

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING
THE GROWTH OF GOOD NEWS AFRICA
GOSPEL CHURCH IN NAIROBI

BY
JAMES OUMA

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Missions

JULY 2005

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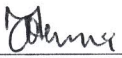
July, 2005

Student Declaration

AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE GROWTH OF GOOD
NEWS AFRICA GOSPEL CHURCH IN NAIROBI, KENYA

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college
or university for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed) 
James Ouma

July 9, 2005

ABSTRACT

The study stemmed from the need to understand the factors that have hindered quantitative church growth at Good News Africa Gospel Church (GNAGC) despite its location in a densely populated area in Nairobi. It became apparent that the results of such an undertaking would provide both theoretical and practical platform for the development of sound mission strategies that would cause the church to advance towards God's intention for it.

There are abundant literature that covers church growth phenomenon and principles pertinent to the biblical and practical ways that deal with churches. However, recent African scholarships have paid little attention to church growth phenomenon irrespective of increasing challenges that several churches are experiencing especially in fast growing cities in Africa.

The 35 participants interviewed in the study were drawn from the GNAGC and other churches where former members of GNAGC fellowship on Sunday. Frequency tables and cross-tabulation were generated using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software application in order to provide deep insights of the variables under investigation. The findings of the study have shown that the GNAGC was not growing quantitatively as the church expected because of problems related to lack of commitment by church leaders particularly in the area of evangelism.

It was concluded that GNAGC was not growing quantitatively. This conclusion paved way for recommendations that appeal to the need for church leadership to come up with programs that will foster togetherness and team work in the church for effective communication and common vision.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear wife Caroline Ouma and my son Brandon Merlin Ouma for the insurmountable support they gave to me in those moment when no one could be available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This task would not have been possible without the assistance and encouragement from, God Almighty who provided wisdom, courage and strength for the whole duration of the study. May glory and honor be to the Eternal God.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Church growth has increasingly become one of the most vibrant issues that have gained particular attention among scientists and leading Evangelical scholars. This has led to the emergence of several schools of thoughts and the development of conflicting church growth theories. For instance, the Church Growth movement led by McGavran at Fuller Theological Seminary perceives the growth as synonymous to “quantitative church growth” implying the actual membership increase and the number of new churches planted (Baumgartner 1988, 8). This theory rose intense dissatisfactions especially from the proponents of wholistic church growth. For them, wholistic growth includes not only quantitative growth, but also growth in understanding God’s purposes and the contemporary world, in social service and liberating ministry, and growth in structure and internal relationship (organic growth) (Costas 1983, 95-107). These two theories have spread worldwide and significantly dominated theological world especially mission strategists.

However, the impressive increase in number of the converts and churches in Africa, Good News Africa Gospel Church (GNAGC) inclusive, has not been acknowledged by leading missiologists and theologians as sound growing churches. As one scholar put it: “The impressive statistical growth of the Christian population in Africa seems to have minimal effect on African societies . . . African Christianity must be about more than numbers” (Tienou 2001, 156).

Problem Statement

The concept of church growth has motivated GNAGC to win souls for Christ and to bring them into the fellowship of the believers through discipleship. However, the constant fluctuation of membership for the last decade has raised concern about the appropriateness of such a growth. This study was carried out in order to assess the factors affecting the numerical growth of GNAGC and their related implications for urban church contexts.

Purpose of Study

This study aims at assessing relevance of the increase in number of the believers at GNAGC with regard to unpredictable number of membership. The fluctuation of church membership may have undesired bearing on the smooth running of various activities in the church. The constant movement of church members out of GNAGC and the unstable flow of new ones in it does not provide fertile grounds for leadership to embark on programs that aim at fostering Christian maturity especially discipleship. The purpose of study is for the researcher and the church to arrive at the factors hindering numerical church growth in GNAGC and to offer biblical suggestions which if implemented will foster the growth.

Significance of the Study

There has been no research aiming at assessing the causes of unpredictability of membership and related administrative implications at GNAGC despite evangelistic programs to target the nearby community. The findings of this study will help GNAGC to understand priorities, principles and choices that need to be articulated.

This will also provide an impetus to the current church members to appropriately apply their gifts for the advancement of the Kingdom of God in their community. Moreover, other churches that are experiencing problems related to church growth will benefit from these findings in various ways. This may constitute a resource material for missionaries who seek to stimulate participation in missionary work among church members.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used in this study:

1. What were the main factors that contributed to church growth attendance at GNAGC?
2. What explanations account for current church membership retention at GNAGC?
3. What were the reasons given by former church members for deserting the GNAGC?

Delimitations and Limitations

This study confined itself to interviewing both the current and former church members of GNAGC. Therefore, the findings only applied directly to GNAGC context. The researcher regretted that he could not have enough time and financial resources to allow for more studies particularly in churches and ministries where former members attended their worship. Similarly, findings at GNAGC were also limited by lack of church statistics and historical records.

Definitions of Terms

The following key terms were defined in this project.

Numerical Growth: This is an increase of church attendance through preaching and living witness of the gospel and incorporation of those who respond to fellowship of the local congregation. This includes members who are gained through birth and transfers.

Membership: These are individuals who acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior and are involved in meeting all financial obligations like tithes and offerings at GNAGC.

Pastor: Is the leader who has responsibility for the local congregation and is the coordinator of an assembly.

Church: Relates to those believers who are gathered in a local fellowship

Ministry: Refers to pastoral care, ministration that is done either by clergy or laity. Ministry refers to service rendered within the church or beyond the church, for example, choir, worship, teaching, intercession, visitation, etc.

Local Institutional Factors: Relates to the congregation- its spirit, methods, dedication, and commitment to the Lord's work.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews and discusses related literature on numerical church growth. This section deals with the role of the church membership, the pastor and church growth, and the structure of the church to understand the way they are interconnected and the extent of their impact on numerical church growth. The discussion captures the centrality of holistic approach ministry as an influential factor that bridges the spiritual dimension with social concerns in church growth.

Church Membership

The plausible insight into the concept of church members can be borrowed from Horban (2001, 13) who indiscriminately associates it with the local church members gathering and the fellowship of believers in corporate worship. The rationale behind this approach stems from the fact that the local church belongs to God's concept, which is fundamental to the propagation of the gospel as well as for fellowship and for the operation of the gifts of the spirit. It also includes the task of teaching and disciplining those people who become part of the body of Christ through repentance and faith in Christ. Members get to mature in their Christian faith and assume responsibilities in the church.

However, a number of Christians find it difficult to associate with a church because they cannot afford to uphold the church requirement of leading a life of integrity at the expenses of their interests and current enjoyments.

Life of integrity may include the willingness for Christians to take certain responsibilities such as faithful attendance, services to render, as well as certain financial obligation.

The acceptance of those responsibilities is part of the costs Christians should incur as followers of Christ. In other words, those who refrain themselves from such a commitment to Christ are motivated by their own desires. This could partly explain why those members often prefer to move from one church to another. In the long run, this continuous movement of members may crystallize to a set of behavior that intertwines to dictate the pattern responsible for growth hindrance in a church.

The need for church membership to fill great needs in the lives of God's people cannot be overemphasized. As Horban (2001, 31) has stated, "Anyone who tries to be a Christian alone gets to be a very odd person. Those who want freedom to go and give where and when they please become rootless and undisciplined" If a believer is not tied to church membership the individual can not only mature but also influence the world to love God and be part of His body. This kind of attitude of a Christian being free to do whatever he wants at his time denies a local church membership and effectiveness in the ministry, a factor which if lacked in the church, membership is apt to decline.

Church Leadership

Leadership is a word with many meanings. Wiseman (1979, 43) said that the idea of local church leadership is best clarified by understanding the role of the leaders in a church. Firstly, church leaders provides authentic biblical ministry of preaching, teaching, counseling, and witnessing for persons to become Christians and mature in their spiritual life. Secondly, the leaders provide constant study and explanation of the

biblical mission of the church making every ministry of the church to be evaluated by a clearly stated objective. And thirdly, they provide daily efficient management of the church's organization property and finances.

The pastor is a shepherd whom God has put in charge of his sheep. In the Gospel of John, Jesus referred to himself as the good shepherd (John: 10:11). At the end of the Gospel, he challenged Peter to feed his sheep (John 21:15 – 17). A pastor does not work alone. He is a co-worker with God. He facilitates the planting and watering of the church for God to cause growth (1Cor. 3:16). According to Roy (1998, 35), "Vigorous church growth most often follows the hard work of God's co-laborers (I Corinthians 3:7-9). The effectiveness of those who plant and water, the human leadership, immensely influences the yield."

There are certain factors that cause people to follow their leaders willingly and to remain faithful to the church. These factors include honesty, competence and vision.

Honesty

Members will follow a leader who has earned their trust by demonstrating credibility. If he fails to earn trust, they will leave the church. When Paul addressed all the leaders at Ephesus he called them to keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God. Leaders contribute to the growth of the church because of special function to guard and guide the flock (I Tim. 3:5, I Pet. 5:2) and exercise discipline when necessary. Pointer (1984, 121) observed that pastors have responsibility to care for the weak and needy members of the fellowship. By doing this the members feel loved and

want to remain in the church. This not only retains church members but also increases attendance.

Members of a congregation will follow an honest pastor. People will follow those they trust. The members will respect a pastor whose walk and talk does not contradict. A pastor who preaches one thing and does the opposite will discourage people from identifying and following him. McGavran and Arn (1973, 8) stated that, "Indifference and sin stain congregations until these are cleared out of the way confessed and purged nothing much is going to happen in the way of growth". Those who are leaders have to live above sin and reproach if they want to be followed and identified with by the people they lead. People don't want to attend a church whose pastor has a bad name.

Competence

Wagner (1984, 73) said, "If churches are going to maximize their growth potential, they need pastors who are strong leaders" people will attend churches and follow pastors who are competent. A leader must perform various roles that go with his position. He must demonstrate abilities to inspire encourage and challenge people. A pastor who has the knowledge and skills for ministry is more likely to influence church attendance and membership retention.

When people realize that the pastor is competent, they will put their confidence in him. Barna (1991, 145), asserted that "the pastor truly became a leader to people rather than a line worker, pastors who have confidence in themselves as leaders realized that their churches were flourishing." People became motivated because they consciously directed their efforts towards enhancing the output of those who ministered on behalf of the church.

However, growth of a church will be hampered if the pastor and his leadership team are not skilled and limits people from exercising their gifts until they have met certain prescribed period of time. Green (1972, 149) has observed that sometimes growth is not seen in some areas because:

We forbid people to exercise any leadership until they have been with us for a prescribed period. It is worth remembering that some young professional people may only stay in an area for a limited time, and if every church they join refuses their gift they may well give up in frustration.

Leaders must therefore exercise their spiritual gifts with wisdom and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading if the whole church is to be actively involved in the ministry.

