limitations including poor infrastructures in the undeveloped and impoverished Busoga region making it challenging to access some rural Church premises. Additionally, some Church leaders restricted access to confidential documents and information, and some informants were reluctant to complete the questionnaire promptly. Despite these challenges, the research ensured confidentiality and used available resources effectively, including translating the questions into the local language of the participants. Limited time and funding also constrained the study but the researcher managed the available resources effectively to the study`s objective.

1.11 Delimitations of the Study

To address infrastructure challenges in rural Busoga, the researcher utilised accessible routes and alternative communication methods to reach the respondents. Confidentiality concerns were mitigated by assuring Church leaders of data protection and obtaining informed consent. To improve response rates, questionnaires were translated into the local language during data collection, and participants were given ample time to complete them. Despite time and financial constraints, the researcher prioritised key study areas and optimised available resources to ensure the study's objectives were met effectively.

1.12 Operational Definition of Key Terms

The following terms assumed the meanings indicated against them in this study.

Church: The word Church refers to an organised group of people within the Christian religion like Catholics or Methodists that have their own beliefs, clergy and forms of worship.

Great Commission Fulfilment: Refers to the process of practicing Matthew 28:16-20 known as the Great Commission, which encapsulates the mission of the Church and emphasises both discipleship and outreach as integral components of fulfilling the mandate.

Church Growth: Church growth refers increment in quality and quantity among Church members.

Missiological Praxis: Is defined as an accepted missional practice or custom, or an idea translated into action, or something rather than something in theory in regard to practicing the Great Commission. This study adopted the same meaning.

Evangelical Approaches: Refer to mission outreach practices focusing on spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ through relational engagement, community service, discipleship, emphasising personal conversion and holistic ministry to address spiritual and social needs in various cultural contexts.

Church Leaders: Church leaders included all laity in leadership positions in their Church hierarchy

Clergy: Refers to any person who is appointed or ordained to lead and offer pastoral services and guiding the wholistic growth of the congregation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

This Chapter presents a review of existing works that have been carried out in previous studies on the relationship between the Great Commission and Church Growth. To achieve this goal, the Chapter engages the available information from other researchers on the subject, after which it concludes with a description of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

2.1 The Great Commission

Bible scholars view the Great commission as Jesus' mandate for all believers to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations (Keller, 2023). This command not only calls for outreach ministry of the Church but also invites the Church to emphasise discipleship of members and ensure that new believers are integrated into Church life. Participation in the Great Commission is a key indicator of a Church's faithfulness as it results into both spiritual and numerical growth of that congregation. McIntosh (2016) highlights that fulfilling this mandate fosters conversion, expansion, and Church renewal, reinforcing the strong link between mission, evangelism and Church Growth. The 21st century Church should rework its mission engagements focusing its energies towards participation in the Great Commission through outreach ministries and discipleship programs. Mission work extends beyond conversion, aiming to transform converts into devoted disciples who continue with outreach efforts. A healthy and growing Congregation thrives by attracting converts and guiding them to live according to scripture. Therefore, active participation in the Great Commission fulfilment can influence Church revitalisation through its practicability for sustainable growth.

2.2 The Church's mandate as rooted in Missio-Dei

The concept of Missio Dei (the Mission of God) has significantly shaped modern missiological discourse, emphasising that mission originates from God's nature rather than being merely a function of the Church (Flett, 2019). Within this framework, mission is Trinitarian. That is, God the Father sent the Son, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, and ultimately, the Triune God sends the Church into the world (Harold, 2019). Bosch as cited by (Bekele, 2021) argues that mission should be understood as God's movement toward the world, with the Church serving as the primary instrument through which God engages humanity. Through the Church's participation in the Great Commission, the Church is seen as taking God to its community. While Missio Dei underscores God's sovereignty in mission, as it may tend to downplay the Church's active agency; a purely theocentric approach risks diminishing human responsibility in evangelism and discipleship, reducing the Church to a passive participant rather than a co-labourer with God (Ma, 2022). Furthermore, the framework, though widely accepted, lacks clear operational models for local Churches to engage missionally, particularly in contexts facing spiritual decline. This study builds on Missio Dei by exploring how Churches in Busoga region can align their mission strategies with both theological principles and practical engagement in fulfilling the Great Commission. As the Church participates in the Great Commission fulfilment, mission should be seen as God's manoeuvre to the world, with the Church perceived as a tool through which God reaches out to the world. Therefore, mission involves the Church participating in both the work and the being of God (Flett, 2019).

2.3 The Church's Mandate as Missio-Ecclesia

Bosch as cited by (Bekele, 2021) defines Missio Ecclesiae as the mission of the Church, emphasizing that the Church is not the sender but the one being sent. This aligns with the understanding that mission is central to the Church's identity, rooted in the Great

Commission and reflecting the nature of a missionary God. Engelsviken (2020) argues that mission and the Church are inseparable, as Christ's mission inherently generates and sustains Church Growth. Similarly, Bevans and Schroeder (2011) open that mission is both an act of obedience and a joyful response to Christ's resurrection. Newbiggin (as cited by Sunquist and Yong, 2015) further asserts that Christian witness should be a natural outflow of one's relationship with God rather than a mere obligation. While these perspectives affirm the Church's role in mission, there is a need to critically assess the balance between mission as a dimension and mission as an intentional activity. Teer (2020) differentiates between the Church's missionary dimension seen in worship, pastoral care, and service and its intention, which requires deliberate outreach beyond its immediate community. Without intentionality, the Church risks internalising mission rather than actively engaging the world. This is particularly relevant to Busoga region where the mainline Churches are facing decline due to lack of outward-focused mission strategies.

2.4 Church Growth

The concept of the Church, derived from the Greek word *Kuriakos* (belonging to the Lord) and *Ecclesia* (Called out), signifies both divine ownership and a communal calling (Grudem, 2020). The Church, as a gathering of believers, exists to worship, fellowship, study the word, and witness to the surrounding community. Warren (2014) argues that, like all living organisms, a healthy Church naturally grows both internally and externally, mirroring the biblical depiction of the Church as a living body. However, whether mainline protestant Churches in the 21st century still uphold these foundational principles remains a critical question. Church Growth has been extensively examined in missiological studies. Wagner (2023) defines Church Growth as the study of congregational expansion, planting, multiplication, and health in relation to the fulfilment of the Great Commission. McIntosh (2016) refines this definition by emphasizing a scientific approach to Church planting,

renewal, and numerical expansion, recognising that commitment to Christ and mission are key indicators of Growth. Towns (2010) further categorises Church Growth into four: internal (spiritual maturity of members), conversion (winning the unsaved), transfer (movement between congregations), and biological (natural increase through birth). Notably, in many mainline protestant Churches today, growth is primarily driven by transfer and biological means rather than active evangelism and conversion, raising concerns about the sustainability of their mission and Growth.

Acts 2:41-42 presents an early model of Church Growth, where new believers devoted themselves to apostolic teaching, resulting in both spiritual and numerical expansion. Chaney and Lewis (2020) argue that the quality of discipleship directly impacts numerical Growth, warning that a lack of authentic spiritual formation can lead to stagnation. True Church Growth depends on discipleship and outreach resulting into soul winning, which reinforces the idea that evangelism through the Church's active participation in the Great Commission fulfilment must be intentional and strategic. While existing scholarship effectively links Church health to numerical expansion, it often overlooks the contextual shifts, urbanisation, and the rise of alternative religious movements. Intentional Great Commission fulfilment can counteract stagnation and decline among mainline Churches in Busoga region by providing insights applicable to revamp the Church.

2.6 Influence of the Missiological praxis on Church Growth

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 contextualising its application within the declining mainline Churches in

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 (Harris, 2022) identifies as a model for intentional Church planting and growth. However, while a chronological approach offers a systematic framework, it's should not be viewed as a rigid sequence. Instead, elements such as the 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 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 its missiological praxis and elements. Historically, mainline Churches have prioritised structured worship and institutional stability over adaptive mission strategies, in contrast to Pentecostal and independent Churches, which have embraced flexible, community centred 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 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 mobilised for evangelism and discipleship. The fulfilment 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 in relation to its influences on Church growth and how it can relate to the prevailing situation in Busoga region.

2.6.1 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 recognise and operate under this authority, they act with boldness, ensuring effective outreach and Church Growth (Desiring God, 2023; 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 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 the society. By anchoring their mission in Christ's authority, mainline Churches in Busoga region can counter decline, restore growth, and build a thriving faith community that effectively reaches the lost.

2.6.2 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 recognise 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, reactivating opportunities to reach the lost and disciple new converts (Amelia, 2024).

In Busoga region, where poverty, corruption, violence, and teenage pregnancy contribute to Church decline, this element and principle is 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 marginalised, 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. The Mainline Church to reclaim this principle and actively embrace and participate in this element of the Great Commission in order to reverse the decline in Church membership in her 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 out” 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. When the Church is going out, the result is growth and expansion. In fact, a reemphasis on the original imperative intent of the Great Commission heightens all of these as it places the contribution to the fulfilment of the Great Commission within the capacity of every believer (Amelia, 2024).

2.6.3 Baptism

Baptism, as emphasised in Matthew 28, is a vital component of the Great Commission fulfilment, 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 symbolises transformation, offering believers a sense of belonging and empowering them to actively engage 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. Consequently, Baptism becomes both a spiritual initiation and a relational bridge, growing the Church. Beyond symbolising resurrection life, baptism also signifies a believer’s

acceptance of Christ's suffering, deepening their devotion and commitment to witnessing (Connor, 2010). Churches that prioritise baptism often experience growth, as it strengthens faith, fosters unity, and encourages active participation (White, 2023). Baptised believers become ambassadors of the Gospel, sharing their transformation stories, which in turn, attract others to faith following the (Truth, 2024). The Church should not just stop at infant baptism but disciple the members to become devoted Christians that participate in the Great Commission fulfilment. 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, emphasising Baptism can reinforce the Church's role as a transformative agent in the Community. By baptising 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 formation. Baptism in any local congregation is a sign of a church that is reaching the community with the Gospel message leading the lost into the Christian family of God.

2.6.4 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 to not only "make disciples" but also to teach them His commandments,

emphasising an ongoing process of spiritual formation. Teaching helps internalise Christian values, strengthens believer's faith, and equips them 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 (Pettengil, 2023). When Churches prioritise teaching, they foster deep spiritual transformation, encouraging believers to engage with others, and thus strengthening the Church community. This aligns with the early Church's Catechesis, which included memorisation of scripture, prayer and participation in sacraments as essential components of Christian formation.

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 emphasise 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 strong doctrinal grounding, making them susceptible to false teaching and spiritual complacency. Without structured discipleship, believers struggle to uphold spreading their faith, thus 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 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 prepare them for mission work. Through consistent teaching, the mainline church in 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.

2.6.5 Obedience

Emphasising 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 creates 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 Busoga region has experienced decline and membership loss contributed by the neglect of this principle. When obedience is not emphasised, 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 evangelise

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 fervour 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 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 a practical solution to Church decline, ensuring both spiritual depth and numerical growth among mainline Churches in 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 Church growth.

2.6.6 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 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 evangelise others. The mainline Church in 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 disciple-making. Ignoring disciple-making has highly contributed to the Church 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 prioritised 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 helps 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 prepared to carry out Christ's mission until His return. The Church should invest more energies and finances in disciple making for her growth and establishment.

2.7 Influence of the Great Commission Knowledge on Church Growth

The knowledge of the Great Commission is a key driver of Church Growth as it shapes the Church's mission in discipleship and evangelism. A decline in understanding this mandate leads to reduced outreach, stagnation, and loss of membership, as seen in some mainline Churches in Busoga region (Back & Hand, 2024). When Churches prioritise programs over personal discipleship, they risk becoming inward-focused and ineffective in fulfilling Christ's mission. Churches fail to equip members for evangelism, limiting outreach and spiritual impact. However, reigniting an understanding of the Great Commission fosters renewed outreach, spiritual growth, and revitalisation of declining congregations (Lewis Center for Church Leadership, 2024). Jesus commanded His disciples to make more disciples through teaching, emphasising the need for knowledge and training in fulfilling the Great Commission. Effective theological education plays a key role in empowering leaders and members for effective mission work. Marak (2010) asserts that theological institutions provide the structural foundation for mission, yet concerns remain about the disconnect between theoretical training and practical application. Church leaders must be equipped beyond pulpit ministry to engage in discipleship that nurtures believers. Paul's instruction to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2) highlights the need of entrusting sound doctrine to faithful individuals who continue the cycle of discipleship. Church growth is significantly influenced by how well members are taught and mentored. Jesus spent time equipping His disciples before sending them out, underscoring the importance of knowledge in fulfilling the Great Commission. The Church should intentionally invest in discipleship training, evangelistic strategies, and mission-focused leadership to foster an active disciple-making culture (Beck & Hand, 2024).

