

MISSION FIELDS IN GHANA: THE CHALLENGE OF UNREACHED PEOPLES

By Very Rev Dr Richard Foli

*Head, Religious Studies and Ethics Department, Methodist University
College Ghana*

Abstract

Although about 69% of Ghana's population profess to be Christians, there are many distinct groups within the total population that are "unreached" by the Church. This is a great challenge confronting the Church in Ghana. Attention is drawn to three mission fields which I have come up with in the course of my study of the Ghanaian church scene. These are: a) The neglected mission field, b) The unnoticed mission field, c) The forgotten mission field.

If the Church is to experience expansion (numerical) growth, extension growth and bridging growth, a consistent effort at reaching these groups of people with the gospel must be very high on the church's agenda. Priority attention is required in order to face the challenge of unreached peoples. To say that the Church cannot experience rapid growth without priority attention to the neglected, unnoticed and forgotten mission fields is not an overstatement.

Introduction

Nominalism, institutionalism, ethnocentrism and involvement in lodges have been identified as hindrances to church growth¹. Besides these hindrances are what one may identify as challenges to growth. In this article we turn attention to the challenge of unreached peoples since it is the right attitude by the Church in Ghana to these peoples that will ensure extension / bridging growth. The article looks at this challenge in the light of three mission fields identified in Ghana. The discussion includes the examination of proven ways of working among these various unreached peoples.

¹ Refer to my article titled "Hindrances to Church Growth in Ghana" submitted for publication in the next issue of *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*.

The Challenge

In Ghana today, after about 180 years of Christian mission, there are still many people who have not had any meaningful contact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Although about 69% of Ghana's population profess to be Christians², there are many distinct groups within the total population that are "unreached" by the Church.

The Lausanne Strategy Working Groups on Unreached People defined **a people** as:

*a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, class or cast, situation etc. or a combination of these*³

It is these cultural, linguistic and social similarities which give a group of people the sense of common identify so that they regard their groups as being "we" as opposed to others who are "they". The Lausanne Working Groups have not only sought to define a "people". They have also defined "unreached people" as:

*a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this group.*⁴

The implication of the above definition is not that the term "unreached people" simply refers to "unsaved people" everywhere. Rather, by the term "unreached people", reference is being made to ethno-linguistic or tribal groups without an indigenous community of believing Christians who have adequate numbers and resources to evangelize their own people without outside assistance. In other words the term refers to a significant group of people without a church that can reach its own people with the Gospel.

If the Church in Ghana is to experience total growth, which must include both Extension Growth and Bridging Growth, it must face the challenge posed by the various unreached peoples throughout the country. *Extension Growth* occurs when

² The 2000 Government census indicates that 69% of Ghana's population are professing Christians

³ R. Campbell (ed) National Consultation Resource Book (GEC), p.45.

⁴ *Loc.cit.*

congregations plant daughter churches among their own kinds of people in the neighbourhood, district or region. i.e. when a church decides, as a matter of policy, to extend the scope of its work to reach such people who are not in touch with any church. *Bridging Growth*, on the other hand, occurs when a church sets out deliberately to cross a linguistic or strong social, ethnic or racial barrier, and, in effect, plants a church in a new culture.

The Mission Fields

To enable the Church to grapple with the challenge of unreached peoples, these various peoples have to be identified first of all. I therefore draw attention to three mission fields which I have come up with in the course of my study of the Ghanaian church scene. These are namely,

- (a) the neglected mission field
- (b) the unnoticed mission field, and
- (c) the forgotten mission field

The Neglected Mission Field

The unreached peoples of Northern Ghana (the three northern regions namely, Upper West, Upper East and Northern) constitute a formidable challenge to the Church. Referring to this part of Ghana as the neglected mission field does not imply that the Church has not done anything at all in terms of evangelization. The point that is being made is that compared to the southern Ghana regions, there is a great imbalance in the distribution of spiritual, manpower and material resources of the Church. According to the Ghana Evangelism Committee (GEC) report,