Vision

Vision is the foundation upon which growth occurs. When there is vision, different parties see the reality as one. Otherwise, division may arise since the involved parties fail to share the same goal. Metaphorically, a person leads a meaningful life if each of his eyes harmonizes their individuality in order to see an object as one reality. Similarly, a visionary church implies sharing of objectives between the pastors and the church members in order to attract and nurture new members. According to Miller (1998, 10) pastor's leadership is essential for the church to carry out its priorities. He leads the team as he shares his own vision for the church's work. The team's support for pastor's leadership and vision is indispensable when it comes to their implementation in the ministry.

Vision is the capacity to see both needs and possibilities. As Smith (1984, 45) said, "With vision one perceives opportunities for growth while another, lacking vision, succumbs to complacency or depression and gives up."

In reality, vision is the ability to dream – or in some case to dream again. A vision of church growth will relate to the numerical increase of churches and of members in churches.

Roy (1998, 36) elaborated on the question of attracting and keeping new members in his Velcro church. One factor that he mentioned was that, the pastor must be a person of hope and vision “when people believe a church has a future and a vision they can identify with, they will make that church their church.” In this subject therefore, he wanted to help new members “stick” in fellowship. Salter (1990, 80) added that, vision based on integrity and creativity in meeting the needs of the church members would earn the pastor respect and people would want to believe and serve with him. “Perhaps the most important element of the pastor’s enviable track record is an ability to be big and yet to act small at the same time.”

A visionary pastor should point the church members and leaders to Christ and to the work of the ministry and not to himself. Carter (1998, 28) demonstrated a broad grasp when he said,

Church members too involved in the pastor’s private life risk disappointments. They often find themselves hurt because they focus on the pastor more than they do on Christ. When pastor’s charisma leads people into a church its loss drives them away.

A leadership that has caught the pastor’s vision is likely to give a church a shared vision. A church should have a compelling and unified vision for what God is calling the congregation to be and to do. These give the congregation a sense of optimism and hope which enhances attendance. Without hope, members become apathetic and quite the church to seek whatever ministry that may be available elsewhere!

One important question is how the pastor gets a vision. According to Barna (1992, 30) vision for ministry comes from God. “Vision for ministry is a reflection of

what God wants to accomplish to build His kingdom ... while he allows us ample latitude and creativity to articulate, disseminate and implement the vision, make no mistake about it. Visionary leaders receive their vision for ministry from God.”

As the leader studies Scriptures, he sees what Jesus would have the world around him look like. God’s vision, His reign in the hearts of men, is clarified Christ’s reign in the pastor’s heart and helps him to see how the society around him can be transformed into a different society more satisfying than what it may appear. Visionary pastors should therefore understand their environment and trust God to change it to what he would have it be like.

The pastor strengthens his vision by being enthusiastic about it. Roy (1998, 35) observes that, “another factor in attracting and keeping new member is pastor’s and congregation’s enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is not simply being a cheerleader... it is an involvement in ministry.” Like the New Testament church, the pastor shares his vision which when caught by the members, they become obligated and burdened to meet the needs of the new comers. This causes membership to increase and attendance to grow in the church. On the other hand, when the pastor and members are not enthusiastic to serve those who come to the church, they loose new members. Roy (1998, 35) focusing on the role of enthusiasm in church growth noted that two sure ways to loose new members are to create an atmosphere of obligation or to create a spirit of shallowness says. For new members to feel welcome in this church they need a relationship with the pastor. To assure that new members stick in this congregation, the pastor needs to give personal attention to new comers until they find a place to be accountable. This may call for regular visits to their home during their infancy stage of membership.

The pastor is the escort for all new members in this church, the pastor's influence here is significant.

A pastor who has a vision should know that in his effort to promote the vision of church growth, he might create discomfort for some people in the church. Roy (1998, 150) points out that, "Some will agitate, constantly raising irritating questions about necessity for change. Others will become so distraught that they will leave the congregation." Despite the discomfort, a visionary leader should not fret over such departures because "sometimes visions have cleansing element to it, which reflects changing needs, conditions and growth" In implementing the mission in order to achieve the vision Satan will bring resistance. He adds, "But just as Bible promises tough times, it also promises God will be present when we need extra strength and motivation." A pastor therefore needs to implement God's vision with fervor and passion for His glory. This kind of courage by the fact that God is able to sustain can cause a sense of expectancy that is able to help a church to grow.

The Pastor and Church Growth

The church has a mandate from God to influence the world for His glory. This means that she must play her religious role not only in propagating the gospel but also in encouraging church attendance where converts can converge to be disciplined and trained to go out and convert others to the faith and also bring them to the church. To incorporate members, the church should appropriately structure itself around small homogeneous units. For Wagner (1976, 134) homogeneous unit refers to "simply a group of people who consider each other to be one kind of people." When people have many areas of mutual interest like culture, and where they socialize freely they

grow numerically and spiritually. Evangelical churches will increase their potency if they will put more efforts, on homogeneous unit.

The early church was distinct in respect to sharing and a sense of belonging. Acts 4:32 says that no church member or group claimed that any of his possession was his own, but they shared everything they had. Today, many Christians may not freely say they prefer some churches to others though it is clear that most of them join or support a church that gives them a sense of belonging and one that is ready to minister to them when they are in need.

Holistic Ministry Concerns

Christianity's social aspect of meeting needs of the church members as well as the community where the church is planted may form a vital and indispensable part of promoting church growth. Orthodox Christianity falls short of her biblical charges to relieve suffering and improve life when she neglects or fails to meet social felt needs. Church growth efforts must acknowledge and become conscious of the church's call to serve and this call includes evangelism, social ministry and action. The ministry of the church embraces clothing and food distribution, medical, educational assistance, financial support, to name but a few. It has been said that stingy, miserly, penny-pinching Christians are not conducive to church growth implying that church with strong economic stand will increase in light of the house church model. Growth usually means a sanctuary, surplus packing area, Christian education unit, staff salaries, choir robes, audio visual material, office supplies, buses and vans, and more (Towns 1983, 281).

However, the church must be careful not to allow either evangelism or social involvement to be totally eclipsed. Church Growth scholars observe that the church

should maintain a balance between evangelism and social priority. Nevertheless, the church needs to actively take lead in social concerns and actions without losing her prophetic vision especially in extreme cases that require more social attention (Disasters, extreme oppression, etc.) (Smith 1984, 119-120; Vaughan 1983, 97).

Holistic ministry to the whole church without any favoritism is instrumental in determining one's commitment to the church. Whenever a church reaches out to its members, it creates and leaves a lasting impression. As Milne (1978, 90) put it:

How often have Christians discovered as if for the first time, the reality of the love of their brethren when they have passed through a difficulty time financially and proved in a practical way how real was the love of their fellow believers. Such an experience of love in practice is something which is not readily forgotten, but which goes on enriching and deepening the relationships of God's people for years to come.

Church growth will be affected if it fails to meet the felt needs of its congregation members. Every service and activity should therefore be considered as an opportunity to reach people with the love of Jesus.

The Structure of the Church

The church has the mandate to win people to Christ, incorporating them into fellowship through baptism, building them through discipleship and sending them out into the world to win others so that the process may continue. For better functioning, church growth specialists suggest that in the initial stages of her growth, the church should structure herself around five groups of laity for her to be maintained in a healthy manner as it expands numerically. McGavran and Arn (1973, 89-92) categorized these groups of laity in five groups; those who serve the existing church. They are Sunday school teachers, deacons, elders, choir members, ushers, ladies who arrange flowers, and those who phone or visit members who are sick.

This group of people is involved in carrying out maintenance ministry in the church. The second group is involved in leading the community to Christ. The third group of laity includes those who work with small groups like cell groups. The fourth group is those like the pastor and others on the church payroll. The fifth group is the missionaries send out by the church for ministry in other communities. All these groups in the church must be actively involved in ministry work for spiritual and numerical growth to be realized.

Furthermore, the structure of the church requires cooperation amongst all the strata of the church for it to attract more church members. For instance, there must be a healthy relationship between the pastor and the board to ensure conversion of new believers to church membership. It has been said that many churches have stagnated because the wrong people are in leadership. Often people are chosen for leadership because they have money, education, or status in the community. But they are spiritually immature and will keep the church from growing (Byler 2001, 3).

Nevertheless, cooperation is very much influenced by church members' worldviews which often conflict and threaten to obscure the entire structure. Conflict may encompass differences in opinions, convictions, wishes, perspectives and priorities. The unpreparedness of church leaders to deal with conflict in light of the biblical teaching divides them and even causes the entire congregation to disintegrate. This may corrupt people's mind, cause confusion, and drive them away from the church. The prevalence of the congregational disintegration renders questionable the role of light and salt that Christians have to play in the society as they experience little transformation in their lives. It should be noted that transforming society is only possible if the lives of the members of a society are themselves transformed (Schubert 2004, 8).

There are six key elements necessary for the smooth running and promotion of membership in the church, which are combined to reflect Allan's "Team Wheel" model (Fig 1).

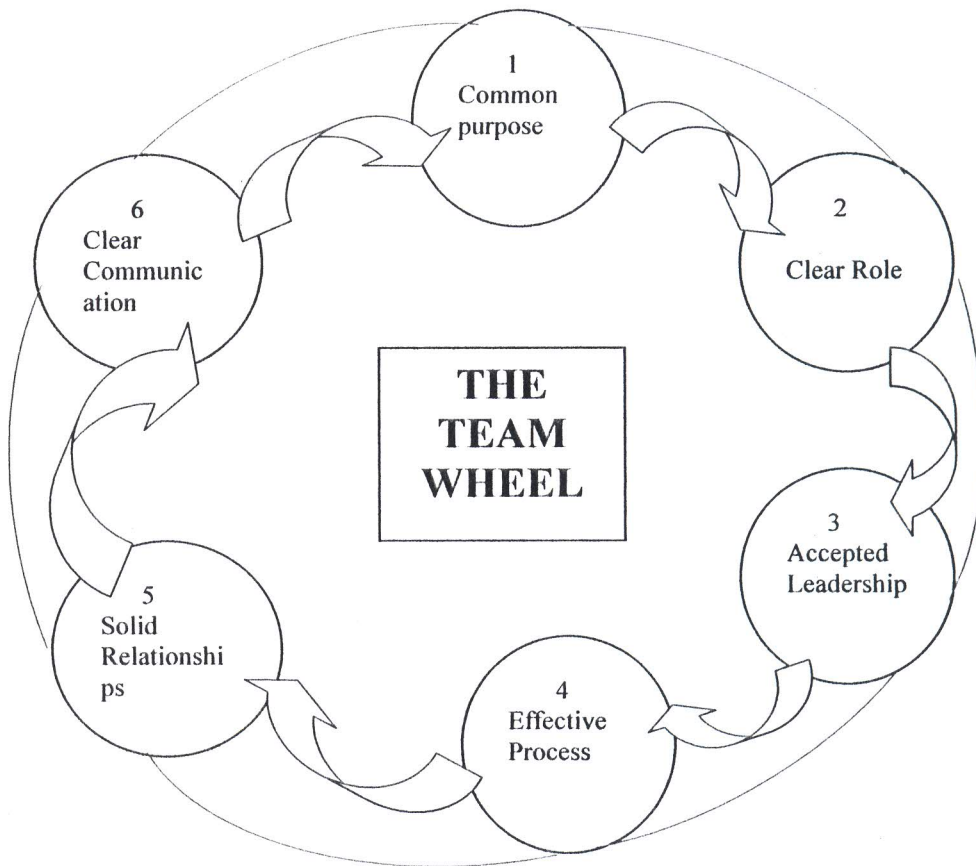


Fig. 1. The "Team Wheel" model of the six characteristics of effective leadership

The concept of the Team Wheel (TW) leadership requires that common purpose be embraced by those in leadership for a ministry to grow and achieve its purpose. Common purpose is an essential factor in fostering team success because it produces motivation which assists in high performance.