2.7.1 Role of great commission knowledge on church growth

Knowledge of the Great Commission plays a vital role in Church Growth by aligning the congregation with its divine mandate for discipleship and outreach. Understanding the Great Commission equips the congregation with the purpose and tools to actively participate in spreading the Gospel and nurturing new disciples (Beck & Hand, 2024). It fosters a culture of intentional evangelism and discipleship within the Church, ensuring that members do not merely attend services but engage in fulfilling their missional calling. Churches that prioritise teaching and practicing the Great Commission experience sustainable growth, as they cultivate communities of mature disciples who are empowered to replicate the process (Lewis Center for Church leadership, 2024). Conversely, a lack of Great Commission knowledge often leads to stagnation, as members may lack the vision and motivation to evangelise or mentor others. Therefore, empowering members with this understanding is essential for creating a thriving, mission-driven Church (Edmondson, 2024). The traits of God's kingdom include but not limited to justice, peace, joy, equality and faithfulness. A committed and transformed child of God is one who ponders on the knowledge of God, presence of God and worships God in the community around him. Through the knowledge of God and His mission, the disciple of Jesus is able to declare the Gospel by reaching out to those around him with God's love. The disciple becomes an agent of the Great Commission through reaching out to the community.

2.7.1.1 Christian Spiritual Maturity.

The Great Commission is fundamental in fostering Christian spiritual maturity which directly impacts Church Growth. Knowledge of its key aspects, discipleship, teaching and obedience deepens believer's faith and equips them for active engagement in evangelism, service, and mentorship. Spiritually mature Christians contribute to both numerical and spiritual expansion of the Church. However, studies reveal that many Churchgoers, particularly among

mainline Churches, lack awareness of the Great Commission, leading to stagnation in personal spiritual growth and a decline in outreach effort (Barna Group, 2024). This knowledge gap has significantly contributed to dwindling Church engagement, necessitating a deliberate effort to empower congregants with the Great Commission's teachings.

Discipleship plays a critical role in fulfilling the Great Commission, as it nurtures believers in spiritual disciples and equips them to disciple others. In the New Testament Jesus' followers understood their responsibility to disciple others within the local their congregations. Churches must emphasise that discipleship is not a secondary role for clergy alone but a shared responsibility of all believers. Spiritual transformation occurs through disciples, enabling Christians to reflect Christ's image and live out their calling. Discipleship fosters spiritual growth by transforming members into public witnesses. When Churches fail to make disciples, their efforts in evangelism, worship, and ministry become ineffective as the Church loses impact without disciple-making. Knowledge on the Great Commission helps believers find their role in ministry, deepening their relationship with Christ and fostering Churchwide spiritual maturity. As believers grow in their faith, their character and ministry skills develop, rearing them to participate in Jesus' mission (The Witness, 2024).

Neglecting the Great Commission has contributed significantly to Church decline in Busoga region, as members lack direction in discipleship and evangelism. Without intentional disciple-making, Church experiences spiritual stagnation and membership loss. Restoring this knowledge will be instrumental in reversing the trend, ensuring that members understand their role in the Church' mission. By integrating discipleship into Church teachings and practice, the Church in Busoga region can cultivate spiritually mature and mission driven congregations. When believers are empowered with the Great Commission's knowledge, they will actively engage in evangelism, community outreach and leadership, leading to holistic

growth. Ultimately, making disciples must be the Church's priority, as it is the foundation of sustained Church health and expansion.

2.7.1.2 Effective Church Ministry

Understanding the Great Commission among Church members and leaders is essential for an effective and impactful Church, ministry, ultimately contributing to Church Growth. When believers grasp their mandate to “go and make disciples”, they intentionally integrate evangelism, discipleship, and community service into their ministries. This knowledge empowers them to actively spread the Gospel, teach biblical truth, and nurture new believers, creating a holistic approach to ministry (Beck & Hand, 2024). Further, informed congregations can easily align their programs and activities within the Church's mission, ensuring that resources and efforts contribute directly to numerical and spiritual growth. However, many mainline church attendees are often unfamiliar with the Great Commission, resulting into ineffective ministry efforts that lack a focus on outreach and discipleship.

Understanding the Great Commission's role in Church growth by church members, they become more engaged and effective in ministry. Church ministry is a loving response to people's needs in Jesus' name, calling for active engagement from the Church. Church ministry, rooted in love, obedience, and compassion, includes worship, preaching, ordinances, diaconal services, mission and evangelism and community outreach, all of which nurture spiritual development and Church health. The mainline Churches should invest in their ministry and mission teams by providing training, encouragement, and ongoing support to ensure effective outreach and disciple-making efforts (The Barna Group, 2024). When the Great Commission is neglected, it weakens Church ministry, leading to stunted growth and reduced community engagement. The Church decline in Busoga region can be attributed to a limited focus on disciple-making and community impact. To reverse the decline, the Church

should prioritise teaching and training members in the Great Commission principles. By equipping believers to actively participate in ministry and evangelism, the church fosters spiritual renewal, attracts new members, and strengthens its influence in the community. Embracing mission with clarity and purpose, churches become centres of transformation, ensuring sustainable growth and long-term impact.

2.7.2 Practices for empowering Church Members with Knowledge

2.7.2.1 Spiritual Mentorship

Spiritual mentorship is a transformative practice that empowers believers with Great Commission knowledge, fostering both numerical and spiritual church growth. By establishing intentional relationships where mature Christians guide others in faith, mentorship equips individuals to integrate evangelism, discipleship, and service into their daily lives. Through personalised teaching, accountability, and encouragement, mentors nurture spiritual maturity and confidence, ensuring that mentees actively participate in ministry and mission work (Willard & Simpson, 2023). This practice creates a cycle of disciple-making, where mentees eventually become mentors, sustaining Church Growth across generations (Lewis Center for Church Leadership, 2024). Historically, mentorship has been central to faith transmission, as seen in Jesus' mentorship of His disciples and Paul's guidance of Timothy. The Old Testament also highlights mentor-mentee relationships, such as Moses and Joshua or Elijah and Elisha, demonstrating that mentorship is essential for sustaining leadership and advancing the Great Commission (Krallmann, 2008). When Church leaders intentionally mentor others, they develop strong, mission-driven congregations reared for effective ministry.

The declining Church membership among mainline Churches in the Busoga region can be attributed, in part, to the neglect of spiritual mentorship. Without structured discipleship, many

believers lack guidance, confidence, and accountability in their faith journey, leading to disengagement and stagnation. Churches that fail to mentor younger generations struggle with leadership gaps, reduced mission activity, and weakened commitment to the Great Commission fulfilment. To reverse this trend, Churches in Busoga must prioritise spiritual mentorship as a core ministry strategy. By intentionally raising and equipping new leaders through mentorship, the Church can foster a culture of disciple-making, revive engagement, and strengthen mission-efforts. Implementing structured mentorship programs will not only address the decline in Church membership but also create a spiritually vibrant, mission-oriented Church reared for sustained growth.

2.7.3.1 Spiritual Contact with Members.

Spiritual contact with Church members is a deliberate practice that empowers individuals with Great Commission knowledge, fostering numerical and spiritual growth. Through visits, one-on-one conversations, and fellowship activities, Church leaders and mature believers engage directly with members to reinforce discipleship, evangelism, and service (Beck & Hand, 2024). This personal engagement ensures that members feel valued, spiritually supported, and equipped with practical tools to share their faith. According to the Lewis centre for Church Leadership (2024), Churches that prioritise relational engagement and mentorship experience higher congregational involvement and a disciple-making culture.

Church leaders lay a critical role in influencing members toward active participation in the Great Commission. When leaders maintain direct contact with congregants, they inspire engagement in Church mission activities and create an inviting atmosphere that attracts new members. Jesus commanded His followers to go into the world and do good to all, leaving no one out. Similarly, John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, built his ministry on communal strength, establishing regular contact with members through small group fellowships that encourage introspection and accountability (Wesley, 2004).

By fostering a culture of close spiritual interaction, church members develop a deep sense of community, strengthening their commitment to mission. This approach transitions believers from passive attendance to active involvement, ensuring that Church growth is both sustainable and mission driven. As members stay connected through fellowship and discipleship, they not only draw closer to one another but also deepen their relations with God, making the Church a vibrant and transformative community.

2.7.2.2 Members' Participation in Church Ministry

Active participation in Church ministry is a transformative practice that empowers believers with Great Commission knowledge, ultimately fostering Church Growth. When members engage in ministry activities, they internalise the Great Commission through hands-on experience, strengthening their faith and developing the spiritual gifts (Lewis Center for Church Leadership, 2024). Churches with high levels of member involvement experience greater retention, vibrant ministry activities, and overall growth. Engagement fosters a sense of ownership, making members ambassadors of the Church's mission within and beyond the congregation (Willard & Simpson, 2023). The declining Church membership among mainline Churches can be reversed by actively involving members in ministry. When leaders identify members' strengths and integrate them into various ministries, they foster a sense of belonging and commitment. Church growth occurs when leaders equip and mentor others, creating participatory environments where every member contributes to the mission fulfilment (Wright, 2023). Ignoring membership participation weakens engagement, leading to stagnation and eventual decline, as members are disconnected from the church's mission. The situation of declining Churches in Busoga region can be reversed by prioritising active involvement which cultivate a dynamic mission-driven congregations that thrive both spiritually and numerically.

2.7.2.3 Investing in Children and Youth Ministry.

Investing in children and youth ministry is a strategic practice that empowers young believers with the Great Commission knowledge, equipping them to actively participate in discipleship and mission (Beck & Hand, 2024). Through engaging, age-appropriate programs, young people develop a strong foundation in faith, learn to share the Gospel, and embrace their Christian calling. When nurtured early, they become kingdom ambassadors, contributing to Church vitality and sustainability. Churches that prioritise youth and children ministries create a culture of discipleship, ensuring long-term Church growth and leadership development (Barna Group, 2024). The situation of declining Churches can be reversed by intentionally investing in youth and children`s ministries. Since young people often form the largest percentage of congregations, providing them with opportunities for engagement such as Church music, discipleship trainings, and active ministry participation fosters their commitment and, in this way, they invite others to join them. Employing and supporting dedicated youth and children workers ensures that young people grow in their love for God and Church. Conversely, ignoring youth and children`s ministry leads to disengagement, loss of future Church leaders, and eventual decline. By prioritising this investment, mainline Churches in Busoga region can secure long-term sustainability and expansion of the Great Commission (Beck & Hand, 2024).

2.8 Evangelical Approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment.

Evangelical approaches to fulfilling the Great Commission significantly influence Church Growth by emphasising discipleship, community engagement, mission focused practices and innovative evangelism. Mission-oriented practices, such as sending missionaries and supporting cross-cultural evangelism, expand the Church`s outreach, following the biblical model in Acts. Evangelical Churches actively equip members for mission work, leading to the establishment of new and vibrant congregations worldwide (Lifeway, 2023). In contrast,

mainline churches often prioritise social justice and institutional preservation over active mission. While addressing societal issues is crucial, neglecting evangelism weakens their ability to fulfil the Great Commission effectively. A failure to integrate social justice with Gospel proclamation diminishes both spiritual and numerical growth. Furthermore, resistance to cultural shifts such as digital evangelism and contextual preaching has made some churches struggle to remain relevant. The Lausanne Movement highlights the need for contemporary evangelism to respond to societal changes while maintaining biblical fidelity (Evangelical Focus, 2023). Neglecting evangelical strategies, can lead to stagnation. The church's failure to embrace evangelistic mechanisms leave it vulnerable to spiritual opposition. Many congregations have struggled due to lack of evangelistic focus, resisting modern outreach methods, and leadership that fails to mobilise congregations effectively. The reluctance to engage in mission-driven discipleship and innovative evangelism has contributed to dwindling congregations, and reduced impact of mainline Churches. To reverse this trend, the Church, must reclaim their evangelistic mandate, integrate discipleship, and embrace modern strategies to reach and nurture believers, ensuring sustainable growth (Great Commission Research Journal, 2023).

2.8.1 Evangelical Approaches that Influence Church Growth

2.8.1.1 Inspiring Worship Services

Inspiring worship services play a crucial role in Church growth by creating an atmosphere that draws people to God and fosters spiritual transformation. These services prioritise vibrant music, engaging sermons, and strong sense of community, making evangelism and disciple more effective, especially among young people. Evangelistic worship emphasises creativity and cultural relevance, incorporating contemporary music, traditional hymns, multimedia, and personal, testimonies to engage diverse congregations. This approach not only attracts the unchurched but also strengthens the faith of believers, encouraging them to

invite others to Church. Research indicates that Churches investing in uplifting, Christ centred worship often experience both numerical and spiritual growth, as worship becomes a platform for fulfilling the Great Commission (Lifeway, 2023; Evangelical Focus, 2023).