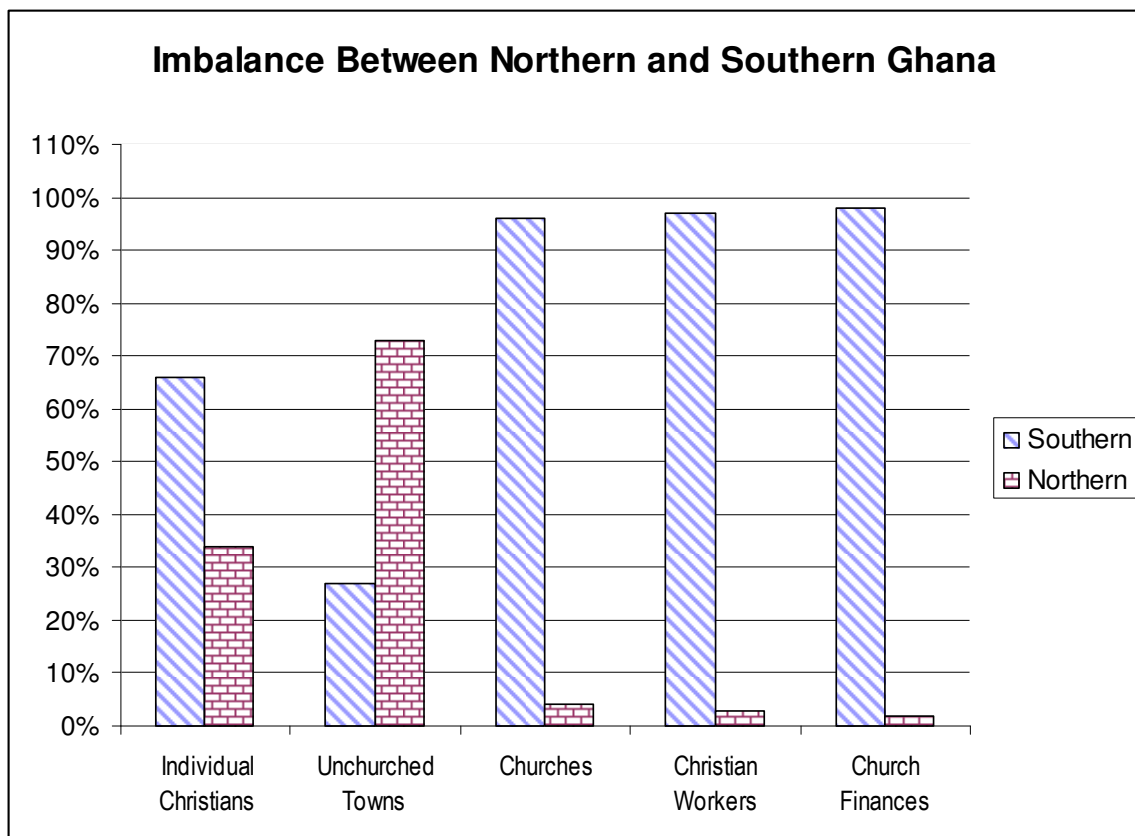
only 4% of churches, 3% of full-time Christian workers and less than 2% of church finances serve northern and alien peoples⁵.

There are forty (40) or more distinct people groups scattered over this part of Ghana in varying densities. People with different histories and customs; speaking many different languages and dialects; giving allegiance to different

⁵ October – December 1990 issue of “**THE TASK**”, published by the GEC.

gods and religions; governed by differing authority structures and struggling to live by a variety of subsistence occupations. These peoples living in this part of Ghana which is about 41% of the country's land area, constitute a vast mosaic of peoples waiting to be reached by the Church.

From the Ghana Evangelism Committee survey⁶ we find that over three (3) million of Ghana's population living in the three northern regions are unreached. These 3 million unreached people are made up of 40 or more people groups in 5,309 unchurched towns and villages. Indeed as we look at the Church as a whole in Ghana this great imbalance is clearly evident. It is more glaring from the following graph:



Of the 27,186 Churches reported in 1993 only 1,584 are to be found in the three northern regions. The breakdown of this number of churches in this part of Ghana is Northern Region – 970, Upper West – 229 and Upper East – 385.

⁶ The Ghana Evangelism Committee (GEC) undertook two national surveys in 1988 and 1993.

One could cite geographical isolation, linguistic and cultural differences, the binding power of Islam and traditional religion, lack of education and development as reasons for the slow progress of the Church in Northern Ghana. These reasons are not wholly tenable if one considers the fact that the Roman Catholic Church in this part of Ghana has managed to establish as many as 582 congregations.