Secondly, every team member performs well when there is a clear understanding of roles. When every team member is clear about his particular role and those of others team members, exceptional results of membership in the church accrue.

Thirdly, accepted leadership is a great contributor in high performance of any TW. In those ministries where Clear, competent, Christ-centered leadership is promoted high performance by the team is often realized. But if such a leader is lacking, many groups get discouraged, leading to team ineffectiveness.

Fourthly, effective team results in a church must embrace effective process. This entails continual evaluation of programs' effectiveness as they are implemented in a congregation. Taking process for granted may deny the church from improving her life both in quality and quantity.

The fifth essential factor the TW encourages for ministry effectiveness in the church is solid relationship among leaders and church members. Conflicts in a team may contribute to divergent directions. When there is no shared direction among the team members the growth becomes retarded and the congregation may diminish in the church.

The last factor considered under TW concerns Clear communication among team members. The importance of this factor cannot be overemphasized. In the church very little can happen if there is no clear communication. The need for clear communication must precede the desired result for any church growth.

The diagram below captures the central theme of the above discussed factors of the need for church leaders to be prepared if the church is to grow in quality and quantity. Thus a strong commitment to common purpose, clarity in team roles, accepted leadership, effective process, solid relationship and clear communication can move a team from divergent directions to converge and share direction. "This makes the results bigger and better" (Allan 2001, 6-7).

Summary

This chapter was an instructive part of the study. The literature offered a helpful account of the ways in which a church can experience church growth using biblical principles. Some of these principles were; a church grows when it has a leader with a vision and is able to mobilize, train and work with members as a team and when people are involved in active participation in the church. A growth oriented-congregation increases quantitatively when she participates in social activities within and without the church.

However, the researcher was not able to find many literatures that had exhaustively dealt with the context in which he was interested in.

Most of the books he came across addressed contexts outside Africa. He concluded, therefore that a study that could provide a clear perspective of the situation of GNAGC was necessary. In order to comprehend membership problem at the church a good research methodology was sought for in. This leads to the next chapter on methodology and procedures.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter gives the qualitative research paradigm as the most appropriate method that was considered in this study. Rational for choosing qualitative research paradigm and ground theory were discussed in this section. The chapter also discussed research participants, data collection, strategies and procedures, data analysis strategy, validation and verification strategy that was considered in this study.

Method and Procedures

Qualitative research method does not give results that are based on statistics as compared to quantitative research method. Qualitative research refers to an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic, picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of respondents and conducted in a natural setting” (Creswell 1998, 1, 2). Qualitative research method was used to explore and to deepen the existing knowledge concerning factors that affect the numerical growth of the church for it captures the complexity of human situations.

Rationale for Choice of Research Paradigm

The rationale for using the qualitative design focused on the following reasons as given by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 197-203):

1. When the research topic needs to be explored; in this case, “by using the qualitative method, researchers are able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively.”
2. The need to study existing tangible realities. Studying these realities raises questions that render predictions and controls outcomes. “We can however gain a deep understanding and hence be able to interpret these realities.”
3. The need to emphasize the researcher’s role as an active learner who seriously considers the emic view of the respondents. “Qualitative researchers therefore believe that studying social systems and problems should include giving voice to those who are being studied as a way of empowering them” to freely communicate their ideas.
4. The need to give respondents a chance to state their problems the way they understand them and participate in seeking solutions to those problems and effecting such solutions.

The Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative: For the purpose of this research, the researcher adapted a qualitative research method, which involves constructing theory through interpretation of data (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 23). There are a number of qualitative approaches. These approaches include ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research and narrative research.

The Grounded Theory

The grounded theory approach denotes a research in “which the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study” (Creswell 2003, 14; Strauss and

Corbin 1990, 24; Creswell 1998, 12). It employs a systematic set of procedures to develop an actively desired theory about a phenomenon than other forms.

Thus, the use of it in this study was to ensure that the findings explain the factors that affect numerical growth of GNAGC.

Entry

The researcher was issued an official letter of introduction from the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (DVCAA) at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) in order to introduce him to the congregation at GNAGC. The fact that the investigator was an Assistant Pastor at GNAGC facilitated his introduction to the congregation under study. This constituted an added advantage for explaining the objectives of the study and the criteria for church selection to the congregation for interview purposes. The interaction with the congregation provided an opportunity to ensure confidentiality of data collected and preservation of the anonymity of respondents.

Data Collection Strategy and Procedures

The initial step into a qualitative ground theory is site selection. Good News Africa Gospel Church was selected because of the willingness of the church members to participate in data collection exercise, and probable resource availability. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 43) suggest that “access available resources, research goals plus your time and energy” dictate the site.

Some additional considerations that the researcher looked into as members and leaders of the GNAGC and former church members included level of literacy, their

willingness to collaborate with the researcher, and ethnic diversity within the congregation.

Population

A Population is any group of individuals who have common characteristic that are of interest to the researcher. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 9) refer to a population as “the aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification.” The population under study included members and leaders of the GNAGC, and former church members.

Sampling

It is recommended to draw a sample of at least 20 to 30 participants. Creswell’s sampling theory suggests that upon reaching the saturational level, the interviewing may stop. Theoretical saturation is when the researcher cannot find new codes emerging from the data analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 158). Sample selection depended on the participants’ informative ability determined by sample questions asked by the researcher. The sample was split into three groups for analysis purposes. The first group included 10 GNAGC members who had been in the church for at least one year. The second group consisted of 11 GNAGC leaders selected from various church departments. The third group was composed of 14 former GNAGC members who had been in the church for more than five months.

Types of Data Collection

Qualitative interviews were used for data collection. This was complemented by observations in order to capture valuable information that the participants may have failed to capture during the interviews.

Qualitative Interview

A face-to-face interview was used because of its effectiveness in developing information (Weiss 1992, 3). The researcher used open-ended, semi-structure questions and adjusted questions to participants where clarification was needed.

Another reason for conducting the interview was associated with uneven distribution of knowledgeable participants.

Observations

The researcher has been with the denomination, Africa Gospel Church as a member and fulltime minister for over 10 years and has served in various churches in different capacities. Currently, he is assisting GNAGC as associate pastor. This gave him an opportunity to make various observations in the church services and to interact with church members and leaders who assisted in data collection. This allowed the researcher to have first hand experience with the respondents, recorded information as it occurred, noticed unusual aspects and explored any topic that the respondents were uncomfortable to discuss.

Data Analysis Procedure

In a qualitative research, data analysis aims at bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 117) said that in qualitative analysis “researcher obtains detailed information about the phenomenon being studied and then try to establish patterns, trends and relationships from the information gathered.” The collection of data and its analysis can be done at the same time in qualitative research. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software application was used to code, enter, and analyze data.

Validation /Verification

Reliability and validation are fundamental in gathering of data. Reliability according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 95), “is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials.” For a qualitative study where interviews are implemented, effectiveness is in establishing rapport so that the important information needed is elicited (Creswell 1998, 208).

Verification for the ground theory research depends on the researcher and can be done at different stages in conducting research. The participants were asked several questions and their answers provided fertile ground for verification purposes. The literature review also offered valuable insights that pertained to verification.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to analyze and describe the various factors hindering numerical church growth in Good News Africa Gospel Church, with the intention of making biblical recommendations that will enhance sustainable growth. By means of open-ended and semi-structure questions, and oral interview the researcher was able to procure relevant data. The findings which are analyzed and discussed are reported in this chapter.

Data Analysis

The Questionnaires was administered to 35 participants in order to assess the factors affecting the growth of Good News Africa Gospel Church. The participants were selected among the church leaders, church members and former church members in order to compile data, which could be used for comparison purposes. Several related factors were identified as possible factors responsible for the fluctuation of church growth at GNAGC. To investigate these factors three research questions were discussed:

1. What were the main factors that contributed to church growth attendance at GNAGC?
2. What explanations account for current church membership retention at GNAGC?

3. What were the reasons given by former church members for deserting the GNAGC?

In light of these questions, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) application was used to code, to generate frequencies and to cross-tabulate the variables under study.

Findings

Results from frequency tables have indicated that the majority of the Church leaders have been fellowshipping with GNAGC for the last 4 to 8 years; few of them fall in the category of 1 to 3 years of church attendance and even beyond 8 years.

Church Leaders

Challenges

About half of the select church leaders have revealed that the main challenge they have faced in GNAGC has been the lack of commitment from the church. They have also pointed out other challenges such as poor administration and disunity in the church. However, many of them have not considered financial constraints as one of the key challenges (Figure 2).

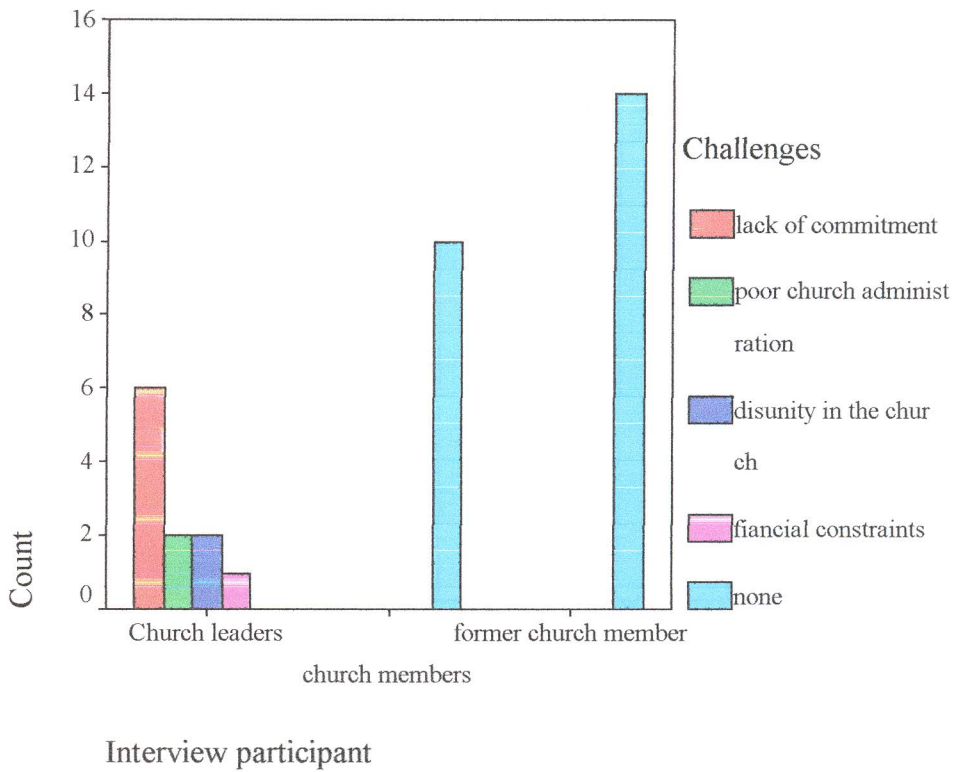


Fig. 2. Challenges the church leaders face at GNAGC

Coping mechanisms

There have been several ways to deal with the above-mentioned challenges. The study has shown that church leaders are more familiar with self-motivation and prayer than any other coping mechanism. Copying mechanisms such as training worship, team members, church recruitment of members for service, tithing and offerings were spelt out (Figure 3).