A thriving Church integrates inspiring worship that involves the entire congregation, recognising God's presence through sacraments, preaching, testimonies, and fellowship. Worship in peaceful congregations is joyful and engaging, strengthening community bonds and attracting outsiders. During worship people seek to experience God's presence, yet a Barna poll found that while some worshipers consistently feel God's presence, a significant percentage rarely or never do. According to his findings, 27% responded always, 12% usually. However, Barna also discovered that 27% said rarely or did not know, and 34% said they never sensed God's presences in worship (Barna reports, 2023). Neglecting inspiring worship has contributed to Church decline in Busoga region. Many Churches lack vibrant engaging services, failing to connect with the young generation and leaving worship uninspiring. Most mainline churches practice traditional Church worship introduced by the western missionaries. Without intentional, spirit filled worship, members disengage, reducing evangelism and discipleship efforts. In order to revamp church growth, mainline churches must reclaim inspiring worship as an evangelical strategy, incorporating dynamic music, relevant preaching, and active participation, to reignite passion for Christ and create services that draw people into God's presence fostering a strong community, encourage outreach, and ultimately lead to Church revitalisation (Evangelical Focus, 2023).

2.8.1.2 Open Air Crusade and Door to Door Evangelism

Open air crusades and door to door evangelism are powerful outreach strategies that significantly contribute to Church Growth as active components to fulfilling the Great Commission. Open air preaching, rooted in biblical and historical tradition, remain one of the most effective ways to introduce the Gospel to new territories. From Old Testament prophets

to Jesus and the Apostles, public proclamation of God's word has always been central to evangelism. This approach allows the Church to reach diverse audiences in marketplaces, streets. Public gatherings, break barriers that traditional indoor services cannot (Lifeway, 2023). Door to door evangelism complements open air preaching by fostering personal engagement, allowing for deeper spiritual conversations and direct responses to people's questions and needs. Jesus and His disciples frequently ministered to individuals and small groups, a method that strengthened faith and built lasting relationships. Together, these evangelistic strategies create a holistic outreach model, ensuring that the gospel is both publicly proclaimed and personally applied.

However, mainline Churches have experienced decline due to neglecting these evangelistic approaches. Overreliance on biological growth has made outreach passive, reducing engagement with the unchurched. In contrast, growing Churches embrace open air evangelism, drawing large crowds through public worship, testimonies and dynamic preaching. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, demonstrated this through his open-air evangelism ministry, which led to the widespread growth of Methodism (Hanks, 2019). To reverse the decline of the Church in Busoga region, mainline churches must reignite grassroot evangelism by organising open air crusades and door to door evangelism as they engage in personal evangelism. By returning to these biblical models, the mainline churches can experience renewed growth, and strengthen faith communities leading to increased membership and spiritual growth.

2.8.1.3 Media Evangelisation

Media evangelisation through televisions, radios, social media, and print media has become an essential tool for the Great Commission fulfilment resulting into Church Growth in the 21st century. Digital platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and podcasts enable Churches to engage global audiences, while traditional media like television and radio reach communities with

limited internet access (Great Commission Research Journal, 2023). Television evangelism offers dynamic Gospel presentation through sermons, music and testimonies, while radio ministry remains a powerful tool in rural areas, allowing for widespread Bible teaching, prayer, and spiritual nourishment. Incorporating media with social platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp enhances follow-up conversations, discipleship, and deeper engagement. Research indicates that Churches utilising media evangelism experience increased attendance, following and commitment, as listeners and viewers often transition to in-person Church participation (Evangelical Focus, 2023). Additionally, print media such as Gospel tracts, booklets, and Christian literature serves as a silent missionary model allowing the gospel message to be revisited and shared multiple times, amplifying its impact.

Limited outreach efforts have contributed to the reduced community-Church engagement. By leveraging media evangelisation, Churches can reverse this trend, reaching both the Churched and the unchurched with consistent gospel presence beyond Church walls. Investing in radio programs, social media outreach, and Christian literature distribution will ensure the message of Christ remains accessible, fostering revival, discipleship, and church growth. Electronic evangelisation uses radios, televisions, social media, internet, and other electronic technologies to spread the gospel message globally. Since most of the young people today are highly placed on social media platforms, the media therefore, can reach large audiences, overcoming barriers where other methods might fail. To reach the current generation with the gospel message, the mainline Churches must step into the same media space engaging with mass media, as a potential tool and channel for the Great Commission fulfilment.

2.8.1.4 The Ministry of Diakonia and Philanthropy

Diakonia and philanthropy are essential evangelical tools for fulfilling the Great Commission. Active engagement in social justice, poverty alleviation, education, and healthcare, Churches

demonstrate Christ's love in action, strengthening its growth (WCC, 2023). When the Church meets tangible community needs through food distribution, medical camps, and scholarships, the church remains relevant and impactful. Through such, the church attracts people to not only its messages but also its transformational presence. Churches have experienced decline due to their failure to address pressing economic and social needs. As poverty and hardships persist, Churches that neglect diakonia, risk being perceived as detached and irrelevant, causing many to disengage (World Vision, 2022). Without holistic ministry Churches lose the opportunity to minister effectively, weakening their role as a beacon of hope. To restore growth, Churches must integrate diaconal ministry into their evangelistic strategy, partnering with local and international organisations for resource mobilisation. By aligning philanthropic efforts with spiritual mission, Churches can revive their influence, rebuild trust, and attract new believers. Jesus Himself demonstrated this approach by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and serving others which drew multitudes to His ministry. Evangelism and diakonia are inseparable as preaching in both word and deed is key to fulfilling the Great Commission. Effective evangelism requires more than just preaching, it must be demonstrated through acts of love and service. Two major assets that shape holistic Great Commission fulfilment are Diakonia and philanthropy. These elements reinforce evangelism by addressing both spiritual and physical needs of the people, making the gospel practical and impactful.

2.8.1.5 Church Planting

Church planting is a strategic and dynamic evangelical approach that drives church growth. It involves establishing new congregations in unreached areas, providing spaces for worship, and discipleship. This biblical model is seen in the book of Acts. It emphasizes the multiplication of believers through spirit-empowered preaching and intentional establishment of worshipping communities (Keller, 2023; ARC Journal, 2023). Christian (2002) asserts that

church growth is achieved when a congregation matures spiritually and replicates itself by sending members to establish new Churches. Preaching to the unchurched creates converts who join in prayer and scripture study, strengthening local assemblies fostering growth. Donald (2020), further highlights that expansion growth occurs when a congregation converts non-Christians and incorporates them, while extension growth involves planting sister churches in the neighbourhood. Any Church that is committed to the Great Commission fulfilment naturally engages in church planting, extending the gospel worldwide.

In Busoga region, churches have experienced membership decline and community detach due to their failure to engage in church planting and cross-cultural evangelism. Without active proclamation of the gospel and establishing new congregations, mainline Churches continue struggling to adapt in evolving communities (Murray, 2023). Neglecting Church planting leaves a spiritual and social vacuum, allowing charismatic-evangelical churches plant new congregations and attract members. Churches that do not multiply themselves risk losing relevance, as they fail to meet the growing spiritual hunger and communal need of the people. To reverse the decline Churches must develop a mission driven strategy that focuses on planting new congregations and equipping leaders for evangelism (Graham, 2017). Additionally, Church planting should be intentional ensuring discipleship programs are in place to nurture new believers into maturity (Keller, 2023).

2.8.1.6 Budgeting and Ministry Evaluation

Budgeting and ministry evaluation are essential tools to fulfilling the Great Commission which foster church growth. A well-structured budget ensures that church resources are effectively allocated to key ministries such as outreach, discipleship, and worship programs. Ministry evaluation assesses the impact of these activities, allowing adjustments to maximise effectiveness (United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana, 2023). Without strategic budgeting

and evaluation, churches risk resource wastage, uncoordinated programs, and stagnation which leads to a decline in engagement as the church loses its presence and influence (Illinois Baptist state Association, 2024). The Church's failure to plan financially and evaluate ministry effectiveness results in diminished community impact which makes it irrelevant in addressing needs of the community.

The declining Church membership has been greatly influenced by poor budgeting and lack of ministry evaluation. Without a clear financial plan, Churches struggle to sustain evangelistic activities, mission work, and discipleship programs, making them less effective in fulfilling the great Commission. To reverse the continuing decline, mainline Churches must adopt strategic budgeting and evaluation frameworks. This includes setting measurable goals, conducting SWOT analyses, and prioritising resource allocation in high impact areas such as youth, children, women ministries, and evangelism (Smart Church Management, 2023). Churches must develop annual budgets that reflect mission priorities. Investing in those who preach and teach is crucial for sustaining evangelistic work. Ultimately, the growth or decline of any church depends on the stewardship of its resources. By implementing effective budgeting and evaluation, mainline Churches regain spiritual vitality and expand outreach ministry.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted two key theories that provide a solid foundation; the church growth theory and the Missio Dei Theory. These theories emphasise the relationship between evangelism, discipleship, and church expansion. The church growth theory, initially developed by Donald McGavran, has remained relevant in the contemporary discussions on mission and evangelism. According to Elliot (2019), this theory asserts that church growth is not accidental but results from intentional evangelistic and discipleship efforts. Churches that prioritise the fulfilment of the Great Commission through proclamation of the gospel and

structured discipleship programs tend to experience both numerical and spiritual growth. A critical component of the church growth theory is the homogeneous unit principle, which suggests that people respond more positively to the gospel when it is presented within their cultural and societal contexts (Hunter, 2020). This principle has been widely debated some arguing that it may promote segregation rather than unity of the body of Christ. However, its effectiveness in church planting and evangelism is undeniable (Garrison, 2019). Additionally church multiplication is another core element of this theory. Research by Smith (2021) indicates that churches that actively plant new congregations tend to grow at a faster rate than those that solely focus on membership retention. On the other hand, the main criticisms of this theory is its strong emphasis on numerical growth, which some scholars argue may lead to superficial conversions rather than deep lasting discipleship (Johnson, 2020). However, proponents of the theory argue that spiritual and numerical growth are interconnected, as true discipleship leads to transformed lives that in turn draw others to the faith (Williams, 2023). The theory remains crucial in analysing how churches that actively engage in the Great Commission experience sustained Growth.

The Missio Dei Theory, asserts that mission originates from God, not the Church (Bosch, 2011). This theory has gained significant attention in modern missiology, particularly in the context of holistic mission. Wright (2023) argues that the Church does not own the mission but rather participates in God's redemptive work in the world. One of the primary tenets of Missio Dei theory is that evangelism is not just about saving souls but about addressing social justice issues (Kirk, 2019). In this sense, churches that engage in both evangelism and community transformational efforts tend to experience holistic growth, where members grow not only in faith but also in their role as agents of societal change. This aligns with the Great Commission, which calls believers to make disciples and teach them to observe all that Christ commanded. Another significant aspect of the Missio-Dei framework is its Trinitarian

foundation. According to Anderson (2018), mission is initiated by God the Father, carried out through Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Churches that embrace this Trinitarian approach experience deeper spiritual, renewal and effective outreach efforts. However, some scholars argues that Missio Dei underemphasises the strategic role of the Church in Mission work leading to some congregations adopt a passive stance, instead of actively engaging in evangelism (Newbiggin, 2019). Despite these criticisms, the Missio Dei approach remains highly relevant in the contemporary mission work. Research by Miller (2021) suggests that Churches that align their mission to God`s broader redemptive plan tend to grow in both depth and number. Furthermore, churches that embrace Missio Dei principle tend to develop a stronger sense of community and global mission engagement fostering both internal discipleship and external evangelistic impact (Green, 2022). In a nutshell, both church growth theory and Missio-Dei theory provide essential insights into how fulfilling the Great Commission influences church growth. The church growth theory emphasises intentional evangelism, discipleship, and strategic Church planting, while Missio Dei theory underscores God`s mission as the driving force behind church expansion. The integration of these theories can help Mainline Churches in Busoga region develop comprehensive strategies that foster both numerical growth and spiritual maturity.