The Unnoticed Mission Field

Peoples of northern and West African tribal origin in the seven southern regions of Ghana (i.e. Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Western, Eastern, Central, Volta and Greater Accra) represent a vast, unnoticed mission field. Their population of 2,020,700 is 18% of Ghana's population. They are classified 'unnoticed' because they do not appear to be in the reckoning of the leadership of the southern churches when it comes to plans for outreach. The GEC survey⁷ reveals the following about the unreached peoples designated "unnoticed mission field" in this work:

- (a) The number of northern and alien people living in the Ashanti Region is greater than the population of the Upper West Region.
- (b) The number of northern and alien people living in the seven southern regions is greater than the combined populations of Northern and Upper West Regions
- (c) 43% of all peoples of northern or West African ethnic origin in Ghana live in the southern regions.
- (d) The current northern and alien population in Accra alone is estimated to be 270,000 (i.e. 24% of the population).

Although these 2 million northern and alien people live in a geographical area served by 20,800 churches, the GEC survey shows that only ninety (90) of these churches primarily serve northern or alien communities. "Of the ninety, eighty-one (81) are to be found in the rural savanna areas of the Volta and Brong Ahafo regions..."⁸

⁷ R. Campbell (ed) *National Church Survey* (GEC, 1989), p.119

⁸ *Loc.cit.*

Certain Church denominations and Mission bodies have made tangible commitments of personnel and resources to specific unreached people groups in southern Ghana. The Presbyterian Church for instance, has targeted the Balsa, Frafra, Kasena and Kusasi peoples in Accra-Tema, Sekondi-Takoradi, Akwapim ridge, Koforidua and Kumasi. The Church has actually appointed five pastors, two in Accra, one in Kumasi, one in Sunyani and one in Takoradi as full-time co-ordinators of Northern migrant outreach. It is interesting to note that the Bantama Presbyterian Church in Kumasi has two Northern congregations – one for Frafra and another one for the Kasena.

Mention should be made, of the efforts of some Methodist churches in this direction. Mount Olivet Methodist Church in Accra has a Balsa congregation at Sukura in Accra. The Immanuel Methodist Church in Tema is also working among the Frafra people. The Kumasi District, in its report to the Methodist Conference in 1992 wrote:

The Kumasi District has taken up the challenge to reach the Northerners in the Kumasi metropolis. Currently a Frafra Society with an average membership of 30 is being nursed in the Kumasi circuit. A 3-day Open-air meeting recently conducted at the Central Market with the Frafra community in view brought in many more Frafra. The Kusasi mono-ethnic Group is now our target.⁹

A more systematic approach by the various denominations to reach these northern and alien people groups will no doubt contribute to the growth of the Church in Ghana.

The Forgotten Mission Field

Churches in Ghana today face the challenge of a great number of unchurched towns and villages. People in this “forgotten” mission field are mostly subsistence farmers and fishermen. They are mostly illiterates who are in the grip of traditional religious beliefs and practices. In terms of development these rural people lack good drinking water, electricity and health services. Once again it must be made clear that talking about the “forgotten” mission field does not imply that the Church does not have some

⁹ Methodist Church Ghana “Representative Session Agenda”, 1992 (Supplement), p.12

congregations in any of these rural areas. The point being made is that there is a general tendency of church leadership being pre-occupied with their immediate environment- “forgetting” people living in rural areas.

The GEC survey reveals that 68% of the 21,000 rural towns and villages have no regular Protestant Sunday worship service. These 14,000 or so unchurched towns and villages constitute what is designated the “*forgotten mission field*” in this work.

This designation is in place especially if we look at the situation in the seven southern Ghana regions. It must be noted that the 2000 Government census shows that 63% of the population of these seven regions is rural (i.e. towns and villages of less than 5,000 people). The following table shows how grave the situation is in these rural areas in southern Ghana.

Table on Population figures of Towns and Villages

<i>Population</i>						
	<i>Enumeration Areas</i>	<i>1001-5000</i>	<i>601-1000</i>	<i>301-600</i>	<i>50-300</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total						
Numbers in						
The South	5,803	1,300	1,120	2,338	10,197	20,758
Numbers						
Unchurched	1,213	50	146	800	8,406	10,815
%						
Unchurched	21%	4%	13%	34%	82%	52%

Currently it would appear that the initiative for pioneer church planting in unchurched villages is seen among the African Independent and Ghana Pentecostal Council churches. The Christian Council Churches have to “remember” these rural people in their outreach programmes in order to experience total church growth.