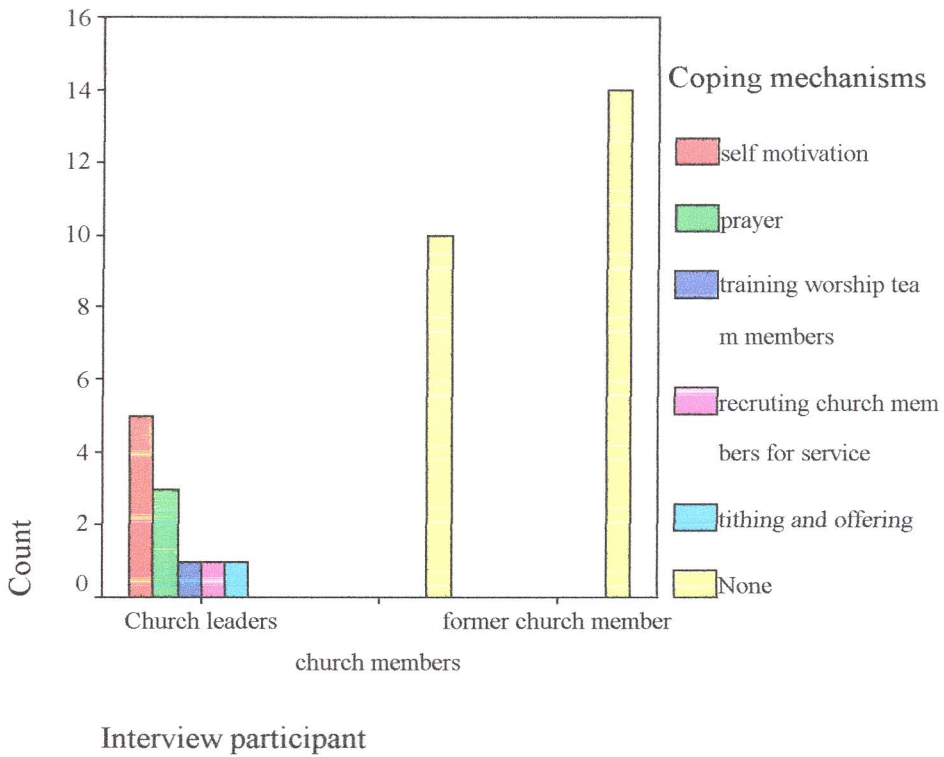


Fig. 3. Coping Mechanism adopted by GNAGC leaders

Hindrances to church growth

The results have indicated many factors that hinder growth in GNAGC, but the impact of Islam appeared to be the most threatening of them. The lack of evangelization, attention to peoples' felt needs, poor conversion methods of leading people to Christ were among other factors that contributed to church growth hindrance. Nevertheless, there was very little concern about the impact of poor church facilities to church hindrance (Figure 4).

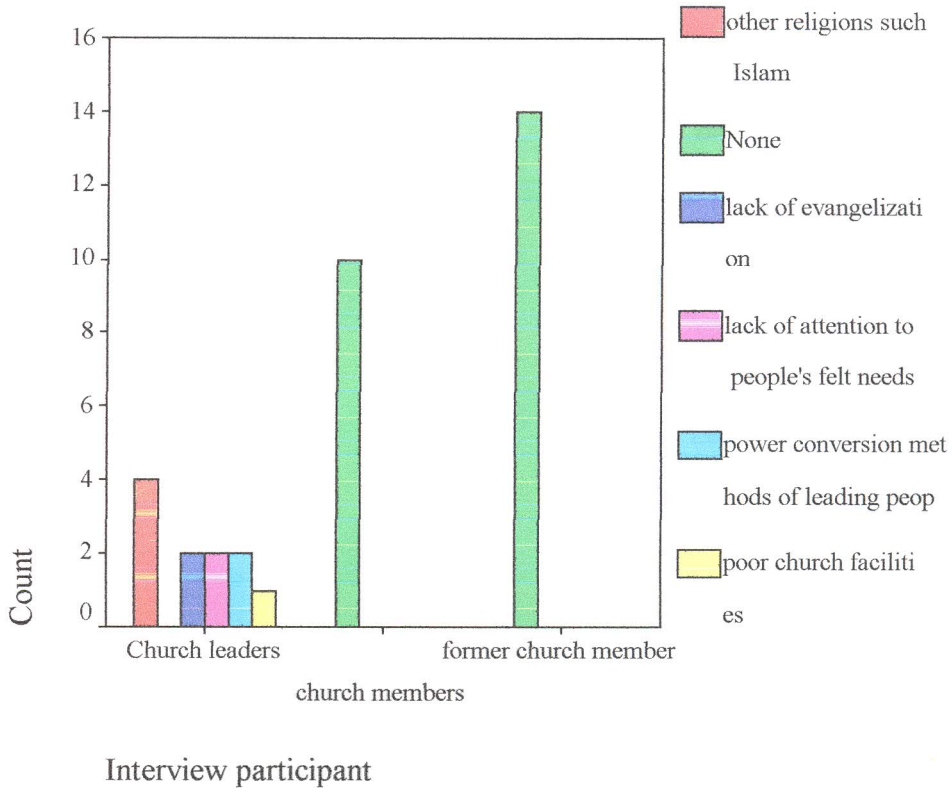


Fig. 4. Leader's opinions of hindrances to church growth at GNAGC

Suggestions for church growth

Guidance from the Holy Spirit was central to church leaders' strategies for overcoming growth hindrances at GNAGC. The need for pastors to stay longer in the church and the advertisement of the church were suggested for this particular need. Some voices were supportive of meeting social needs, improvement of church facilities, and attractive church programs (Figure 5).

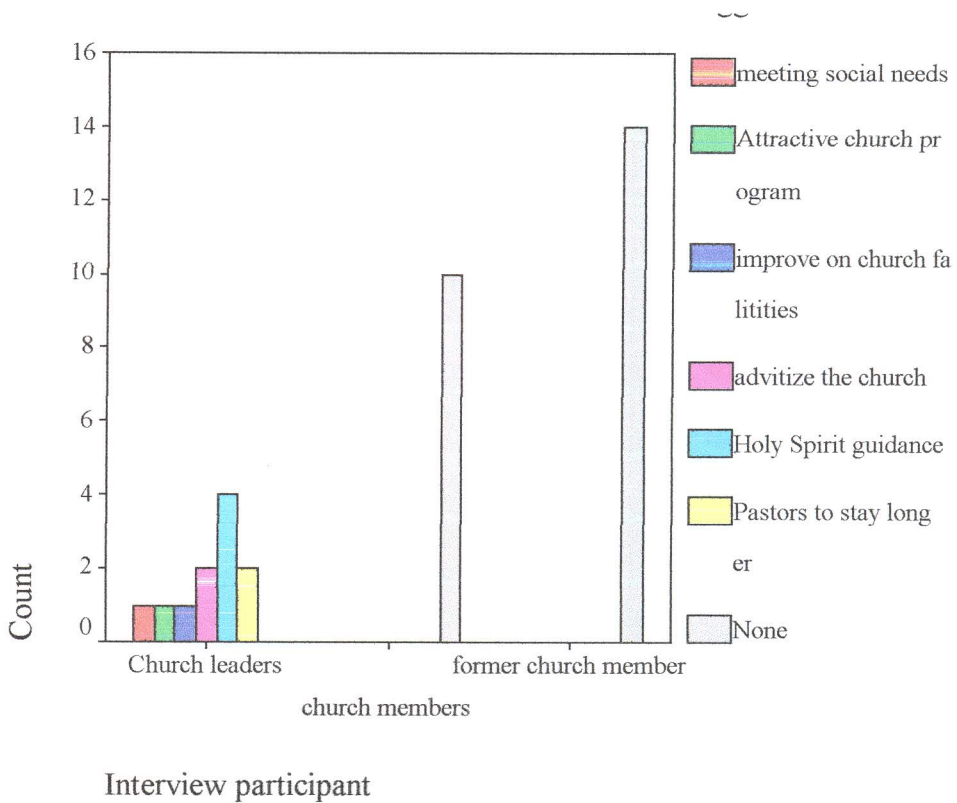


Fig. 5. Suggestions given by the church leaders for the growth of GNAGC

Church Members

Conversion experience

Results in have indicated that the majority of church members were converts from All Nations church. This was followed by those from the Roman Catholic Church, GNAGC; but the number of converts from AIC was negligible (Figure 6).

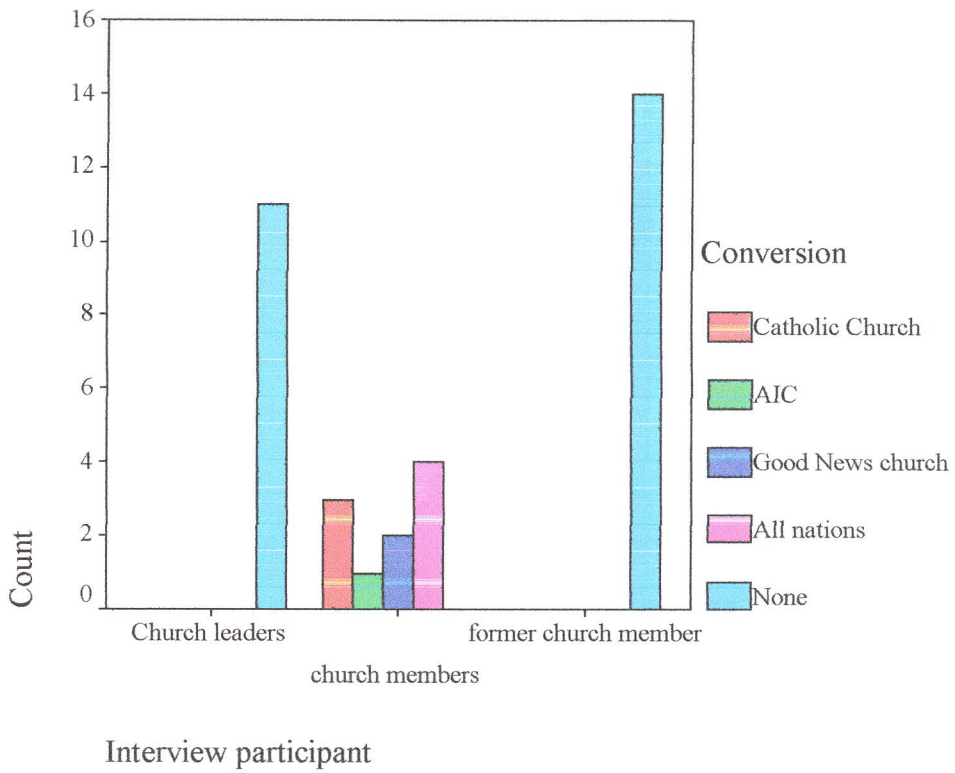


Fig. 6. Conversion experience of church members

Christian growth experience

Several church members have acknowledged prayers and Bible study as key factors responsible for Christian growth at individual level. Regrettably, discipleship was not given enough weigh among the respondents (Figure 7).