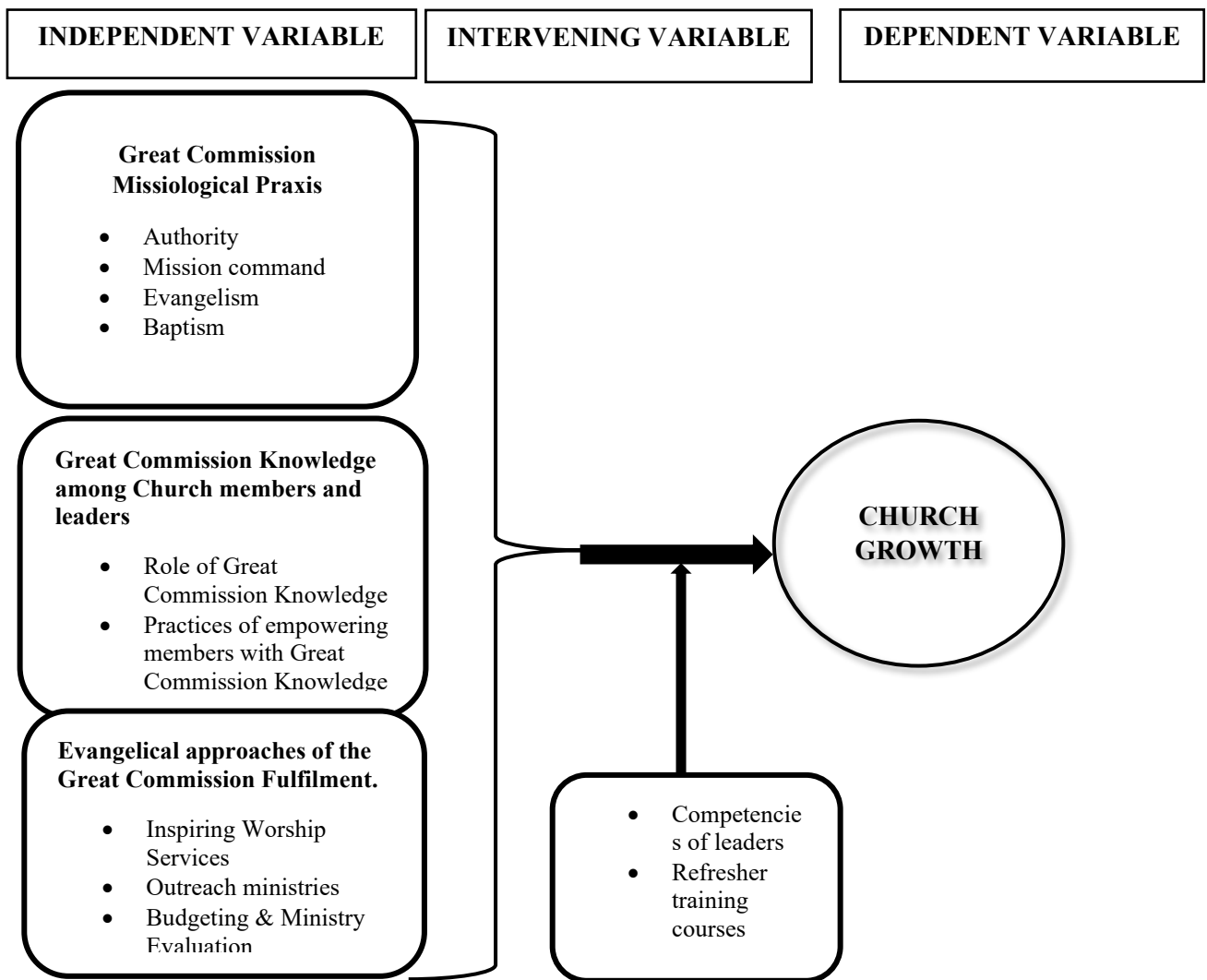
2.10 Conceptual framework

The concept framework, as described by Neuman (2020), is a systematic and logical instrument encompassing various contexts and variations. The conceptual framework helps in making conceptual distinctions and organising ideas. By encapsulating real phenomena in a straightforward manner, the conceptual framework ensures ease of remembrance and practical application. Fig 2.1 dramatically represents the conceptual framework of this study highlighting the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The outcome (dependent variable) is church growth influenced by independent variables such

as Great Commission missiological praxis, Great Commission Knowledge among Church leaders and members, and evangelical approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment. Additionally, the independent variables influence each other, as depicted by the vertical arrows between them. Church growth relies on each independent variable and their combined effect, as indicated by their connection together. Additionally, mediating variables such as competence of Church leaders, and refresher trainings indirectly impact the Great Commission fulfilment, thereby promoting church growth.

Fig. 2.1

Conceptual Framework



2.11 Summary of the Literature review and Research Gap

The literature review establishes a theological and missiological basis for the church's mandate in mission and evangelism through the Great Commission. Scholars such as Keller (2023) and McIntosh (2016) emphasise that fulfilling the Great Commission requires all believers to make disciples, directly influencing church growth. In Busoga region, where mainline churches face membership decline, revitalization through strategic outreach and discipleship is essential. Authentic growth includes spiritual maturity, conversion, transfer, and biological means, yet modern protestant churches mainly rely on transfer and biological growth, raising sustainability concerns. Effective integration of the Great commission nurtures maturity, evangelism, and discipleship, but mainline churches lack sufficient outward-focused mission. While discipleship is affirmed as key to growth, further research is needed on its effective implementation for sustainable revitalization in Busoga.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section presents the research methodology and design that was used in the study. Key subtopics include, study population, research design, sampling techniques and sample sizes, instrumentation, data collection methods, data analysis techniques and research ethical considerations.

3.1 Location of the Study

This research was conducted in Eastern Uganda, specifically in Busoga region, covering Jinja and Kamuli districts, and focused on mainline protestant Churches.

3.2 Research design

Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) define research design as the structured approach for acquiring responses to research questions, including the outline of questions, methods, data collection procedures, analysis and presentation of the outcomes in a simple and clear way understood by anyone. The researcher used descriptive survey design, collecting data through interviews and questionnaires from a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). The design is suitable as it permits an in-depth examination of events and provides comprehensive information of this study.

Busoga region faces several challenges, including high poverty levels, rising teenage pregnancy, increased HIV and AIDS prevalence, and a rise in crime, all of which need to be addressed. This study aims to assess how the fulfilment of the Great Commission influences church growth, positing that church growth can help address these communal challenges. By sharing the good news, the church can transform lives, create disciples, and contribute to the overall community improvement. With this design the researcher assessed the influence of

the Great Commission fulfilment on church growth among selected mainline protestant churches in Busoga Region.

3.3 Target Population

The Study population comprised 20 selected mainline Congregations from Busoga region all affiliated to the UJCC. These Churches were chosen due to their closeness to doctrinal teachings and the observed decline in membership and spiritual influence. The study focused on this population amidst increasing competition from Evangelical, cultic, and Islamic religious groups in the region. The targeted population was all the 20 Church ministers one from each congregation who are the facilitators and influencers of the Great Commission fulfilment and 20 lay leaders one from each congregation who are the second in command to influence congregation in the Great Commission fulfilment. The study also targeted 55 members at least 2 from each congregation, who are the main participants in the Great Commission fulfilment. Consequently, the target population was 95 respondents.

3.4 Sampling Size and Sampling Procedure

Sampling involves selecting a group of individuals to represent the entire population for the study (Burns & Grove, 2007). 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 clergy, 1 lay leader, and 3 committed members actively involved in the Church's ministry, particularly in areas of discipleship and Evangelism. The rationale for selecting the 5 participants per congregation was to ensure a balanced representation of both clergy and laity, capturing diverse perspectives on the Great Commission and church growth dynamics. Including at least one clergy and a lay leader per congregation ensured that institutional leadership was represented, while the inclusion of committed lay members allowed insights from those engaged in day-to-day active ministry and congregational life. This composition was considered sufficient for representing the

views of each congregation while keeping the sample manageable and practical for qualitative analysis. A combination of random sampling and purposive sampling methods was used. Random sampling was applied in selecting the Churches to avoid bias in congregation selection, while purposive sampling was used to identify knowledgeable and experienced respondents- those who were actively involved in evangelistic efforts, discipleship programs, or Church leadership roles. This method ensured that participants were information-rich and could provide meaningful insights related to the study objectives. Church leaders facilitated the identification of participants based on their involvement and knowledge of Church Growth and mission activities, thereby increasing the credibility and depth of the data collected. The selected sample size and composition were deemed adequate for the study's qualitative approach, allowing for thematic saturation while ensuring each congregation's dynamics were sufficiently captured.

3.5 Data collection instruments

The primary instrument for data collection used in this study was a structured questionnaire, which is effective for collecting quantitative data as it facilitates tabulation, summarisation, and statistical analysis. The questionnaire was designed to collect both demographic information and data aligned with the specific research objectives. It was structured in two parts; Part A captured the participants' demographic details such as; age, gender, denomination, and role in the Church; Part B focused on the gathering responses related to the study's key objectives concerning the Great Commission fulfilment and its influence on church growth. The development of the questionnaire followed a systematic process. First, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature and similar studies to identify relevant themes and constructs. Based on this review and the specific research objectives, initial items were drafted to ensure content relevance and clarity. The questionnaire included close-ended questions using a Likert-scale format to enable data

quantification and allow for easy composition of opinions and attitudes. To ensure content validity, the draft questionnaire was submitted to academic supervisors for review and feedback. Their input helped refine the language, eliminate ambiguity, and ensure alignment with the study objectives. The questionnaire then underwent pre-testing with a small group of about 20 respondents drawn from mainline congregations of Buganda region which are closely similar to those in the actual study population. The instrument tested the reliability, clarity of questions, time needed for completion, and respondent comprehension. Based on the feedback from the pilot test, minor revisions were made, some items reworded for clarity, and redundant questions were removed. The final version of the questionnaire (Appendix II) was therefore validated for reliability and content accuracy. The consistent structure and focused item development ensured the instrument effectively gathered the required data for analysis, interpretation, and conclusion drawing based on the sample.

3.6 Data collection procedure

Before collection of data, a letter of introduction was obtained from the University. The letter facilitated the researcher to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to give authority to the researcher to carry out data collection in the location of study. Once the permit was obtained it was used to apply for local authorisation to carry out the study. Subsequently, data was obtained through primary sources. The data was obtained through use of questionnaires administered personally to the respondents. The questionnaire items were both open and close-ended. At the agreed time, the researcher met the respondents, distributed the questionnaires, gave the respondents time to respond and then collected the responses soon after completion. The collection soon after completion improved the response rate as for any participants who were not able to interpret the questions, the researcher sat with them, asked the questions to the

respondent in the mother tongue and recorded their response. This procedure was followed for all participants who were not able by themselves or were not ready to read and write.

3.7 Pilot study

Before data collection, the researcher carried out a pilot study to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. A pretest of data collection instruments was done a nearby Buganda region that has similar conditions of Church decline with Busoga region. The similarity between the two regions stem from the fact that the entire Mainline Church in Uganda as a whole is experiencing decline membership and spiritual influence. The piloting process evaluated whether the tool design was logical, clear and easily understood, and helped determine how long it would take to complete a single questionnaire. Pretesting checked whether the gathered variables can easily be examined and guided necessary adjustments to avoid misinterpretation by participants. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 and the feedback was used to refine the tool for data collection before final data collection. A Cronbach coefficient of above 0.7 was considered.

3.8 Validity

Mugenda & Mugenda defines Validity as the degree to which a research instrument measures what it's supposed to measure. To measure instrument validity, content analysis and judgement was conducted under the guidance of the supervisors, ensuring that the variables align with the study objectives. According to Burton, the truthfulness, correctness or accuracy of the research data determine the validity of the tool in use. Several actions were taken in this study to determine the validity of the research instrument. Experts from the Kenya Methodist University reviewed the contents of the instruments, the researcher ensured that all the items were based on the study objectives and finally the results of piloting were used to

check for any ambiguities, the time required for instrument administration and the researcher made all necessary adjustments.

3.9 Reliability

This is the ability of the research instrument to produce consistent results after several tests. An instrument is deemed reliable if it consistently yields the same expected outcomes when used repeatedly to collect data from same population. The reliability coefficient indicates the extent to which a data collection instrument is free of error variance. The researcher used Cronbach`s alpha test which should be 0.7 or above for the instrument to be deemed reliable. To evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, it was administered twice at two-week interval during the pilot study.

3.10 Data analysis

After data collection, all questionnaires were first checked for completeness and consistency. Any questionnaire that was found to be less than 75% complete was excluded from further analysis to ensure the quality and integrity of the data. The remaining valid responses were sorted and organised for analysis. Since the study employed closed-ended questionnaires based on a Likert-type scale, responses were coded using the following format to facilitate quantitative analysis; SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), N (Neutral), A (Agree), SA (Strongly Agree). This coding system allowed for a standardised interpretation of respondents` attitudes and perception towards the study constructs. The coded data was then entered into IBM SPSS Version 24 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyse the data. The rationale for choosing descriptive analysis was based on the nature of the study, which aimed to summarise and describe the patterns, attitudes, and levels of agreement on the influence of the Great Commission fulfilment on Church Growth in Busoga region. Descriptive analysis

was appropriate as it provided a clear and concise summary of the respondents' views and enabled comparisons across different groups. The organisation of the results followed the research objectives to ensure focused interpretation and logical flow in the discussion section. This structured data analysis approach enhanced the reliability, validity, and interpretation of the findings.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

An introduction letter from Kenya Methodist University and other documents from relevant authorities were obtained and presented to those in authority. The letter from KeMU was used to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Availing information to the researcher was on a voluntary basis and none was coerced to available information to the researcher. Participants' anonymity was upheld at every stage of study where the respondents were given alphabetical letters to conceal their identity. All the respondents were availed with clear information on the purpose and the use of the research findings. Data collected was used for academic purposes only.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the responses and discusses the main findings from the research. It introduces the information and examines the reactions of the respondents who participated in the study. The gathered information is shown and interpreted using surveys, with frequency and percentage tables, and visual diagrams based on direct scale responses. The chapter first presents the results of the analysed data and then discusses the outcomes in relation to various areas and objectives.