Reaching the mission fields

If the Church is to experience expansion (numerical) growth, extension growth and bridging growth, a consistent effort at reaching these groups of people with the gospel

must be very high on the church's agenda. Priority attention is required in order to face the challenge of unreached peoples. To say that the Church cannot experience rapid (total) growth without priority attention to the neglected, unnoticed and forgotten mission fields is not an overstatement.

The issue that needs to engage our attention in the remaining paragraphs of this article is how the Church in Ghana can effectively reach these mission fields. The following are recommended as ways of reaching the various fields:

The Neglected mission field

The people groups of northern Ghana are largely unreached – lacking “an indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their group” without outside help. Mission research by scholars like Donald A. McGavran, John B. Robb and Jim Montgomery reveals that people who do not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are reached most effectively when they are approached with a strategy of aggressive evangelism and church planting that is relevant to the attitudes, values and behaviour that make up their culture. This fact is clearly behind the following observation by the Ghana Evangelism Committee made in “The Task” ¹⁰(issues 12-15):

The growth and multiplication of communities of believers in every class of people, every ethnic group and every geographical locality is God's simple strategy for an evangelized Ghana.

This means that we need to reach groups of people by understanding their world and presenting Christ in the context of their language, culture and value system. It has in fact been found that churches grow most rapidly when they consist of just one people group. This is neither a matter of excluding others nor encouraging tribal churches, but of enjoying fellowship with one's own people. This is the idea held by missiologists which John Robb designates “People Group Thinking” He says,

¹⁰ “The Task” is a quarterly newsletter published by the GEC

People group thinking is an approach to ministry. It refers to that process by which those engaged in evangelism and/or social service first become conscious of the diversity of people groups in their society. They then design and carry out ministry efforts that take into account the uniqueness of the particular group or groups with which they have chosen to work¹¹

Though the phrase or designation “People Group Thinking” is a modern terminology, the concept, one observes, has its roots in God’s strategy for bringing redemption to the human race. Originally it emanates from Yahweh’s redemptive purpose which clearly encompasses all the people groups of the world. From the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 onward through Bible history, God’s concern has always been that the blessings of His redemption flow to all peoples and to the people groups within them.

Research conducted by Peter Barker¹² has revealed that the area being referred to as the “neglected mission field” (i.e. Northern Ghana) has not less than forty (40) distinct people groups. There are many instances where a town or even a village may be inhabited by more than one people group – groups of people who have nothing at all in common. They are homogeneous units who are ethnically, culturally and linguistically distinct from one another.

All denominations need to take steps towards moving the Church more meaningfully to this “neglected mission field” mindful of the people group concept discussed. In moving to this particular mission field, it is essential to the impact, appropriateness, and success of ministry to become conscious of the diversity of people groups that may be present, rather than unwittingly lumping them all together according to geographical criteria alone. To reiterate the need for “people group thinking” in future missionary ventures in Northern Ghana by the Church, three points must be made.

First, the people group concept affirms that every group of people not only have their own unique identity, but appreciate that common identity. They feel “at home” amongst

¹¹ John B. Robb, *The Power of People Group Thinking* (California MARC, 1989), p.13

¹² Peter Barker did a detailed study of the peoples of Northern Ghana leading to the publication of xxxxxx

their own people as they speak their own language, and discuss issues relating to their own families and villages. It is for this reason that people of the same language enjoy coming to worship God together in their own language, and in their own way.

Secondly, the people group concept leads us to start planning with the people to be ministered to, rather than with a programme to be administered. Time must be given to understand the particular people and see what problems they are facing. This will allow for the development of methods of evangelism which will be relevant and effective for that particular people. This is because no one strategy will be equally effective for all people-groups.

Thirdly, the people group concept allows one to see new goals for the missionary task. The task can be seen to be not just the making of converts, but the planting of living Christian fellowships within every people-group. These Christians will in turn reach out to their own people, and draw them into their own people-group churches where they will be able to worship God in their own culture, and hearing the scriptures read and preached in their first language.