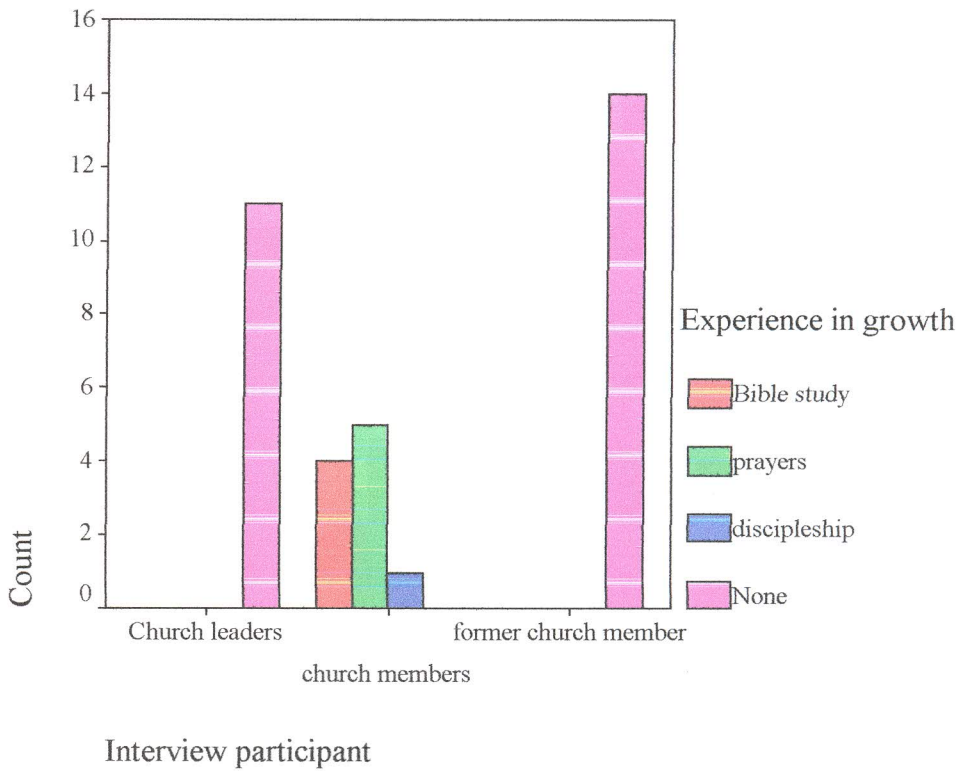


Fig. 7. Church members' growth experience at GNAGC

Reasons for remaining at GNAGC

The respondents have strongly attributed the reasons for their staying at GNAGC to loving and caring attitude in the church, and good preaching (Figure 8).

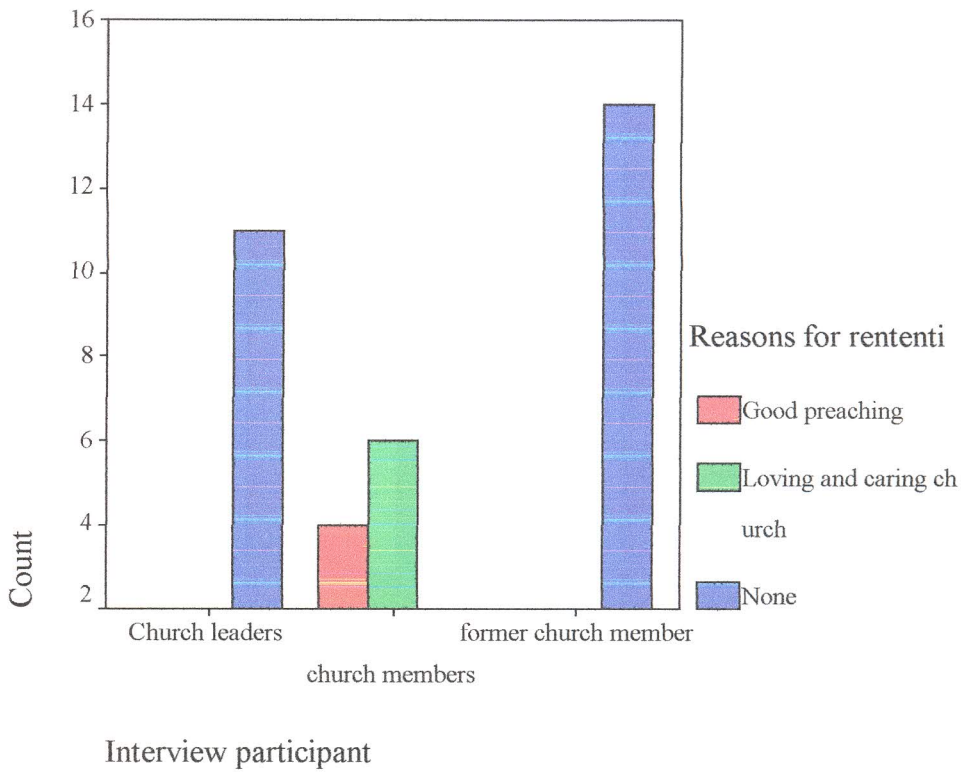


Fig. 8. Reasons church members worship at GNAGC

Areas for improvement for GNAGC

As church, the respondents singled out a number of areas to improve on for church growth. For instance, much attention was put on church program, followed by Sunday service and worship team (Figure 9). They suggested that ample time needs to be allocated to the above activities.

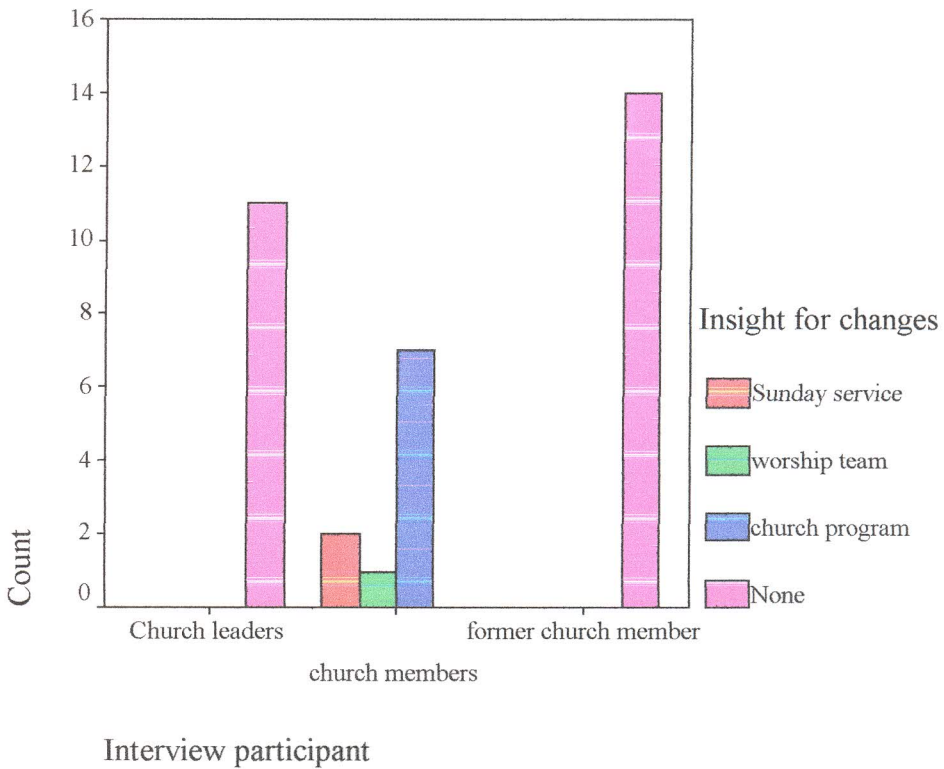


Fig. 9. Areas proposed for improvement by church members

Former Church Members at GNAGC

Experience of former church members at GNAGC

The majority of the participants agreed that their experience in the church before they joined their current ministries was that GNAGC was a loving and a caring church (Figure 10). They also attributed the success of the church growth to the support she got from the mother church.

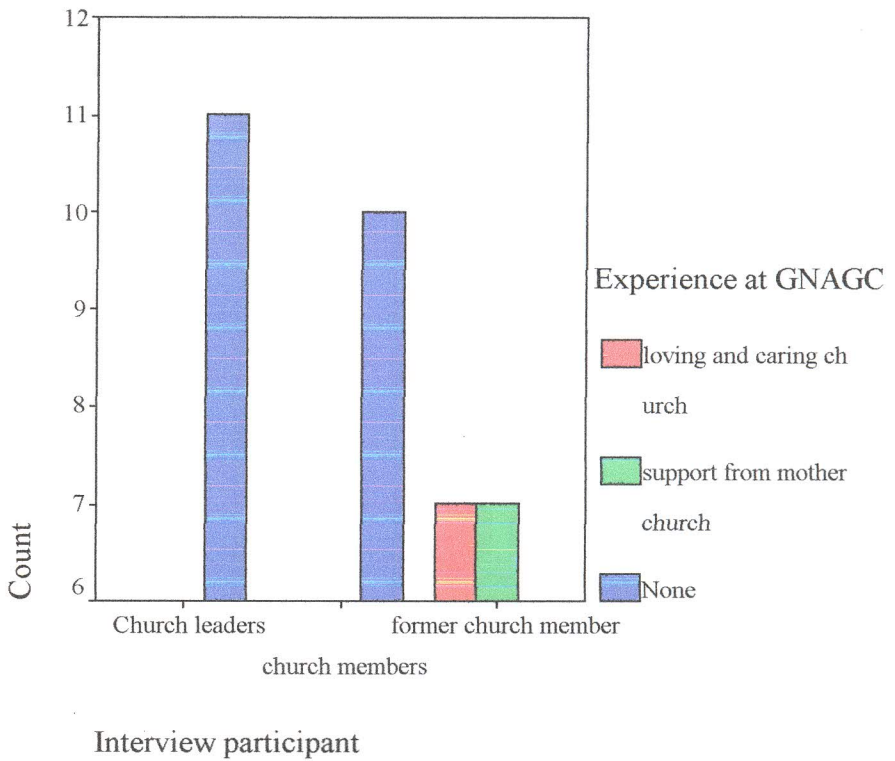


Fig. 10. Experience of former church members at GNAGC

Reasons for deserting GNAGC

The results in Figure 11 indicate that most former church members left the church because they were less involved in the program of the church. It was also revealed that some left the church because of conflicting ministry vision. Only a few attributed their leaving the church to factors associated with employment and marriage.