4.2 Response Rate

This study targeted a total sample size of 95 respondents and about 76 reacted to the issues under investigation.

Table 4.1

Response Rate of Instrument

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

Table 4.1 shows that an average of 80% of the respondents' questionnaires were returned. Mugenda and 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 discoveries. Therefore, 80% reaction rates were, in this way considered a good representation of the sampled respondents.

4.3 Personal Demographics of the Respondents

This section provides a summary of the demographic variables of the respondents who participated in the study. Collecting this information was essential to understand the sample characteristics of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were women, with a balanced representation of males. Most respondents were aged 30 years and above, with a few under 30, and the minimum age being 20 years. Church membership duration varied from 1 year and beyond. Including church membership duration in the interview helped the researcher explore other variables that might influence members' involvement in the Great Commission fulfilment in their local churches. Additionally, the study aimed to examine the level of education and church leadership experience of the participants to assess their knowledge and ability to engage in the fulfilling of the Great Commission. The level of Education and leadership experience of the respondents were used to check the quality of knowledge and ability to engage in the Great Commission fulfilment as part of church ministry especially among church pastors and lay leaders who influence church members' involvement in the fulfilment of the Great Commission through discipleship.

4.3.1 Role played by Respondents

Table 4.2

Role played in Church

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Role | Minister | 12 | 15.8 | 15.8 | 15.8 |
| | Lay Leader | 30 | 39.5 | 39.5 | 55.3 |
| | Member | 34 | 44.7 | 44.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

As summarised in Table 4.2, the majority of respondents identified as Church members, representing 44.7%, while 39.5% indicated they were lay leaders of their local congregations,

4.3.2 Gender of the Respondents

Table 4.3

Gender of Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 35 | 46.1 | 46.1 | 46.1 |
| | Female | 41 | 53.9 | 53.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

As indicated in Table 4.3, the statistical return shows that majority of the respondents were female at 53.9% and male at 46.1%. This clearly indicates that there were relatively more female respondents in the study field in Busoga Region than there were male respondents. Nevertheless, both genders were represented as the percentage difference was a small margin.

4.3.3. Age of Respondents

Table 4.4

Age of Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Age | 20-29 yrs. | 15 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 19.7 |
| | 30-39 yrs. | 26 | 34.2 | 34.2 | 53.9 |
| | 40-49 yrs. | 20 | 26.3 | 26.3 | 80.3 |
| | 50yrs above | 15 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

As shown in Table 4.4, to address the sensitivity of asking about exact ages, respondents were categorised into age brackets. The results revealed that majority of the respondents 34.2% were between 30-39 years old, 26.3% were between 40-49 years, and those who were between 20-29 years and 50 years above had the same percentage of 19.7%. These findings suggest that most of the respondents were sufficiently mature to assume any leadership roles and actively contribute in the Great Commission fulfilment.

4.3.4. Membership at Current local Church and Leadership Experience

Table 4.5

Statistics of Duration of Church membership and leadership experience.

| | | Years of Membership at current local Church | Years of Leadership experience |
|----------------|---------|--|-----------------------------------|
| N | Valid | 76 | 53 |
| | Missing | 0 | 23 |
| Mean | | 23.38 | 6.72 |
| Median | | 20.00 | 5.00 |
| Mode | | 20 | 5 |
| Std. Deviation | | 14.535 | 5.468 |
| Range | | 59 | 21 |
| Minimum | | 1 | 1 |
| Maximum | | 60 | 22 |

Table 4.5 represents data on the duration of respondent’s membership at their local church congregations and their year of leadership experience. Most respondents reported having been members of their local congregations for about 20years, with an average mean of 23.38 years and standard deviation of 14.535. The longest membership reported was 60 years, while the shortest was 1 year.

Regarding leadership experience, out of the 76 respondents, 53 reported having held leadership positions in their local congregations. Among these, most had been in leadership roles for over 6 years, with an average mean of 6.732 years and standard deviation of 5.468. The longest recorded leadership tenure was 22 years, while the shortest was 1 year.

4.3.5 Years Local Church has been in existence and estimate of local Church Membership

Table 4.6

Duration of local Church existence and Numerical local Church membership

| Church Characteristics | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Years Local Church has been in existence | Below 5yrs | 2 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| | 5-10 years | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 3.9 |
| | 11-20 years | 4 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 9.2 |
| | 20years | 69 | 90.8 | 90.8 | 100.0 |
| | Above | | | | |
| Total | | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Estimate of Local Church Membership | 50 Below | 28 | 36.8 | 36.8 | 36.8 |
| | (50 -100) | 28 | 36.8 | 36.8 | 73.7 |
| | (100-200) | 7 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 82.9 |
| | (200-300) | 11 | 14.5 | 14.5 | 97.4 |
| | (500 above) | 2 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table 4.6 presents data on duration of existence of respondents' local church congregation and estimates of the congregational memberships. The majority of the respondents 90.8% reported that their local church congregations had been in existence for 20 years and above. In contrast, 5.3% noted their churches had existed for 11-20 years, 2.5% for less than 5 years, and 1.3% for 5-10 years.

The results regarding the numerical membership of respondents' local church congregations showed that 36.8% of the respondents reported membership numbers of 50 or below, and the same percentage reported membership between 50-100. Additionally, 14.5% reported membership of 200-300, 9.2% reported 100-200 members, and only 2.6% reported memberships exceeding 500.

4.3.6 Education level and Marital status of Respondents

Table 4.7

Education level and Marital Status of respondents

| Demographic Characteristics | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Education level | Primary | 14 | 18.4 | 18.4 | 18.4 |
| | Secondary | 16 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 39.5 |
| | College | 16 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 60.5 |
| | University | 30 | 39.5 | 39.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Marital status | Single | 20 | 26.3 | 26.3 | 26.3 |
| | Married | 56 | 73.7 | 73.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 76 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.7 presents the education levels and marital status of the respondents. Regarding education, the majority of the respondents (39.5%) had university education, followed by those with college education (21.2%) and secondary school education (21.1%). Only 18.4% reported having a primary education level. These results suggest that most of the mainline congregations in Busoga region have attained some level of education which is crucial for effective engagement in the fulfilment of the Great Commission mandate reaching out to both educated and non-educated populations.

Regarding marital status, the majority of the respondents were married (73.7%), with only (26.3%) being single. There were no divorced respondents. This suggests that most church members are upholding the institution of marriage as Christ desires in the Bible.

In summary, given that simple sampling was conducted by asking clergies to randomly recommend other leaders and church members, the higher percentage of female respondents indicates significant female representation in church leadership. This suggests that women

have demonstrated their capabilities in leadership roles. Consequently, it reflects that the church has embraced the spirit of affirmative action.

It was also noted that most respondents were between 30-39 years of age, followed by those aged 40-49 years, and majority were married. Additionally, most respondents had attained university, college or high school education. This indicates that church membership of mainline churches in Busoga region consists of mature and fairly educated individuals. It is also commendable that most clergies had studied biblical and administrative subjects. These factors reflect the good qualities of church leaders, which are crucial in influencing church members to participate in the Great Commission fulfilment resulting into church growth.

The study revealed that, on average, most of the respondents had served in church leadership positions for at least 2 years and had been members of their local congregations for over 5 years. This suggests that leaders and members of the mainline churches in Busoga region are experienced and familiar with the region's dynamics, making them well-suited to address the barriers of effective ministry and involvement in the Great Commission fulfilment.

Most respondents indicated that their local congregations had been in existence for over 20 years, although many reported having fewer than 50 members, with only few congregations exceeding this number. The presence of these members provides church leaders with a population they can influence in the participation in the fulfilment of the Great Commission. However, the minimal church membership relative to church's years of existence suggest that the church is not seriously involved in fulfilling the Great Commission hence the decline.

4.4 Data on Study Variables

The independent variables studied in this research were; influence of the practical implementation of the missiological praxis of the Great Commission on church growth, the influence of the Great Commission Knowledge among Church leaders and members on

church growth, and influence of Evangelical Approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment on church growth among mainline churches in Busoga region.

4.5 Influence of the Missiological Praxis on Church Growth.

The first objective of the study was to assess how the practical implementation of the Great Commission missiological praxis impact church growth. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including ANOVA and linear regression, were used to analyse the respondents' opinion. Table 4.8 presents questions designed to evaluate how the church's engagement in the Great Commission fulfilment influence its growth. These questions measure the extent to which the implementation of the Great commission missiological praxis, as stated by Jesus Christ, affect church numerical and spiritual growth.

Table 4.8

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 |
| Its 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 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 | 5.2 | 23.7 | 10.6 | 53.9 | 6.6 | 2.43 | 0.854 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| recorded. | | | | | | | |
| 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 in the previous 5yrs | 22.4 | 59.2 | 9.2 | 5.3 | 3.9 | 2.09 | 0.941 |
| 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 planed 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 Busoga region have confessed Christ as their personal saviour: 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 standard deviation of 0.55, suggest 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 Busoga region is predominantly influenced by family and marriage connections, with a mean of 4.2 and

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 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 Busoga region believe that the Gospel should be shared by those who have accepted Christ as Lord with a mean of 3.55 and 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 while 9.2 were uncertain. On the other hand, 44.7% agreed and 9.2% strongly agreed. This suggests that spiritual leaders in Busoga region are somewhat moderate in their encouragement of members to evangelise, with a mean of 2.61 and standard deviation of 1.096.

Regarding the induction of new members into the church through clearly 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 mainline churches in Busoga have 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 church members, with only 2.6% agreeing and 0.1% strongly agreeing, resulting in a mean of 2.14 and 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 Busoga region have not experienced growth, with a mean of 2.09 and 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 among mainline churches in Busoga region is through members giving birth, with a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.459.

The results in table 4.8 show that 2.6% of respondents strongly disagreed, 47.4% disagreed, 13.2% were unsure, 30.3% agreed, and 6.6% strongly agreed that their churches 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 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 deliberate 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 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 fulfilment have a significant influence on church growth in Busoga region as the church adopts and practices these discipleship mechanisms for its growth.

Figure 4.1 presents a graphic representation of the results of the influence of the missiological praxis of the Great Commission fulfilment on church growth among mainline churches in Busoga Region, whereby most of the respondents indicated that most of the missiological praxis were not highly practiced among the mainline church as shown in the bar graph below.

The results shown in figure 4.1 indicate that the respondents consider the missiological praxis of the Great Commission to be significant in influencing church growth if they are practically implemented churches. 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 while only 1 respondent (1.3%) disagreed.

Figure 4.1

Influence of the Great Commission missiological praxis on Church Growth.

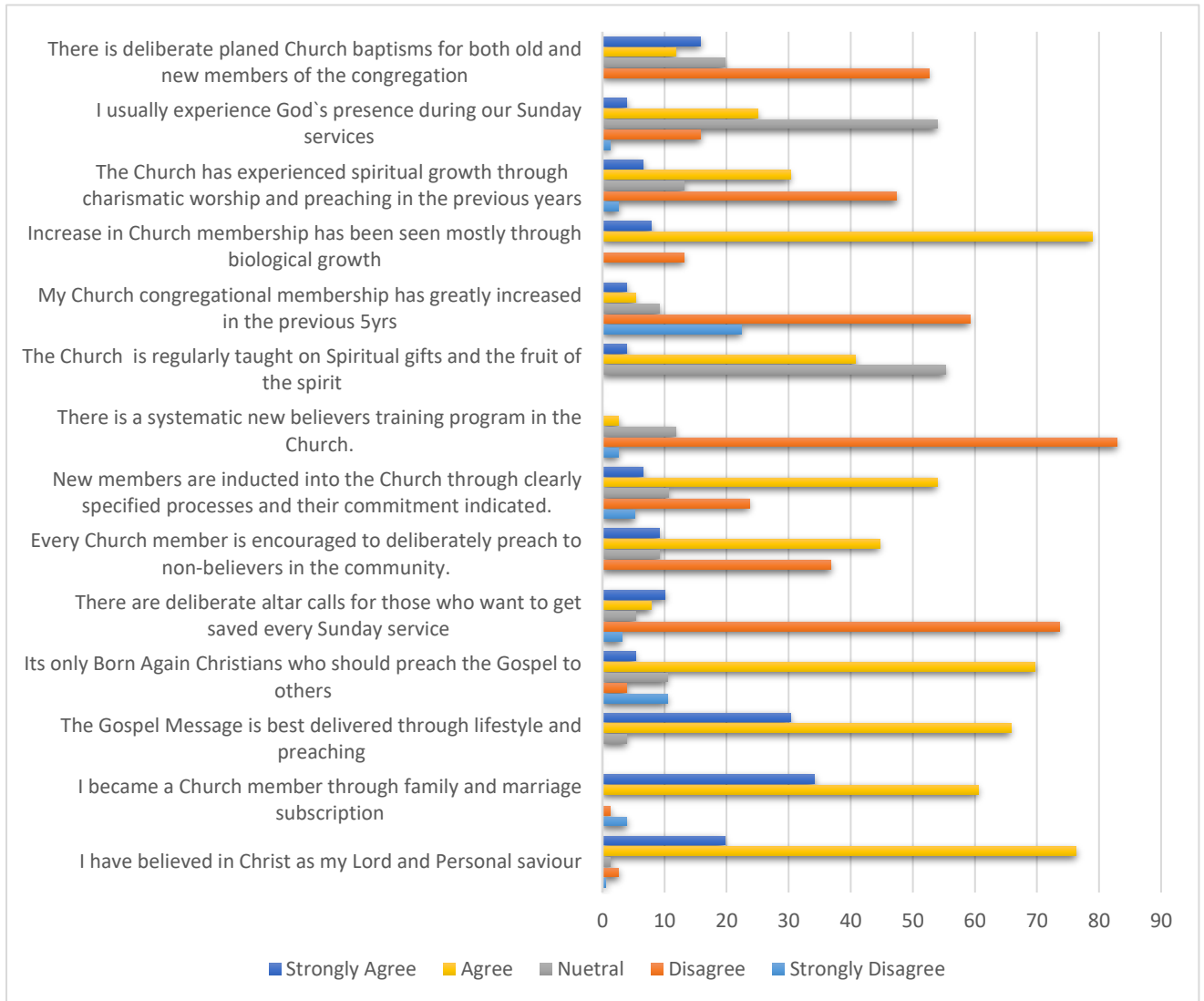


Table 4.9

Regression analysis results on the relationship between the Great Commission missiological praxis implementation on Church Growth.