The task of the Church in the “neglected” mission field of the three northern Ghana regions calls for the following strategies, among others:

- (a) Prioritizing missionary outreach to particular people-groups
- (b) Re-deploying gifted personnel from maintenance ministries in the south to missionary outreach in the north
- (c) Making long term missionary appointments rather than short term pastoral transfers
- (d) Providing cross-cultural orientation for all workers assigned to the north
- (e) Assigning workers to specific people-groups and encouraging them to learn the language of their target people
- (f) Planting indigenous churches and developing indigenous leadership

The Unnoticed Mission Field

We now turn to what has been designated *unnoticed mission field* (i.e. the over 2 million unreached northern and alien tribal people in the south). As indicated earlier in this article, the Church in Ghana as a whole is yet to make these unreached people-groups in the south a target of her missionary ventures. This is because churches have failed to recognize the extent of the mission field in their midst, or their responsibility to reach these northern and alien people. Also churches have mistakenly written off all northern and alien people migrating in large numbers to the south as Muslims perhaps because of their mode of dressing. Yet the majority of these tribes like the Balsa, Frafra, Kasena, Dagaare, Kusasi and Bimoba peoples are rather adherents of traditional religion.

It is true also to say that churches in the south are pre-occupied with themselves and in fact shun northern people because of their lower social status. Even when attempts have been made at evangelizing these people-groups, inappropriate and culturally insensitive methods have been used. An example is the “hit and run” crusades in the zongos, which are essentially open air preaching without any attempt at consolidating gains made through the follow-up of converts..

Recent efforts by southern churches in Accra and Kumasi to penetrate some of these people-groups have produced encouraging results. Mr. Lawrence Larewanu, former Urban Mission Director for GEC, who is himself a northerner, introduces the idea of mono-ethnic churches with the following facts about northerners migrating to the south:

The typical Northerner leaves his homeland for the south to break from poverty caused by impoverished farmlands and traditions militating against progress. He comes to the city of the south with little or no education to gain a good job. He therefore has to ‘perch’ on a brother or kinsman till he finds work. This is usually some menial job such as houseboy, labourer, watchman, cook, steward or fufu pounding. He resents being looked down upon by southerners, and seeks little contact with them outside working hours. He sees churches as a ‘southerners’

*affair' and wants no part in it. On the positive side he is freed of many traditional restrictions, which makes him more open to new ideas. There is therefore an opportunity of presenting the Christian faith.*¹³

Rev. Sule Saa¹⁴ thinks that Southern churches do not welcome Northerners into their midst. No provision is made for the peoples of Northern Ghana in the churches. As a result, unless a Northerner can speak Akan, Ga or English he can never benefit by going to church. Even those Northern Christians who go to church often do not feel much at home. Sule Saa makes reference to Dr. Dovlo's article on the growth of the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P.) Church outside the Volta Region to stress the issue of "a feeling of being foreigners" in southern churches. In the case of the E.P. Church, the Ewes found themselves in the same situation as the Northerners in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana's congregations, which use Ga and Twi.

Sule Saa claims that the only exception is the Catholic Church, which "in the case of the Northerners, was very sensitive and innovative. For example, in the Nima St. Kizito church, there were masses in Dagare, Buli, Kasem, Frafra etc. which are Northern languages. There were also recognised groups for the different ethnic groups. Northerners were fully integrated into the church. They were therefore, in the church not as observers as pertained in the Protestant churches, but participants".

The "unnoticed" people groups in the urban south thus constitute a very receptive mission field, but how do we approach them? Let us have a look at the steps suggested for church planting among Northern People groups in the Urban South. Before enumerating the suggested steps for planting mono-ethnic Northern Community churches, I quote below a testimony by Lawrence Larewanu in this regard:

Worldwide it has been proven that mono-ethnic churches grow fastest. In conjunction with the Assemblies of God Church, the Baptist Church and the Evangelical Churches of Ghana, the Ghana Evangelism Committee

¹³ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁴ Sule Saa, S. S. "The Emergence of the Northern Outreach Programme and its impact within the Presbyterian Church of Ghana" (A Long Essay – University of Ghana), p.28-29. Sule Saa, also a Northerner, is a key figure in the NOP of the Presbyterian Church.