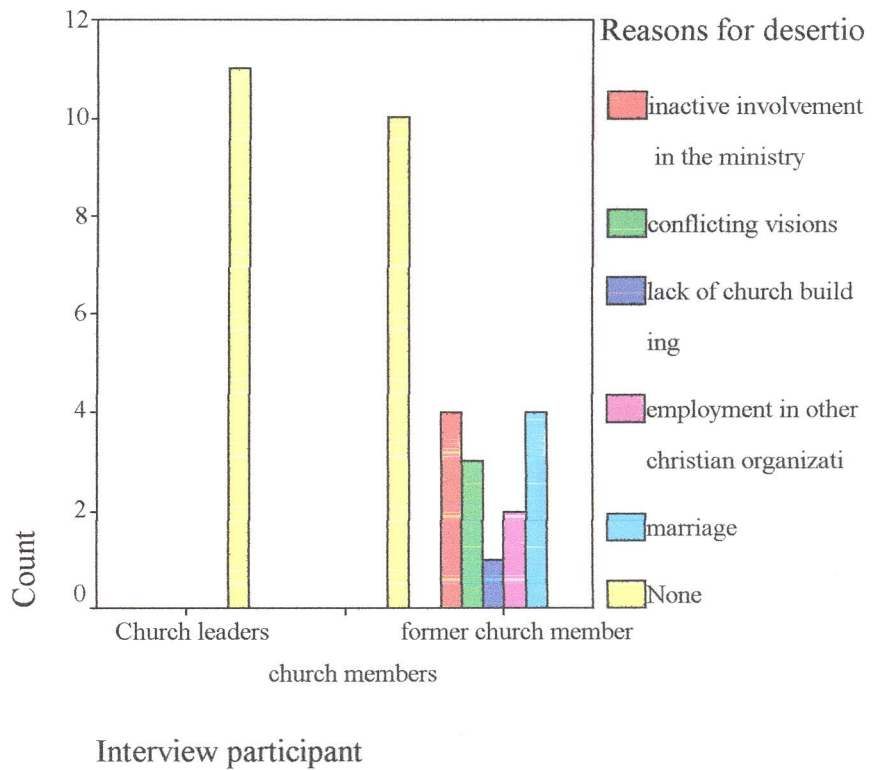


Fig. 11. Reasons former church members left GNAGC

Preference for former church members

Figure 12 stipulates that what former church members liked most in their churches was their involvement in ministries that agrees with their visions. Some participants were happy with their current church capacity building.

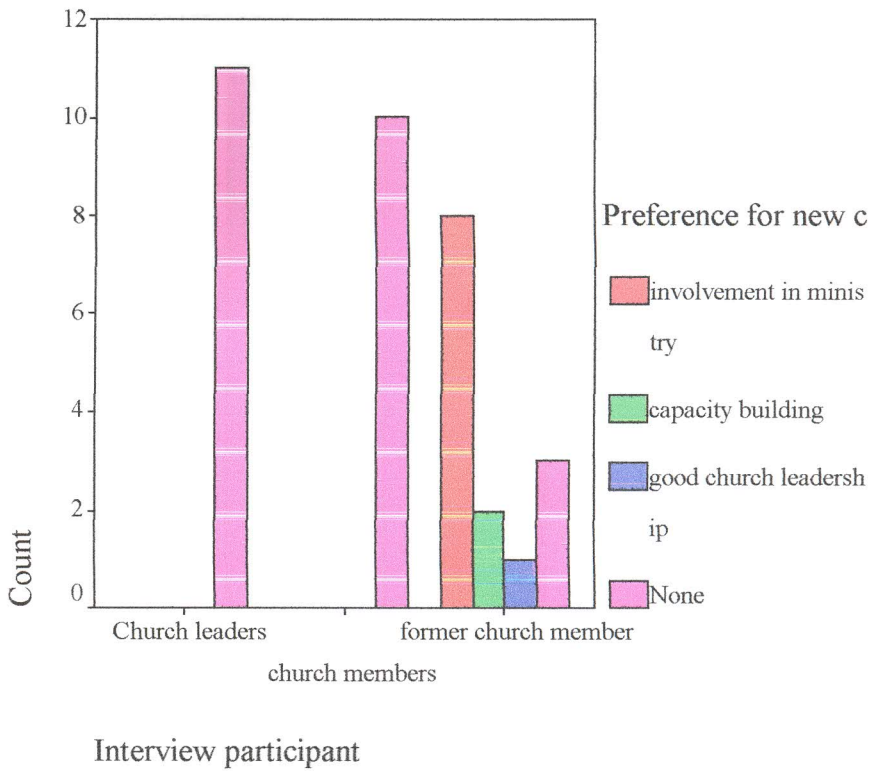


Fig. 12. Reasons former GNAGC members like their current churches

Suggestions of growth by former members of GNAGC

In Figure 13, most former church members interviewed suggested that GNAGC needs to do more follow-ups to increase and maintain her church members. Some respondents said that active participation in the church, more prayers and discipleship should be implemented.

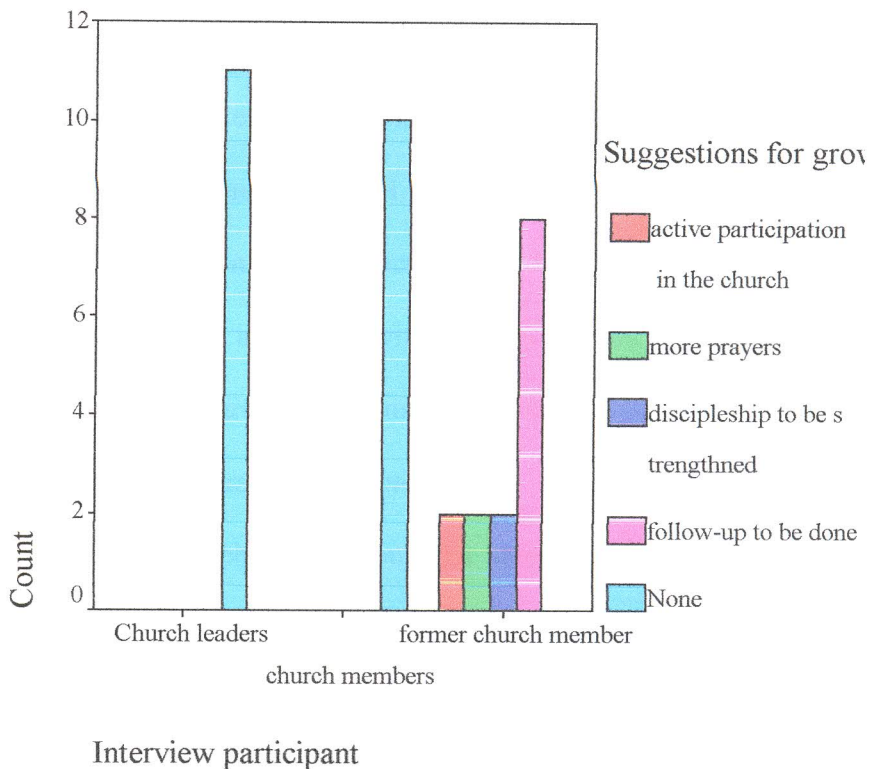


Fig. 13. Suggestions of growth from former members of GNAGC

Discussions

Factors affecting church membership at GNAGC

Discussions with the church leaders at GNAGC indicated that GNAGC was growing qualitatively and quantitatively since its inception in 1989. GNAGC was very instrumental in encouraging and assisting people to discover their identity and their place in God's unfolding intentions for them (*Field notes*). The result of this study, however, has shown several dynamics that have negatively influenced the initial growth attendance at GNAGC. Factors like lack of commitment in the church, poor church administration and disunity in the church have been reported to have hindered growth at GNAGC.

Commitment in the church

It was revealed in the findings that not many people are active in the life of GNAGC. Church leaders pointed out that only few church members are committed to prayers, Bible study, and Sunday school program. They pointed at lateness in attending to ministries of the church as a factor that needs to be dealt with by most of the people in the church. An interview with another church member indicated that lack of commitment in some areas in the ministry was due to lack of empowerment due to inadequate training programs (*Field notes*).

The pastor of the church pointed out that some church leaders and members were not committed in serving the Lord with their tithes and offerings. This has affected the provision for Christian learning materials such as Christian literature. In addition, organizing seminars, erecting church structure where various programs can take place concurrently with the Sunday Morning service have not been possible. One of the church leaders clearly stated that, “With the availability of money we can do so many things. Currently, we are struggling to erect a building for various ministries and the pastor’s office for effective running of the church” (*Field notes*). The availability of a spacious and safe place where church members can have their children taught the word of God would be an incentive for going to GNAGC. A former church member who was involved in teaching Sunday school commented that “I left because I wanted a place where I would have what I needed to be effective teacher. We had few Sunday school materials and children were taught together regardless of their age and level of education” (*Field notes*). So if the church is to grow attention should be given to Sunday school children and involve many church members in their varied ministries. It takes great financial commitment for a church like GNAGC to have materials and properties that can foster different activities.

Church leadership

Findings have indicated that leadership plays a crucial role in church growth because the scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ work through people, especially God's obedient servants. They do not look at church growth as a purely academic activity but as something that God desires (Gibbs 1986, 8-27; McGavran 1982, 3-22). The New Testament narratives have revealed that Jesus was the perfect model of leadership of people of his time. For Him, leadership implied the godly attitude of servanthood.

The researcher's findings at GNAGC showed that there was lack of purposeful, goal-directed, and achievement-oriented leadership. One respondent commenting on the leadership of the church said,

We have had pastors who did not prove to us as a church that they were serious with their work. There was no vision in respect to where we were in the church let alone where we were going. Many people became discouraged as a result and decided to join other denominations. With the new pastor, we have hope that given time things will go well although there are some obstacles to overcome (*Field notes*).

The above comment suggested that the very presence of the pastor or other high ranking official in the church served as a motivator and added validity to the church venture. Roy (1998, 34) asserted that, "when people believe a church has a future and a vision they can identify with, they will make that church their church." The church must provide hope to people who are searching for answers to their questions in life. Unless church leadership addresses people's needs church growth may not be achieved.

Other researches agree with the researcher's finding that churches that have demonstrated growth have strong leadership.

Both the pastors as well as strong leaders must be people of vision and determination who can realize God's intention of church growth through their commitment to the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth. It has been said that in any growing local congregation, a significant degree of momentum is discernible within the spirit of its lay leadership (Arn 1979, 137). As the leadership team seeks to discern God's intention for the church, it finds itself extended in vision, and committed to serve and stimulate the congregational body to be active stewards of Christ.

Moreover, study on the leadership abilities in the church showed that the act of guiding, motivating and influencing the church to perform its responsibilities was one of the factors that affect the growth of the church. When church members get frustrated they leave. Those who stayed in the church as members became stunted in their personal involvement in the growth of AGC.

Church administration

Church administration was considered as one of the factors that attributed to lack of quantitative growth at GNAGC. Church administration refers to the combination of physical, financial and human resources for effective church management. For instance, the church leaders have not put enough attention on identifying people's gifts and skills for various church assignments. Not everyone understands his assignment. Poor coordination of activities coupled with lack of commitment could partly explain the ineffectiveness of the ministry.