| <i>Model Summary</i> | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| <i>Model</i> | <i>R</i> | <i>R²</i> | <i>Adj. R²</i> | <i>Std. Error</i> | | |
| 1 | 0.276 ^a | 0.076 | 0.64 | 21.368 | | |
| <i>ANOVA^a</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Model</i> | | <i>Sum of Squares</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>Mean Square</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
| 1 | Regression | 0.2787 | 1 | 0.2787 | 6.104 | .016 ^b |
| | Residual | 0.63788 | 74 | 0.0457 | | |
| | Total | 0.91658 | 75 | | | |
| <i>Coefficients^a</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>Model</i> | <i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i> | | | <i>Standardized Coefficients</i> | | |
| | <i>Beta</i> | | <i>Std. Error</i> | <i>Beta</i> | <i>T</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
| 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 4.9 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 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 by 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 not included in the model. The model equation is $Y=0.841+0.276X_1$, where Y represents Church Growth and X_1 represents the fulfilment 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 fulfilment of the Great Commission through its practical implementation and church growth. The results demonstrate that fulfilling the Great Commission through 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 churches to effectively fulfil the Great Commission, it is essential to practically implement its missiological praxis.

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. This perspective aligns with the leadership style of Jesus Christ as discussed in the literature review.

However, respondents noted that church leaders among mainline churches in Busoga region have performed below expectations in engaging their congregations with these missiological practices. This suggests that the church leaders in Busoga region need to invest more in the

practical application resulting into church growth and integrate these practices into church life.

This corroborates with the regression results, which showed a statistically significant relationship between the Great Commission fulfilment through practicing 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) that resulted into church growth. Therefore, it is crucial for the church consider the practical implementation of missiological praxis in fulfilling the Great Commission.

4.6 Influence of the Great Commission Knowledge on Church Growth.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate how knowledge of the Great Commission among church leaders and members influences church growth in Busoga region. To achieve this, the study used descriptive and inferential statistics, including ANOVA and linear regression, to analyse the respondents' opinions. Table 4.10 presents questions aimed at assessing how the Great Commission knowledge among church leaders and members can empower and equip them to make disciples as instructed by Jesus Christ resulting into church growth. The rating of these questions measures how well this knowledge influences the fulfilment of the Great Commission in relation to church growth.

Table 4.10

Influence of the Great Commission Knowledge among Church members and Leaders on Church Growth.

| Statement | SD% | D% | N% | A% | SA% | Mean | Std.Dev |
|---|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|---------|
| Do you think every church minister should attain theological training | 3.8 | 12.7 | 27.8 | 51.9 | 3.8 | 3.95 | 0.638 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Have you heard of the Great Commission? | 67.1 | 0.0 | 1.3 | 20.3 | 11.4 | 2.76 | 1.135 |
| The Church has an organised approach to mentorship. | 0.0 | 70.9 | 2.5 | 22.8 | 3.8 | 2.59 | 0.968 |
| Members are systematically trained on the Great Commission. | 2.5 | 65.8 | 27.8 | 0.0 | 3.8 | 2.37 | 0.719 |
| The Church provides specific programs and curriculum aimed at empowering young people in mission and evangelism. | 2.5 | 88.6 | 3.8 | 1.3 | 3.8 | 2.15 | 0.662 |
| The Church leadership encourage the Church to pray and have effective prayer programmes weekly as they pray for the work of God | 0.0 | 73.4 | 2.5 | 20.3 | 3.8 | 2.54 | 0.945 |
| The Church in its annual financial budget prioritizes training programmes and capacity building initiatives. | 6.3 | 87.3 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 3.8 | 2.10 | 0.709 |
| Church ministries are evenly distributed /delegated across Church membership. | 3.8 | 12.7 | 3.8 | 75.9 | 3.8 | 3.63 | 0.894 |
| Church leaders regularly plan business meetings with strong representation from the membership. | 3.8 | 12.7 | 27.8 | 51.9 | 3.8 | 3.39 | 0.898 |
| Sunday preaching is typically reserved for pastors. | 11.4 | 83.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 0.0 | 1.96 | 0.492 |
| Church members are responsible for reaching out to others with the Gospel and providing welfare. | 0.0 | 10.1 | 7.6 | 81.0 | 1.3 | 3.73 | 0.655 |
| The pastor has sufficient time in the office to address the needs and concerns of the members. | 0.0 | 41.8 | 2.5 | 51.9 | 3.8 | 3.18 | 1.035 |
| Congregation leaders are responsible for planning evangelistic meetings, rather than delegating the task to ministry volunteers. | 3.8 | 6.8 | 46.8 | 39.2 | 3.8 | 3.33 | 0.812 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| The Church leadership has effective programs, such as retreats, seminars, and conferences, to teach, and motivate congregational members. | 6.3 | 64.6 | 0.0 | 25.3 | 3.8 | 2.56 | 1.059 |
| There are established and effective group ministries where members receive weekly biblical reflections and pray together. | 0.0 | 62.0 | 3.8 | 7.6 | 26.6 | 2.99 | 1.335 |
| Church discipleship classes last for at least one year before one is accepted into full membership | 12.7 | 60.8 | 22.8 | 0.35 | 0.0 | 2.18 | 0.694 |

Table 4.10 above presents questions designed to establish how knowledge on the Great Commission among church leaders and congregational members in Busoga region influence church growth. Thus, if church members are empowered with knowledge on the Great Commission, they would engage in its fulfilment by reaching out to the unchurched as they apply the knowledge practically. The results indicate that 51.9% of the respondents agreed that every church minister should receive at least the lowest level of theological training, with a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation 0.638. however, 67.1% strongly disagreed that they had heard about the Great Commission with a mean of 2.76 and standard deviation 1.135, and 70.9% disagreed that there are systematic mentorship programs in the local congregations with a mean of 2.59, and standard deviation 0.968. Additionally, 65.8% disagreed that members are systematically trained on the Great Commission with a mean 2.37 and standard deviation 0.717, and 88.6% disagreed that there are specific youth and teens programs in mission and evangelism with a mean of 2.15 and standard deviation 0.662. The results suggest that most mainstream churches in Busoga region lack clear programs and curriculum to empower members with the Great Commission knowledge.

The results further show that 73.4% of the respondents disagreed that church leadership encourages regular prayer and effective weekly programs. This indicates that the leadership is

largely reluctant to engage and influence their members in this regard. Only 20.3% agreed, with a mean of 2.54 and a standard deviation of 0.945. Additionally, 87.3% of the respondents disagreed that training programs and capacity buildings are significantly considered in the financial church annual budgets, with a mean of 2.10 and a standard deviation of 0.709.

The majority of the respondents 75.9% agreed that church ministries are evenly distributed across membership, with a mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.894. Similarly, 51.9% agreed that church leaders plan regular business meetings with good representation, though 12.7% disagreed (mean of 3.39, SD 0.898). Most respondents 83.5% disagreed that Sunday preaching is reserved for clergy men (mean of 1.96, SD 0.492). Additionally, 81.0% agreed that reaching out with the gospel and welfare is a responsibility of church members with a mean of 3.37 and standard deviation of 0.655. These results suggest that to some extent the mainline churches in Busoga region are actively involving their members in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Regarding whether the clergy men have ample time in the office to attend to members' needs, 41.8% of respondents disagreed, while 51.9% agreed, and 3.8% strongly agreed. This suggests that to a large extent clergies have sufficient time to address members' concerns with a mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 1.035. Additionally, 46.8% were uncertain if church leaders are responsible for planning evangelistic meetings, while 39.2% agreed, with a mean of 3.33 and SD of 0.812. When asked if church leadership has effective programs to teach, train, and motivate members through retreats, seminars and conferences, 64.6% disagreed, indicating a lack of such initiatives (with a mean of 2.56 and SD 1.059). Furthermore, 62.0% disagreed that effective group ministries exist where members receive biblical reflections and prayer, with a mean of 2.99 and SD of 1.335. These results show that mainstream churches in Busoga region are underperforming in empowering leaders and

members with Great Commission knowledge. Regarding whether church discipleship classes last at least one year before acceptance into full membership, 22.8% of respondents were unsure, and 60.8% disagreed, with a mean of 2.18 and standard deviation of 0.694. This indicates that most respondents either disagreed or were neutral on the duration of discipleship classes.

Overall, the influence of Great Commission Knowledge on church growth cannot be ignored reflected by a mean of 2.838 and standard deviation of 0.853. However, the results show that much work is needed, as many respondents were neutral or disagreed in areas related to equipping members with Great Commission Knowledge. These areas should be a focus for future improvement to foster growth and establishment among churches in Busoga region.

The bar graph presented visually represents the influence of Great Commission knowledge on church growth among members and leaders in mainline churches in Busoga region. The results show that most respondents felt that practices promoting Great Commission Knowledge were largely neglected among churches with only a few practices being appreciated as illustrated in figure 4.2. This reflects a general need for improvement in how mainline churches put emphasis and instil Great Commission Principles among their members and leaders.

The results presented in figure 4.2 highlight that respondents unanimously agree on the significance of the Great Commission knowledge in motivating church members to fulfil the Great Commission. All 76 interviewees (100%) confirm that when members are empowered with information about the Great Commission, they are more likely to apply such Knowledge in outreach efforts. However, the figure also reveals that churches have done little in promoting practices that instil knowledge among its members and leaders, signalling a need

for increased focus in this area. None of the respondents disagreed with the importance of the Great Commission knowledge.

Figure 4.2

The influence of the Great Commission Knowledge among Church members on Church Growth.

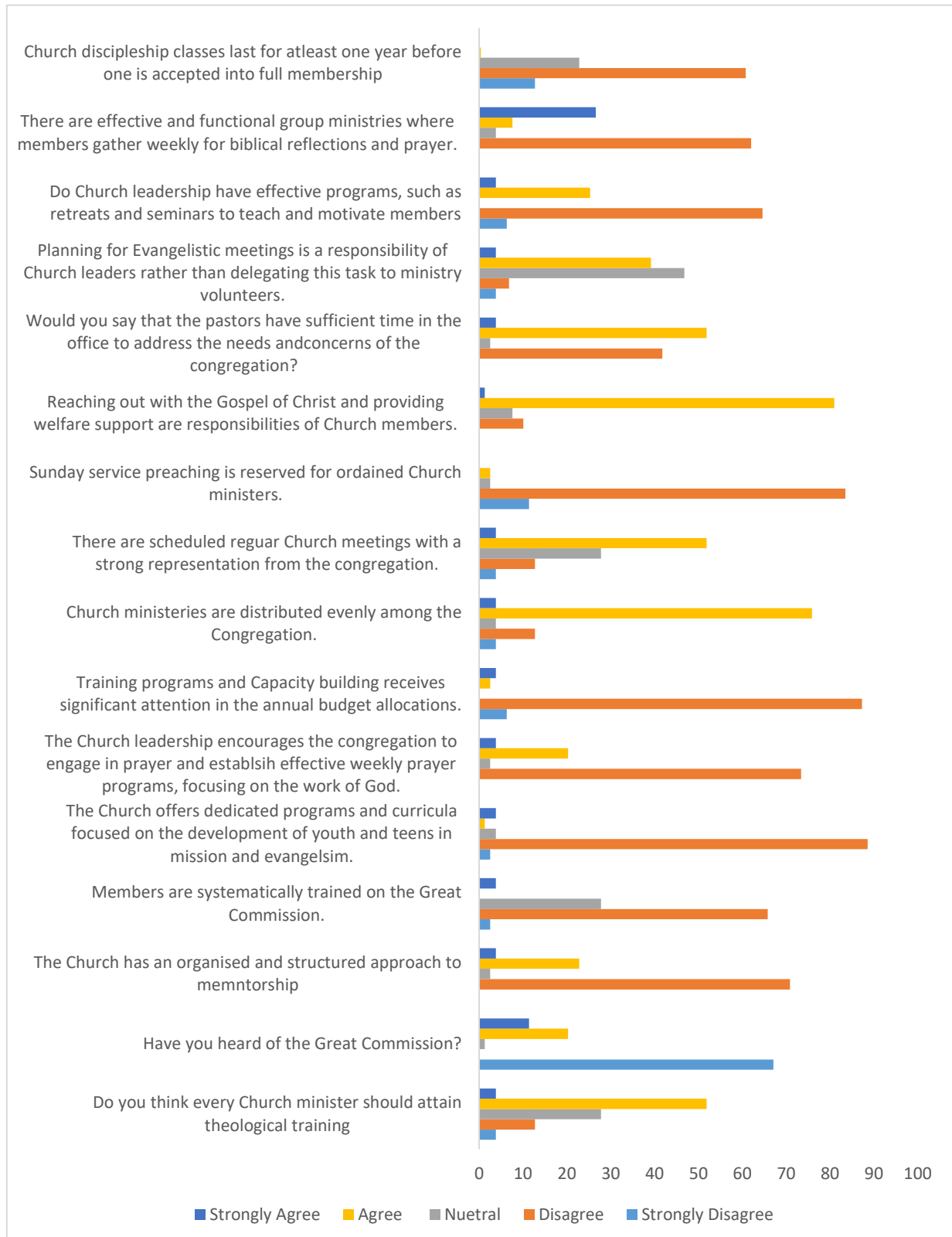


Table 4.11

Regression analysis results on the relationship between the Great Commission knowledge among Church Members on Church Growth.