*has in the past few months pioneered the establishment of four churches For Kasenas, Nankanis, Frafras and Bulsas. The Church members see these churches as their own and they keep inviting their own brothers, sisters, relatives and kinsmen to these meetings.*¹⁵

The following steps¹⁶

1. Identify the residential areas of Northerners within the city
2. Survey the area to find out the dominant Northern people groups
3. Prayerfully target one ethnic group amongst whom to work
4. Learn the beliefs and traditions of the selected people group
5. See contact person (s) to lead you into the community. This could be a Northern Christian in a Southern Church.
6. Upon entering the community, approach them through their traditional leaders/elders/chiefs and share the Gospel. Use other avenues like tribal association meetings, house visitation, and adult literacy in mother tongue and stress the need for their own distinct congregation.
7. Establish the church in the neighbourhood. Continually visit the people and share their problems.

Note the following **DO NOT'S** of evangelizing Northerners:

1. Don't mount crusades. Northerners will not leave their houses to come to the meeting. Instead, go to their houses.
2. Don't expect them to travel long distances to church. They neither have the time nor the money.
3. Don't expect them to be assimilated into our southern church system. The social prejudice between the Northerner and the Southerner is a barrier.
4. Don't lay financial burdens on them. It will scare them.
5. Don't impose a full-time pastor on them. They would not be able to support him.

¹⁵ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁶ These steps emerged as a very effective strategy in the NOP whose target is northern people in southern Ghana. Other minority tribal groups who have migrated to the south (and are, indeed, part of the unnoticed mission field) could be reached through a similar strategy.

Also consider carefully the following:

1. They are first generation Christians, and as such know virtually nothing about the scriptures. Start from scratch and take nothing for granted.
2. Contextualize the Gospel by learning their beliefs, traditions, etc.
3. Be sympathetic to their problems and address yourself to issues like polygamy, drinking, smoking, gambling (lotto staking).
4. Be careful to groom up the more promising Christians to take on leadership roles.

The Forgotten Mission Fields

Finally, we turn to the third mission field (*the forgotten mission field*) which represents the 14,000 or so unchurched towns and villages throughout this country and in particular the nearly 11,000 towns and villages in the south.

One task is paramount for the welfare and good of mankind, and that is effective evangelization resulting in the multiplication of churches. In fact it is only when a consistent effort is made to saturate the length and breadth of the country with vibrant, self-propagating churches that we can talk about fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Win Arn has rightly said:

*The **goal** of the Great Commission ... is the establishment of a cell (church) of committed Christians in every community, every neighbourhood, every class and condition of people where everyone can hear and see demonstrated the Gospel from his own intimates, in his own tongue, and has a reasonable opportunity to become a disciple of Jesus Christ¹⁷.*

Dr. Jim Montgomery, in a paper written in 1982, explains that although the Bible does not give a disciplined nation in quantitative terms, “we do know that Jesus died for every single person in every nation”¹⁸ That is, every person who confesses his sin, who repents, who puts his faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord is saved. This endorses

¹⁷ W. Arn, “A Church Growth Look at Here’s Life America”, *Church Growth:America* (Jan/Feb.,1977) Vol.3, p.430

¹⁸ J. Montgomery, *The Discipling of a Nation* (Santa Clara, CA: GLOBAL CHURCH GROWTH,1982)

the fact that Jesus is not willing “that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

Attempts should therefore be made to take the Gospel to every person in every people-group in the country in such a way that each person has a real opportunity to accept or reject the claims of Jesus Christ. This will be possible when churches work at the goal of establishing at least one cell or congregation of committed Christians in every rural village and every town and city neighbourhood among every tribe and condition of people. Many prominent missiologists and researchers share this idea. Dr Donald McGavran has written that “... giving opportunity to all men to appropriate salvation can truly be done by establishing millions of congregations of practicing Christians ideally *one in every small community of men*”¹⁹ (emphasis mine).

The activity called for is a multiplication of Christian congregations until an area is saturated with them. Attempting to finish the task therefore implies what may be called saturation church planting.

If fulfilling the Great Commission (the supreme task of the church) involves the planting of self-propagating churches all over the country, we would be right to say that the unfinished task in this respect is great indeed.