This goes beyond suggesting that there was no smooth and effective operation in the life of the church to enhance quantitative church growth. Christ stated, "I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49, NIV). His words serve as a beacon to Christian leaders and workers today.

Division in the church

The findings also contended that disunity in the church due to favoritism was another cause for lack of growth. As one respondent put it “Discrimination against the poor hinders this church from growing” (*Field notes*). One person expressed that the leaders like to visit those people who are materially rich than the poor ones. However, there was differing opinions in respect to lack of unity in the church. What others attributed to disunity, others referred to as biasness. “I don’t think there is any discrimination in the church. If anyone says that there is favoritism in our present church leadership then that person has a problem” (*Field notes*). From the research’s findings, although the above factor was mentioned by some church leaders an attempt to validate the truth among other church leaders and members revealed that what other leaders were calling disunity could be personal difference with people in the church and not something general to most church members at GNAGC. However, the pastor of the church alluded to this fact when he said that “one among many challenges I am facing in this church is to make decisions related to solving conflicts.” The researcher does not think that this factor has been there for a long time to have caused the church not to experience numerical growth as it does not seem to be well presented among congregational members (Appendix D).

The church needs to emulate the life of Christ while here on earth. His life showed that Christian’s ambition does not center on self gratification but rather focuses on advancing the interest of the Kingdom of God.

The staff members must serve together to lead others towards maturity as they realize their purpose for God at GNAGC. In this respect the church will understand the direction that God wants to take them and what he wants the congregation to fulfill.

Short pastoral tenure

One of the challenges that were pointed out by church leaders as a hindrance to GNAGC growth pertained to short pastoral tenure (Appendix D). The GNAGC averages about 60 members in a Sunday morning worship service. The church has not done well in retaining new comers in the church for years. This shows that the church has not demonstrated a high-expectation plan for its new and long term members. It was revealed through the findings that GNAGC has not transitioned to higher-expectation level of church membership retention because the congregation seems to lack the required skills. For a pastor to win the confidence of the church leaders as well as that of the church members to welcome and accept the new members in the fellowship of the believers it will necessitate long-time-disciple-making commitment.

Although the current pastor who has been pasturing the church for the past four years is realizing some numerical growth as a result of confidence that he is gaining in the church, he is facing many challenges. In this respect, one church leader commented,

Our current pastor is very good. I hope he remains in this church until Jesus comes. We are sick of being emotionally drained as we desperately watch our pastors being taken away from us at a time when their impact is starting to be realized in our lives. We are tired of seeing our church transition from one pastor to another within a short period of time. I know that we have not done well in paying our pastors. Even now our current pastor has over five month arrears (*Field notes*).

The same sentiment was reflected in another church member who was interviewed.

The members have denounced the lack of incentives from the church in motivating the pastors. It has been said that:

Our pastor repeatedly tells us that no changes will take place unless we are commitment to prayers. He likes to challenge us using the Lord's Prayer life while on earth. As he related with people and to his congregation prayer was always his number one principle. His understanding of the word of God makes our pastor keep on encouraging us to pray (*Field notes*).

The findings at GNAGC agree with what other church growth researchers revealed. Gibbs (1986, 13) pointed out that growth program takes between four to six years to consolidate. Pastoral tenure in a short time has hampered the growth of GNAGC for years. The leadership of the current pastor has acknowledged an increase in the number of believers as a result of his services in the church for the past four years. Hence, the pastor at GNAGC must be prepared to remain for a reasonable period of time.

Evangelism

Any church that expects God's divine intervention for effective running of the ministry must plan for continuous program of evangelism coupled with discipleship. Contacts must be made to reach the communities and to have them disciplined. GNAGC has programs for evangelism although only a few seem to be actively involved in evangelism. Evangelizing Muslims and Hindus who stay in the areas has proved to be a challenge to members of the church. This has disheartened many members from being actively involved in evangelism (*Field notes*). This could explain why most GNAGC church members are mostly from other churches namely All Nations, Roman Catholic and Africa Inland Church (AIC) (Appendix E). This may imply that most of the members at GNAGC were not converted to Christ through evangelistic effort of the church. The number of new members was gained mainly by transfer growth. Smith (1984, 22) asserts that while transfer growth is important to God's kingdom, conversion growth must be given a more prominent place in the church for it is by conversion growth that the kingdom of God increases most rapidly.

Poor conversion method of leading people to Christ was also mentioned during data analysis as a hindrance to church growth. After preaching in Sunday Morning

service preachers often do not call members forward for altar-call to surrender their lives to Jesus. One leader commented,

When someone goes forward to be prayed for, there is joy and celebration in the whole church. However, the way it is mostly done here, is not stimulating because we sometimes do not know who has surrendered his or her life to Jesus. When preachers tell the congregation to close eyes while those who want to receive Jesus are asked to lift up their hands and pray silently in their hearts. We miss the chance to know who has been saved. This limits who to help and how to encourage the converts grow in the faith (*Field notes*).

In situation like that of GNAGC, one would expect the pastors to be vigilant to the feeling of the whole congregation as sinners come to Christ. Failure for the church ministers to call people forward to accept Christ needs to be revisited.

Evangelism is indispensable in church growth. Pawson (1968, 70) has noted that the church stands to decline in membership if she neglects the role of evangelism in the church. The church can only be God's instrument if she evaluates and examines how she is going in evangelizing the world. The church needs more evangelists who will challenge the indifferent, arouse the careless and apathetic, and stimulate the curiosity that can lead to consecration and bring people to Christ. The researcher thinks that the growth at GNAGC has been affected by lack of developing evangelists and engaging the church members in witnessing to people they come in contact with. Wagner (1976, 75) argues, "It is obvious that the one gift above all others necessary for church growth is the gift of evangelist."

However, he adds that the gift must be used with other gifts simultaneously. The facts from the findings at GNAGC imply that present members have not been effective in influencing their friends and relatives to bring them into their church. If GNAGC had been actively involved in evangelizing the current church growth would have increased quantitatively. It goes without saying that the combination of evangelism with discipleship programs are central for church to grow.

Church Membership and Retention at GNAGC

As stated earlier in the data analysis section, the respondents strongly attributed their staying at GNAGC to love and care they get in the church a factor that has promoted fellowship among current members. Good preaching was also given great consideration. The researcher found out that the majority of the church members have been at GNAGC for less than five years. Although the church did not have membership record for the past years the members said that there has been slow but steady growth in the church for the past two years. The church gained about twenty members in the last three years since 2002. The researcher being an associate pastor and a participant member for the past two years confirmed the validity of the fact that the church membership is improving.

The members interviewed attested to the pastor's love and his Christian character as a motivating factor for their stay in the church. The pastor is greatly loved because he shows interest in the problems of his congregation. One young man said "from the time I shared my problem about sin with the pastor, he always asked how I was faring on" (*Field notes*). When the pastor does not sit in judgment against his congregation but shares correction and comfort he is likely to be loved. When a pastor encourages his congregation in their Christian walk, appreciates them where they deserve members want to remain in the church, a factor which promotes not only retention but also increase in the church.

The new pastor is a man of God whom the church loves and respects. He understands the longings and frustrations, hurt and failure of church members. Sometimes when correction is very personal the pastor said that "I visit church members where I can have personal talk with them and I keep individual secrets as I give them counseling to come out of their problems" (*Field notes*).

The pastor considers it his responsibility to help his congregation. The mutual stimulation, support, comforts, and inspiration the pastor gives to members creates closeness of Christian fellowship. Church growth researches showed that for people to be led and remain active in the church they must have trust in their leader and among themselves. They must feel secure in his hands because he is utterly reliable and trustworthy. Integrity becomes evident when a person displays a consistency of motive and is integrated in character and conduct (Engstrom 1976, 19). When a congregation walks in harmony, its influence in the community will be heightened. Offering genuine fellowship is one of the ways to retain members in the church.

It can be noted therefore that when the pastor correctly relates to his members, fellowship enhances growth of both believers and churches. The weak and needy members feel united in purpose and love. This causes them to remain in the fellowship of the church.

Former Church Members and Desertion from GNAGC

Former church members gave multiple factors for leaving GNAGC and joining other churches. Factors that were given by respondents included inactive involvement in church activities, conflicting visions, change of marital status, and lack of needed empowerment from church leadership.

The decline of the qualitative growth of the church could partially be explained by undesired results following her experience in winning Muslims.

This proved to be a great challenge to church's evangelistic endeavors. It could be that the spirit of defeatism probably caught up with the church leaders overcoming the church's vision even to reach people of other faith in the community. A discussion with a couple addressed the issue in these terms:

I and my wife decided to leave the church (GNAGC) because we were inactive in the ministry. Yes, we could give testimonies once in a while but this was nothing in comparison to what we wanted to do for the Lord. When we shared with the pastor about the vision the Lord was putting in our hearts, that of reaching Hindus with the gospel, he did not seem to share the same conviction. To make the issue even more complicated, within a short time he was transferred. With the passion that we had for the Lord we went a head to look for a church which had the same burden for wining Asians to Christ (*Field notes*).

The participants expressed their enthusiasm and satisfaction as a result of the testimony of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in their practical life activities and in their various ministries. The GNAGC lost a great opportunity of serving with those visionary evangelists who could have otherwise trained, challenged and inspired other Christians to seek the lost for Jesus.

Other reasons respondents gave for leaving the church were lack of empowerment from the church which could foster spiritual growth (Appendix D).

She said that her children were growing up and the Sunday school program that was being provided could not address their spiritual needs. Being a teacher by profession and a Sunday school facilitator it was apparent that something had to be done. Because of financial constraint at that time the church could not afford Sunday School Materials let alone erect a structure where the children would worship God. This caused her to move to a church where her ministry would be used while her children were also growing in their Christian faith (*Field notes*).

Other former members attributed their desertion to other churches to change of their marital status. The tradition in many churches requires that the wife should transfer her membership to the husband's local. Similarly, some former members said that their departure from GNAGC was motivated by new employment opportunities. An offer of good paying jobs far away from the home church area is often associated

with some economic costs in terms of fare which could otherwise be used for transport to church on a Sunday basis.

Summary

The findings can be summarized that inadequate leadership role has affected church growth at GNAGC. This stems from lack of commitment and obedience by the church to the Great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, discipleship, concrete vision, and cooperation of members in the church. Members' activeness in the ministry has also been reduced to a few individuals who are self motivated to sacrifices their time to pray, study the Bible and utilize their spiritual gifts effectively.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The GNAGC cannot ignore the God given responsibilities of equipping church members to use their gifts and talents in the church if she wants to see qualitative and quantitative growth. The fact that church members, church leaders were supportive in the research findings was a clear indication of their eager desire to see changes in their ministry at GNAGC. This chapter deals with the conclusions that result from the findings and discussions of the study. These conclusions led to recommendations that address the need for sound church growth at GNAGC, and the areas for further research.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that poor church administration and lack of commitment have been acknowledged as the crucial factors affected membership growth of GNAGC. This was incompatible with the wish of the majority of those who desired to fellowship with the church.