| <i>Model Summary</i> | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Model | | R | R ² | Adj. R ² | Std. Error | |
| 1 | | .185 ^a | .034 | .022 | 6.18587 | |
| <i>ANOVA^a</i> | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 1.048 | 1 | 1.048 | 2.739 | .102 ^b |
| | Residual | 2.946 | 75 | 0.3827 | | |
| | Total | 3.051 | 76 | | | |
| <i>Coefficients^a</i> | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients B | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Beta | T | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.4339 | 1.405 | | 30.882 | .000 |
| | Great Commission Knowledge among Church Members and Leaders | .0051 | .031 | .185 | 1.655 | .102 |

a. Dependent Variable: Church Growth and Establishment

b. Predictors: (Constant), fulfilment of the Great Commission through instilling the Great Commission knowledge.

The analysis shows that Great Commission knowledge among church members and leaders had a minimal impact on the Great Commission fulfilment that would give birth to church growth, [F=2.739, P<0.102]. The standardised coefficient of regression was (B=0.185 P<0.102), indicating that each unit increase in the Great Commission Knowledge results in a 0.185 increase in church growth. The model's R² value was 0.034, meaning that only 3.4% of the variation in church growth was explained by the Great Commission knowledge among church Members, while 96.6% of the variation remains unexplained, meaning that there are other factors associated with church growth which were not fitted in the model. The model

equation is $Y = 0.4339 + 0.185X_2$ where Y is church growth and X_2 represents great commission fulfilment through enhancing Great Commission among church members and Leaders.

Since the p-value was less than 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant relationship between the influence of the Great Commission knowledge church growth.

It is clear that most respondents (96.6%) believe that empowering church members with Great Commission Knowledge significantly influences their involvement in the great commission fulfilment resulting into church growth. However, Great Commission knowledge among members of mainline churches in Busoga region was rated below average, with limited engagement in outreach activities. Empowering people with knowledge before sending them aligns with Colemans' (2010) observation of Jesus' leadership of focusing on a few and empowering them to reach out to masses. The statistically significant relationship found between Great Commission knowledge and church growth supports Chilcote's (2004) assertion that Christians should seek opportunities to share the gospel and make disciples. This approach starting with individual empowerment, is crucial for Church Growth and fulfilling the Church's mission globally. Multiplication needs to begin on a one-on-one basis. Churches need to look for opportunities to empower its members as it seeks to fulfil its mandate of taking the good news to the ends of the world. Such will lead to church growth as every member becomes a disciple-to-disciple others.

The study's findings align with Platt (2010), who emphasised that congregations must be intentionally guided toward transformation into Christ's likeness. This transformation occurs through biblically approved approaches including maintaining a relationship and fellowship with God. Therefore, mainstream churches in Busoga region should devise modern ways of involving their members in decision-making and provide them with essential information to instil in them the Great Commission knowledge.

4.7 Influence of the Great Commission Evangelical Approaches on Church Growth

The third objective of the study explored how evangelical approaches to fulfilling the Great Commission impact church growth among mainline churches in Busoga region. In examination of this objective, descriptive and inferential statistics, including ANOVA and linear regression, were used to analyse the respondents' opinions. Table 4.12 outlines the questions related to this objective.

Table 4.12

Influence of Evangelical approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment on Church Growth

| Statement | SD% | D% | N% | A% | SA% | Mean | Std.Dev |
|--|------|------|------|------|-----|------|---------|
| Welfare programs are in place to address both the spiritual and physical needs of people. | 0.0 | 67.1 | 10.1 | 20.3 | 2.5 | 2.58 | 0.900 |
| The Church has clear processes for identifying spiritual gifts, talents and skills. | 0.0 | 54.4 | 7.6 | 35.4 | 2.5 | 2.86 | 0.997 |
| Mission and Evangelism has a substantial consideration in the annual budget allocations. | 10.1 | 70.9 | 0.0 | 16.5 | 2.5 | 2.30 | 0.952 |
| Decisions made by Church leadership are regularly communicated to the members. | 0.0 | 6.3 | 10.1 | 81.0 | 2.5 | 3.80 | 0.586 |
| The Church has various missional departments, each with its own designated leadership. | 0.0 | 81.0 | 0.0 | 16.5 | 2.5 | 2.41 | 0.855 |
| Church leadership has established effective programs to reach out to those in need. | 10.1 | 63.3 | 21.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.24 | 0.772 |
| Would you say the Church has intentionally developed a plan to invite new people during her Sunday services? | 10.1 | 60.8 | 5.1 | 16.5 | 2.5 | 3.37 | 4.435 |
| Do the spiritual leaders encourage the Church to reach out to others for salvation through the gospel of | 0.0 | 13.9 | 29.1 | 54.4 | 2.5 | 3.46 | 0.765 |

| Christ? | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|
| The Church has invested in media as a means of evangelising the community | 12.7 | 74.7 | 7.6 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.08 | 0.730 |
| The Church budgets for and organises open air crusades and door to door evangelism at least annually | 12.7 | 70.9 | 5.1 | 2.5 | 8.9 | 2.18 | 0.859 |
| Would you say that the Church has annual strategic plans to plant new congregations as a way of fulfilling the Great Commission? | 10.1 | 79.7 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 0.0 | 2.05 | 0.597 |
| Would you say that Church membership has increased through annual missions organised by the Church? | 10.1 | 82.3 | 5.1 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 2.03 | 0.20 |
| Evangelism is the work of the clergy not Church members | 11.4 | 15.2 | 69.6 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 2.66 | 0.732 |
| The church has cultivated modern ways of liturgical worship | 0.0 | 38.0 | 19.0 | 40.5 | 2.5 | 3.08 | 0.944 |
| Have led at least 2 people to Christ this year | 12.7 | 73.4 | 8.9 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.09 | 0.737 |
| The Church has established cell groups used for reaching out and help members grow spiritually | 12.7 | 36.7 | 19.0 | 29.1 | 2.5 | 2.72 | 1.097 |

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 4.12 reveals that none of the respondents interviewed strongly disagreed about the presence of functional welfare programs to address physical and spiritual needs, but 67.1% disagreed. Additionally, 10.1% were uncertain, 20.3% agreed, and 2.5% strongly agreed. This indicates that functional welfare programs are largely insufficient, with a mean score of 2.58 and standard deviation of 0.990.

Regarding the identification of spiritual gifts, talents and skills in churches, 54.4% of respondents disagreed, while 7.6% were uncertain. Only 35.4% agreed, and 2.5% strongly

agreed. This shows limited clarity in identifying these aspects, with a mean of 2.86 and standard deviation of 0.997.

Furthermore, only 16.5% of the respondents felt that mission and evangelism received substantial consideration in the financial annual budget allocations. The majority strongly disagreed, with a mean of 2.30 and standard deviation of 0.952. This suggests that mainline churches in Busoga region typically lack budget allocation for mission and evangelism.

The results show that, 81% of the respondents agreed that church leadership decisions are regularly shared with members, with a mean of 3.80 and standard deviation of 0.586. However, a majority 81% disagreed that their churches have separate mission departments with independent leadership, showing a mean of 2.41 and standard deviation of 0.855. Additionally, 63.3% disagreed that church leadership has developed effective programs to reach out to the needy, with 21.5% uncertain and only 2.5% were in agreement, with a mean of 2.24 and standard deviation of 0.772. Regarding the church's efforts to invite new people, 60.8% disagreed, while only 16.5% agreed, with a mean of 3.37 and standard deviation of 4.435. on a positive note, 54.4% agreed that spiritual leaders motivate Church outreach efforts, 29.1% were uncertain, and 13.9% disagreed, with a mean of 3.46 and standard deviation of 0.765.

Regarding the Church's investment in media for evangelism, 74.7% of the respondents disagreed, with a mean of 2.08 and standard deviation of 0.730. Additionally, 70.9% disagreed that their churches budget for and organise open air crusades and door to door evangelism annually with a mean of 2.18 and standard deviation of 0.859. This suggests that mainstream churches in Busoga region are significantly underinvesting in fulfilling the Great Commission. Furthermore, 70.9% disagreed with the statement that their churches have annual strategic plans for planting new congregations with a mean of 2.05 and standard

deviation of 0.597. Additionally, 82.3% disagreed that their local congregations experienced membership growth through annual missions with a mean of 2.03 and standard deviation of 1.020. Finally, 69.6% were unsure if evangelism is viewed as the responsibility of the clergy rather than church members, with a mean of 2.66 and standard deviation of 0.732.

Regarding on the question whether their churches have adopted modern ways of liturgical worship, 38% of the respondents disagreed and 19% were uncertain. However, 40.5% agreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed with a mean of 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.944. On the question of whether respondents had led anyone to Christ, 73.4% disagreed, with a mean of 2.09 and standard deviation of 0.737. Finally concerning the establishment of cell groups for outreach and spiritual growth, 12.7% strongly disagreed, 36.7% disagreed, and 19% were unsure. Meanwhile, 29.1% agreed and 2,5% strongly agreed, with a mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of 1.097.

Figure 4.3 visually illustrates the impact of evangelical approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment on church growth among mainline churches in Busoga region, whereby most of the respondents indicated that most of the evangelical methods are not highly prioritised by mainline churches as shown in the bar graph below. This suggests that key strategies related to fulfilling the Great Commission are underutilised which potentially limit the church`s growth and outreach efforts in the region.