How can churches be started in the many unchurched communities? We need a plan of action – a guide about how to get the job done. It cannot be over-emphasized that there is a great opportunity for a tremendous church planting thrust by the Church in Ghana. But how do we go about the task? What is the process? It is impossible to give a specific ‘how to’ guide to church planting as if it is simply a matter of mechanically taking a certain number of prescribed steps. Each circumstance obviously requires a fresh approach and the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. Melvin L. Hodges indicates that there are at least eight basic steps that may be taken to ensure some amount of success in church planting in his book, ***A Guide to Planting and Development***.

¹⁹ D.A. McGavran, “imperialism and Church Multiplication”, *Church Growth Bulletin* 1967, Vol. III, p.225

These steps, which have been proven here in Ghana, are listed below for a close study, and consideration by all ministers, pastors, catechists, caretakers and other leaders with pastoral responsibilities.

1. Impart a Vision and build a commitment to church planting in your Church

Teach and discuss the Biblical perspective of church planting with your church to prepare it spiritually. Develop a mentality for church planting by involving your lay leaders and members in looking at the possibilities of church planting in your area.

2. Pray and plan for church planting

Prayer is foundational. As you teach your church members about why more churches are needed, encourage them to pray for God's power in starting new churches. While planning is essential praying and planning must go together. The remaining six points in this outline will be a guide to your praying and planning for church planting.

3. Mobilize helpers

At least two or three helpers are needed to give leadership together with a much larger team from your church. They must be Christians who have love for lost people and desire to win them for Christ. Think about leaders and members of your church whom you believe have a heart for God and the potential for a church planting ministry. Challenge them to join you in the task.

4. Identify possible localities

Identify possible localities where a new church may be needed. Once you have pinpointed several possible locations go with your key leaders and survey the areas. Find out how many people live there, what languages they speak, what churches if any, if some of your members or former members live there, if there is a possible place for meeting, etc.

5. Decide on an appropriate method

There are many different methods of making contact with those you wish to reach. These are house-to-house visitation, evangelistic compound Bible study, open air

preaching (e.g. Sowers), film shows, use of bible courses (e.g. Project Philip courses), prayer cells in homes, fraternizing with fellow tribesmen- especially if a minority tribe, crusades, camp meetings, etc. Choose the method you feel is most appropriate for the target people and your manpower and material resources.

6. Find a meeting place

As you make contact with the people of the target area and they respond, ask about the possibilities of a regular meeting place. Obviously there can be no church without regular meetings for worship, fellowship and teaching. Here are some possibilities: in a home, a school, under a tree, in a community building, in a temporary shelter (e.g. of bamboo and palm frond). See that the place chosen is conveniently located and is as attractive and as comfortable as possible. Don't swamp the new believers with financial burdens for buildings that will divert them from quickly becoming a reproducing church.

7. Begin the meetings

Get started at once. Meetings for worship, teaching and fellowship are at the very heart of the Christian life. The early Christians met often for worship, prayer, teaching and fellowship (Acts 2:42-47). It is not necessary to have a 'preacher' before you start. One of the best kinds of meetings for a new church is a Bible reading or study meeting. Find a gifted bible study leader – (one who doesn't do all the talking himself but involves others) and get started. Simplified outlines of relevant portions from "Our Methodist Faith" and "Watching over one another in Love" published by the Methodist Church, Ghana will be invaluable in this. 'New Life for All' Bible study materials like "Message of News Life", "Going on in New Life", "You are My Witnesses" and "Answers to Live By" published by the Ghana Evangelism Committee have proved very effective in the past. These are recommended to all ministers and leaders.

8. Find and Train Leadership

Initially members of your team will stay with the new church to guide the development. But as early as possible in the life of the new church find and train a leader from the area who will continue the work. He should be someone with a

shepherd's heart and the ability to teach and train others. Seek for a man or woman who can grow to become a real spiritual leader in the church.

Conclusion

This article has been concerned with a major challenge to the Ghanaian Church – the challenge of unreached peoples. The three mission fields discussed are all very responsive to the Gospel especially if contextualized. They should, accordingly, receive the full attention of the Church to ensure expansion and extension/bridging growth. One hopes that the suggestions given in the course of the foregoing discussion would help both the leadership and the generality of membership of the Church in Ghana to handle the challenge.

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