Church leaders lack shared ministerial vision. This has resulted to ineffective missiological goals both centrifugally and centripetally. Centrifugally, GNAGC face the challenge to effectively communicate Christ to other faiths especially the Muslims. The situation is even more appealing within the church (centripetal) when the unbelievers that Christ has graciously brought to the congregation cannot be

encouraged to accept him as their God and Savior. As a matter of fact, the majority of the congregation is made up of converts from other denominations.

Poor leadership has affected the church members' willingness to participate in various church activities where their talents and gifts can be valued and used for God's glory.

Former church members attributed their desertion from GNAGC to other churches as a result of lack of effective outreach ministry that would cater for Christian maturity through discipleship programs, visitation and responsiveness to the felt needs of the new converts.

Suggestions for Membership Growth at GNAGC

Leaders at GNAGC should be visionary, contextual, planners and life-time learners who delegate and empower the laity for mission. The pastor must empower the church to make ethical and moral decisions that will impact the community around the church and beyond.

People in authority should often inspire the people they are leading. Members should be encouraged and made to know that their contribution is important in the church. This will inspire people to be committed in the work of the church. This can be done by taking the following verbal affirmation and encouragement, a written note, public recognition and continued training.

A pastor will have to develop a relationship and spend time with experienced and successful ministers who are servants of God for more insights. They understand about church growth and they can help. Also the pastor needs to read church growth written materials to receive counsel and wisdom that would help to enhance church attendance.

GNAGC can develop schedules and publicized them to see what happens and who responds. For instance, the church can organize and participate in social activities, leisure activities, pot luck dinners, picnics tournaments and all kinds of fun activities to attract both Christians and non-Christians to come together. This can provide opportunities to witness to none Christians.

Through discipleship training, GNAGC should focus on how to win souls for Christ. There should be focus on practical mission work by the whole church at least quarterly.

Church members will need to be trained in their gift for them to develop and make them more effective. For instance in the area of leading worship in the church and teaching Sunday school.

For a personal relationship between new members and the church to be established a mentor to each new member or assigning each new member to a small group who will be held accountable for contacting and supporting the new member should be started. Bible study group can also help assimilate new members.

For visitors to feel welcome in the GNAGC and remain as members a relationship with the pastor and other members will be inevitable. To ensure that new members remain in the congregation, the pastor will need to give personal attention to all new comers until they find a place to be accountable. The pastor should visit their homes during infancy stage of membership, and organizing programs that will involve new members' training classes.

GNAGC should begin house church or start small groups to provide new believers with constant spiritual support. A new believer needs a small group that stays in daily contact with him for encouragement, to affirm his excitement in his faith, experiences and to counsel with him as questions arise.

The corporate church needs to be taught to adapt an attitude that can help growth. The new members should feel that they are welcomed, needed, and encouraged to find a place in the church and remain as part of GNAGC family.

The house church will provide accountability, build relationships and equip lay leaders. She should focus on reaching out through the net works of relationships which each member has in the community, work place and family. Again, through the building of healthy relationships which function in spirit and in truth, each believer will have the opportunity to be built up into a mature follower in Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

Believers should often be challenged through biblical teachings to demonstrate their trust and faithfulness to God through their commitment. Stewardship should be taught as one key part of worship to God. Members who struggle with tithing should be advised to start giving a percentage of their money and gradually increase the percentage until the family is able to tithe.

The church should pray more to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to be active both in the church and in the world. Only by depending on the Holy Spirit will strategies for growing the church be fruitful. This will promote both qualitative and quantitative growth in the church.

Although the above mentioned suggestions will take time, commitment, money and patience through planning seminars, teachings and counseling, in the long run they will be rewarding to the Kingdom of God.

The church should establish financial goals for economic empowerment. Through professional investment advisors the church can be given counsel on how to wisely use her financial resources to meet the felt needs of its members and develop the surrounding community. For instance, the church can begin institutions like

hospitals and schools. Eventually, this would help the church to be self-reliant and active in cross-cultural mission work.

The church should keep good membership church attendance record of those who come to worship. Those who have professed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and are willing to be baptized and remain part of the fellowship of the church should be put in the membership register. The record should include both the adults and the children who come for Sunday service. To visitors who come to the church, a visitor's card should be issued to them for future contact (where possible).

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations were made for further research.

Firstly, the researcher recommends a study that can evaluate the quality of existing church programs at GNAGC to see the level of participation in the worship, Christian education, and stewardship.

Secondly, a multiple case study in the area is highly recommended in order to understand the dynamics of growth of other denominations in the multifaith society especially in the Muslim dominated areas.

Thirdly, investigation concerning the attitude of the surrounding community towards the Africa Gospel Church or the church of Christ would be instructive in strategizing for mission work.

Fourthly, demographic study should be conducted for planning purposes to ensure the community's felt needs are addressed. Finally, the researcher recommends further studies in order to tackle issues that challenge the entire church of Africa Gospel Church in East Africa.

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APPENDIX A

GUIDING QUESTIONS WITH CHURCH LEADERS

1. Please, would you share with me how long you have been in GNAGC and the leadership responsibility/responsibilities you are involved in?
2. What are some of the major challenges you are experiencing in your leadership at GNAGC?
3. How have you tried to cope up with the above challenges?
4. According to your knowledge, what do you think is hindering GNAGC from growing numerically?
5. What do you think should be done to improve on the numerical growth of GNAGC?

APPENDIX B

Guiding Questions with Church Members

1. Would you please share with me your conversion experience and how you have been growing in the faith?
2. What are the main reasons that have kept you in GNAGC?
3. What are some of the things you wish GNAGC did differently?
4. What do you think GNAGC needs to improve on to grow numerically?
5. What do you think you can do to enhance the growth of GNAGC?

APPENDIX C

Guiding Questions with Former Church Members

1. Please, would you share with me your experience while you were a member at GNAGC?
2. Why did you decide to leave the GNAGC?
3. What are some of the things you like in your current church that you lacked at GNAGC?
4. What suggestions can you offer for GNAGC to grow numerically?

APPENDIX D
FREQUENCY TABLES

year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3 years	1	2.9	9.1	9.1
	4 years	2	5.7	18.2	27.3
	5 years	4	11.4	36.4	63.6
	8 years	2	5.7	18.2	81.8
	14 years	2	5.7	18.2	100.0
	Total	11	31.4	100.0	
Missing	System	24	68.6		
Total		35	100.0		

Interview participant

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Church leaders	11	31.4	31.4	31.4
	church members	10	28.6	28.6	60.0
	former church members	14	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Challenges

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		24	68.6	68.6	68.6
	lack of commitment	6	17.1	17.1	85.7
	poor church administration	2	5.7	5.7	91.4
	disunity in the church	2	5.7	5.7	97.1
	fiancial constraints	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Coping mechanisms

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	68.6	68.6	68.6
self motivation	5	14.3	14.3	82.9
prayer	3	8.6	8.6	91.4
training worship team members	1	2.9	2.9	94.3
recruting church members for service	1	2.9	2.9	97.1
tithing and offering	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Hindrances to church growth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	68.6	68.6	68.6
other religions such Islam	4	11.4	11.4	80.0
lack of evangelization	2	5.7	5.7	85.7
lack of attention to people's felt needs	2	5.7	5.7	91.4
power conversion methods of leading people to Christ	2	5.7	5.7	97.1
poor church facilities	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Suggestion for church growth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	68.6	68.6	68.6
meeting social needs	1	2.9	2.9	71.4
Attractive church program	1	2.9	2.9	74.3
improve on church facilities	1	2.9	2.9	77.1
advitize the church	2	5.7	5.7	82.9
Holy Spirit guidance	4	11.4	11.4	94.3
Pastors to stay longer	2	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Conversion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	71.4	71.4	71.4
Catholic Church	3	8.6	8.6	80.0
AIC	1	2.9	2.9	82.9
Good News church	2	5.7	5.7	88.6
All nations	4	11.4	11.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Experience in growth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	71.4	71.4	71.4
Bible study	4	11.4	11.4	82.9
prayers	5	14.3	14.3	97.1
discipleship	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Reasons for retention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	71.4	71.4	71.4
Good preaching	4	11.4	11.4	82.9
Loving and caring church	6	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Insight for changes in church

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	71.4	71.4	71.4
Sunday service	2	5.7	5.7	77.1
worship team	1	2.9	2.9	80.0
church program	7	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Strategies for church growth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	71.4	71.4	71.4
create more activities	4	11.4	11.4	82.9
relevant messages	2	5.7	5.7	88.6
attention to be given to visiting people	3	8.6	8.6	97.1
small cell group to be started	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Personal involvement

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	71.4	71.4	71.4
intercessor	3	8.6	8.6	80.0
worship team leader	1	2.9	2.9	82.9
evangelist	3	8.6	8.6	91.4
9	3	8.6	8.6	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Experience at GNAGC

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	60.0	60.0	60.0
loving and caring church	7	20.0	20.0	80.0
support from mother church	7	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Reasons for desertion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	60.0	60.0	60.0
inactive involvement in the ministry	4	11.4	11.4	71.4
conflicting visions	3	8.6	8.6	80.0
lack of church building	1	2.9	2.9	82.9
employment in other christian organization	2	5.7	5.7	88.6
marriage	4	11.4	11.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Preference for new church

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24	68.6	68.6	68.6
involvement in ministry	8	22.9	22.9	91.4
capacity building	2	5.7	5.7	97.1
good church leadership	1	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Suggestions for growth

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	60.0	60.0	60.0
active participation in the church	2	5.7	5.7	65.7
more prayers	2	5.7	5.7	71.4
discipleship to be strengthened	2	5.7	5.7	77.1
follow-up to be done	8	22.9	22.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	



23rd March, 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH WORK

The bearer of this letter, Mr. James Ouma is a student at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology and is doing research towards the completion of the Master of Arts in Missions degree. The research is on **“An Examination of Factors Affecting the Growth of Good News Africa Gospel Church in Nairobi, Kenya.”**

Any assistance that you can give to Mr. Ouma will be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

George L. Huttar, Ph.D

Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs

VITA

Personal data

Name: James Ouma
Date of birth: 25th April 1967
Marital Status : Married
Nationality : Kenyan

Academic Qualification

2005: Master of Arts in Mission Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology
1997: Advanced Diploma in Theology, Kenya Highlands Bible College
1986: UACE (A-level), Kololo High School
1983: Secondary Certificate, Kampala Secondary School
1979: UPLE Certificate, Nsambya Primary School

Work Experience

Foreman in building constructions at:
1989-1994: Africa Nazarene University (ANU)
2002-2003: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST)
1995-1997: Churches with Africa Gospel Church, Rift valley in Kenya

Ministry Experience at Faith-Love-Fellowship Church

1990-1994: Youth Leader and Sunday school Teacher
1992-1994: Evangelist
2000-2001: Assistant Pastor
2000-2001: Missionary/Pastor among the Massai of Kenya

Ministry Experience with Africa Gospel Church

1998: Assistant Pastor in Lake View Nakuru church
1998-1999: Church planter and senior pastor in Naivasha
2002-2005: Associate Pastor at Good news Africa Gospel church

Ministry Interest

Missionary/pastor
Church planting