Figure 4.3

Influence of Evangelical Approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment on Church Growth

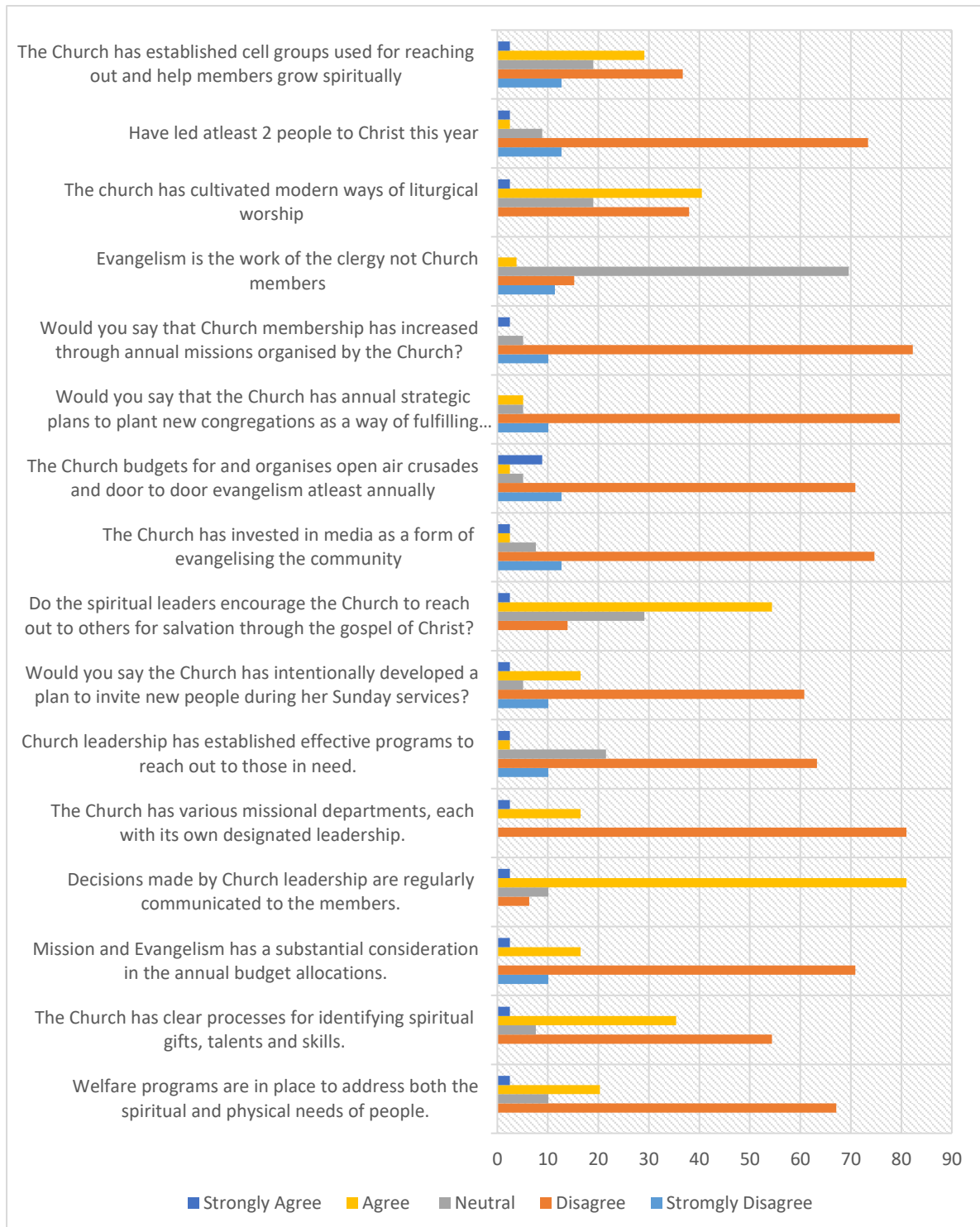


Table 4.13*Influence of Evangelical approaches of the Great Commission fulfilment on Church Growth*

| Model Summary | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Model | R | R ² | Adj. R ² | Std. Error | | |
| 1 | 0.26a | 0.0676 | -0.012 | 10.29721 | | |
| ANOVA | | | | | | |
| Model | Model | Sum of Square | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 5.469 | 1 | 5.469 | .052 | |
| | Residual | 8164.505 | 77 | 106.033 | | .821b |
| | Total | 8169.975 | 78 | | | |
| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | T | Sig. |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| (Constant) | 42.348 | 2.339 | | | 18.103 | .000 |
| Evangelical ways | -.012 | .051 | -.026 | | -.227 | .821 |

a. Church Growth

b. Predictors: (Constant): Evangelical methods of fulfilling the Great Commission.

The relationship between evangelical methods of fulfilling the Great Commission and church growth was tested using regression analysis. The model equation $Y=B_0+B_3X_3+ \epsilon$ was applied.

The results presented in Table 4.13 show a t value of -0.227 with 78 degrees of freedom.

The regression model equation is $Y=0.423-0.026X_3$, where Y represents church growth, and X_3 refers to fulfilment of the Great Commission through evangelical methods. The two-tailed p-value from the test is 0.821. According to the decision rule “ $p \leq \alpha$, then reject H_0 ”, since p (0.821) is greater than α (0.05), we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) meaning the relationship between the two variables is not statistically significant.

In summary, the findings suggest that there is no significant effect between evangelical methods and church growth as indicated by the statistical analysis. However, it remains the responsibility of every church congregation to involve its members in fulfilling the Great Commission not by coercion but as a natural part of their mission. The result of the third objective show that mainline churches in Busoga region were perceived insufficiently focused on evangelical approaches of fulfilling the Great Commission. Most respondents admitted that they had not led any person to Christ within the past year and many were unsure if evangelism was a duty of the clergy rather than church members. This perception hinders progress in fulfilling the Great Commission.

These findings align with previous studies such as Geiger, Kelly and Nation (2012), which emphasise the importance of mentorship in empowering individuals for church growth and Maxwell (2011) who highlighted the role of pastors in empowering church members and leaders. Additionally, Stan (2007) underscored the need for biblical knowledge to help new believers grow in their faith.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter analysed and discussed the influence of the Great Commission fulfilment on church growth. It examined how fulfilling the Great Commission impacts church growth through three key aspects that is missiological praxis, Great Commission Knowledge and evangelical approaches. The findings revealed that mainstream churches in Busoga region are not sufficiently involved in the Great Commission fulfilment. A regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between fulfilling the Great Commission and church growth. The results showed a statistically significant relationship between missiological praxis, Great Commission knowledge and church growth. However, the influence of evangelical approaches to fulfilling the Great Commission on church growth was not statistically significant.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose behind this examination was to make assessment on the influence of fulfilling the Great Commission on church growth among mainline churches of Busoga region. In order to carry out this investigation, the researcher examined the influence of the great commission fulfilment on church growth focusing on three dimensions; missiological praxis, great commission knowledge, and evangelical approaches. This chapter summarises the findings of the study and provides conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research. The conclusions on the results obtained from the study, the recommendations and the areas for further research are also outlined.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study set out to explore how fulfilling the great commission influences church growth among mainline churches in Busoga region. The researcher focused on three major area; the practice of missiological praxis; knowledge of great commission, and evangelical approaches. Overall, the findings reveal a sobering picture of churches that acknowledge the importance of mission, yet often fall short living it out in consistent and structured ways.

It was found out that while almost all respondents (98.7%) agreed that implementing the great commission is vital for church growth, the reality on the ground is very different. Evangelistic practices such as altar calls, structured discipleship, and intentional outreach were rare. The research realised that many churches depended instead on biological growth, where membership came more from marriage, family or tradition than from evangelism. As some respondents clearly confessed, they were not even sure whether they regularly experienced God's presence in their services. Equally striking the researcher observed the

absence of systematic training programs for new believers. Statistical analysis confirmed that where missiological praxis were intentionally applied, growth was measurable and positive. This makes it evident that while the conviction is present, the passion and structures needed to turn belief into practice are still missing. This aligns with the respondents' conviction that without active disciple-making, growth is stagnated.

The also found out that knowledge of the great commission among church members is both limited and misunderstood. A significant number of the respondents admitted to have not been taught about the great commission and often many confused it with the great commandment. The researcher also found out that many churches lacked mentorship programs, discipleship classes, or training structures for empowering church members for mission. Alarmingly, respondents pointed out that in most churches, there were no budgets or resources allocated for training and capacity building, with many remarking that their churches offered no clear paths for young people to grow in mission and evangelism. Regression analysis showed a positive but weak link between knowledge and growth; yet, the respondents' voices made it clear that this lack of knowledge has deeply disempowered them. The researcher believes that without understanding the great commission, church members cannot fully live out their calling, and the church risks becoming passive rather than missional.

The study further found out that evangelical approaches to fulfilling the great commission were the weakest area for most churches. Many respondents lamented that their congregations did not hold open air-crusades, engage in door-to-door evangelism, or plan for church planting. The researcher found out that mainline churches in Busoga region rarely had welfare programmes to care for their communities, nor did they allocate resources for mission and evangelism. At the same time, some respondents did acknowledge efforts from their leaders to encourage evangelism, and a few churches had tried modern worship expressions.

However, overall, the data and the respondents' voices both painted a picture of evangelical approaches to fulfilling the great commission being sidelined by mainline churches in Busoga region. Statistical tests confirmed that these approaches had no significant influence on church growth in the region. In the words of one of the respondents, "we are left to ourselves, no one pushes us to mission," capturing the passive cultures that has taken root.

Another striking observation from the findings is the generational gap in mission engagement. Many respondents pointed out that young people in their churches have little exposure to evangelism and discipleship opportunities. Without intentional mentorship or youth focused programs, a whole generation risks growing up disconnected from the great commission mandate. This lack of investment in the next generation not only weakens present growth but also threatens the future sustainability of the church. The voices of respondents highlighted a yearning for more retreats, seminars, and accountability groups where young believers could be nurtured and equipped for mission.

In addition, the findings revealed a broader issue of resource prioritisation within mainline churches. Respondents repeatedly noted that budgets for mission, evangelism, and discipleship were either non-existent or extremely limited. Instead, resources were often channelled toward maintaining church structures and routine programmes. In one of the respondent's words "churches are competing in who is building the biggest and most beautiful church buildings" while such is important, the lack of financial and structural commitment to mission demonstrates a disconnect between the church's theological convictions and their practical commitments. This reinforces the reality that growth requires not just passion, but also intentional allocation of time, leadership, and resources toward the great commission fulfilment.

Taken together, these findings suggest that church growth in Busoga region is being held back not because people have rejected the great commission, but because the great commission has not been meaningfully integrated into the life of the church. Missiological practices have the greatest demonstrated impact, but even here the researcher suggests that passion and intentionality are weak therefore needed. Knowledge of the great commission fulfilment is lacking, leaving many members disempowered and misinformed. Evangelical approaches are sporadic and under-resourced. The voices of the respondents consistently point to gaps in discipleship, mentorship, and resource allocation, all of which limit the churches' ability to grow both spiritually and numerically.

Finally, when considered through church growth theory, the findings confirm that deliberate evangelism, discipleship, and mission structures are critical for sustainable growth. From the perspective of Missio-Dei, it becomes clear that churches in Busoga region have yet to fully embody God's missionary nature. Mission remains an optional activity rather than the core of their identity. To grow, mainline churches in Busoga region must rediscover their calling as participants in God's mission and embrace the great commission as central to their existence.

5.3 Conclusion on findings

For the first objective, which is determine how the practical implementation of the great commission missiological praxis influence church growth, the study established that practical application of the missiological praxis exerts a positive and significant influence on church growth. Regression results revealed a clear linear relationship between fulfilling the great commission through practical actions and measurable growth in church life. Consequently, the adoption of missiological practices is expected to enhance both numerical expansion and spiritual vitality among mainline churches in Busoga region. Nevertheless, the study found that many congregations in the sample displayed limited commitment to such practices, which has negatively affected their growth. The conclusion drawn is that intentional

fulfilment of the great commission through consistent missiological praxis is not merely beneficial but essential for sustainable church growth.

For the second objective, which is to assess the role of the great commission knowledge, the study demonstrated that biblical knowledge has a statistically significant positive influence on church growth. This suggests that enhancing biblical and theological understanding of the great commission provides a stronger foundation for mission engagement, gospel proclamation, and discipleship, all of which results into growth. However, the study concludes that insufficient emphasis on instilling this knowledge in members has limited their missional effectiveness, there by undermining potential growth.

For the third objective, to examine the influence of evangelical approaches to great commission fulfilment on church growth, the study revealed that the relationship between evangelical approaches and church growth was not statistically significant. Although evangelistic activities were present, they were only moderately practiced within local congregations. Encouragingly, however, the findings indicated that a significant number of respondents resisted the restrictive notion that preaching and evangelism are sole responsibility of pastors. This perspective opens a pathway toward great lay involvement in fulfilling the great commission, affirming that the call to mission is shared by the whole people of God. When nurtured effectively, this wide participation can become a catalyst for renewal and growth.

Theologically, the findings resonate with the biblical witness that the mission of God (Missio-Dei) is the foundation of the church's existence. The great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) affirms that the risen Christ empowers His disciples with both authority and responsibility to make disciples of all nations. Similarly, Acts 1:8 situates mission as spirit-empowered witness that extends from local to global contexts. The neglect of this

commission, as observed among some mainline churches, reflects not only a missional gap but also a theological deficit, since, as Bosch (2011) reminds us, “the church exists by mission as fire exist by burning”. Wright (2006) further emphasises that mission is not an optional activity of the church but part of its very identity as people of God called to participate in God’s redemptive purpose for the world. Therefore, this study concludes that reclaiming the great commission as both theological mandate and practica praxis is indispensable for the renewal and growth of the church in Busoga region and beyond.

5.4 Recommendation of the findings

Based on the results obtained in this study;

The research recommends that churches strategically implement the great commission by engaging members in discipleship and outreach, equipping both clergy and lay members with biblical knowledge and resources, and expanding evangelistic efforts through diverse platforms such as families, workplaces, and media. Strengthening theological and lay leadership trainings, alongside adopting a Christ-centred discipleship model rooted in transformation and intentional mentorship, will ensure sustainable growth. Since all aspects of great commission fulfilment are vital with two showing statistical significance, churches must remain focused and deliberate in their mission, as this commitment directly fosters both spiritual maturity and numerical growth.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Research.

The study recommends that further research to compare how different churches pursue growth through great commission fulfilment. Future studies should also examine factors like eldership and cultural dynamics, extend beyond mainline churches, and assess the long-term impact of the neglecting the Great Commission on church vitality and growth.

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