

An Appraisal of Missions in the Calvary Grace Bible Church, Oyo, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study appraises Missionary activities in the Calvary Grace Bible Church, Inc in the light of Paul Missiology. The main focus of this study was on the methods and impacts of both ministries in the contemporary world. It was established that although methods can vary with time and place but the principles remain the same. Some mission strategies that were not known to Paul were seen adopted in the Calvary Grace Bible Church. But both missions are seen addressing issues as occasions allow it. It was therefore recommended that we must do as much as possible to care for the physical needs of our members and especially the needy ones in our community and also use our stewardship of "influence or connection" to find jobs for numerous Christian that are around us.

Keywords: Missions, Church, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The preaching of the gospel began in a wholly Jewish situation. The first Christians were Jews, and they continued to live and worship like Jew. The main difference between the Christian Jew and the traditional Jew was that the one believed in the Messiah who had come, who had been crucified and resurrected from the dead; the other believed in a messiah who was still to come. The Christian Jews continued to observe temple worship, circumcision, the Sabbath, and all the other matters of the Mosaic Law. When gospel went to the Gentiles, Jewish Christians expected Gentiles believers to be circumcised before they can be baptized. In short, they demanded that Gentiles become Jews before they could become Christians. Paul never agreed with this Jewish Christian view of the gospel. He held that Gentiles believers could be baptized as Gentiles (Akano, 2015:159).

The correctness of Paul's position was put to the test at the end of his first missionary journey. When, on his arrival in Antioch, he reported the conversion of the Gentiles, some Christians came from Jerusalem with the teaching, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). This was the important matter that confronted the church. Paul presented the case before the council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem. After a long debate, the council agreed with Paul, but it asked the Gentile believers not to offend Jewish Christians by conduct with respect to certain Jewish customs (Acts 15:12-21) (Akano 2015). Paul's drastic approach to Christian values and practices attracts the interest and attention of scholars across ages and the globe. This also is the main thrust of this study as this researcher intends to evaluate the missionary activities in the Calvary Grace Bible Church, Inc. in the light of Pauline Missiology. Important in this work, as we shall see the methods, impacts, and the related segments.

2. The Methods And Impact Of Paul's Missionary Activities

Many things have been said and written on Paul, and his mission works. It is the view of some scholars that Paul ranks next, only to Jesus, in prominence and influence on Christian theology and missions. Hauer and Young (1994), in particular, note that Paul stands next after Jesus in terms of influence. According to Fuller (2001), "Paul was a powerful missionary model. He told people in 1 Corinthians 4:16 and Philippians 3:17 to emulate him and his colleagues" (p. 29). In a shortened form, Fuller (2001) later gives Paul's methods of Evangelism as follows: Paul had a traveling ministry. After evangelizing and gathering a church, he set up local leaders (Acts 14:23) and

moved on, coming back to visit them (15:36, 41) and writing to them from time to time. He used the Jewish community, if there was one, as a starting point, and got converts from it who knew the Old Testament and understood something of God. He went to larger cities that became centers to evangelizing the rural areas around them (Acts 19:10, 26; Col. 1:7-8). He used signs and wonders (Rom. 15:19). And he supported himself most of the time by making tents (Acts 18:3; 2Thess. 3&-10).

McCain (2004) and Greenway (1999) give deeper and more detailed analyses of these methods in their respective books. While McCain identifies eight methods that Paul used in his missionary endeavors, Greenway accordingly identifies seven, summing up Paul's methods to fifteen he used in the course of his missionary career. McCain's eight Pauline methods are:

- Concentration on population centers
- Beginning with the Jews and expanding to the Gentiles
- Focusing on leaders and people of influence
- Use of team effort
- Use of the supernatural in Evangelism
- Use of discipleship and follow-up
- Taking advantage of his personal strengths and natural advantages.
- Taking advantage of natural opportunities that afford.

In the same perspective, Greenway gives the following seven methods:

- The confrontation of people with the saviourhood and Lordship of Christ and urging them to submit their hearts and lives to Him.
- Focus on families and households in both Evangelism and outreach into society.
- Stressing of the importance of planting and nurturing churches and communities of faith, worship, followership, and service.
- Concentrating on developing local leaders in the churches and placing them in charge as soon as possible
- Use of natural "bridges" of families, relatives, friends, and contacts in spreading the gospel.
- Starting of "house churches" everywhere he went, which became living cells of the body of Christ.
- Teaching believers to promote justice, truth, and mercy in society and care for the Lord's earth.

After a careful examination of these methods given by the two scholars above, ten different methods were extracted, determined, and established. With respect to the impact of Paul's mission on the church, one can say with confidence that the fact that he set the pace for others to follow in all Christian matters remains a universal truth. Writing on what he calls "Pauline Mission," Boer (1976:22) states that "thus began the Christian life and the missionary career of the man better known to all as Paul, who became the father of Gentile mission and the author of nearly one-fourth of the New Testament." He further says that "The thirty years following his conversion were of the greatest importance for the life of the church." It was Paul who created Christian. Before he did so, the Nazarenes (those who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ after His death), was a Jewish set. Paul brought in various esoteric thoughts and pagan ideas and applied them to his own ideas about Jesus Christ. He also expanded his mission to the Gentiles. As a result, Christianity moved away from its Jewish roots. The Gentile influence subsequently resulted in additional pagan beliefs being applied to the gospel of Jesus, such as the virgin birth. When the gospels were written decades later, the original story of Jesus

Christ was modified to reflect many of these extraneous ideas. Jesus undoubtedly would have been horrified by much of what Paul brought into the church, particularly his deification. Paul is not more or less the founder of Christianity as it exists outside the Middle East proper. He founded the early churches outside of the holy lands and spent the rest of his life offering them guidance and advice (which we will have in the form of the Pauline letter waking up a huge portion of the New Testament). He also serves as a remarkable example of redemption because he was well known for his persecution of Christians prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus. Paul identified his apostolic message with that of the Old Testament Prophets, by saying that the gospel contains what the Old Testament prophets have foretold. They prophesied the death and resurrection of Jesus and that He would be light to the Gentiles. The difference between Paul's message and Old Testament Prophets is that while the prophets foretold the coming of Jesus, preached the fulfillment of the prophetic message. He became a servant and a witness after the Damascus road experience. His own mission is stated in Acts 26:18 thus:

"To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

Boer (1976) gives three main areas in the affairs of the church; this study calls the impact of Paul's missionary activities. The contributions include the establishment of the gospel in foreign nations like Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, allowing Gentiles to be a true worshipper of Yahweh without forcing them to go through circumcision and other Jewish rituals and his body of letters. Among the churches, Paul founded in foreign countries that stand out for both strategic importance and for the length of time he labored in them are Ephesus and Corinth. About twelve years, Boer says, "lie between Paul's conversion and his first missionary journey (A.D. 36-48").

3. History Of The Church

The Calvary started was founded in Araromi (Oyo East Local Government area) in 1988 under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Femi Afolabi. Calvary Grace Evangelical Ministries is seven-fold ministries hence the pluralization of the name as Ministries. The seven arms are:

- Calvary Grace Bible Church
- Calvary Grace Home Mission (including Media)
- Calvary Grace Foreign Mission
- Calvary Grace Campus Church
- Calvary Grace Financial Project
- Calvary Grace Educational Project
- Calvary Grace Literature Ministry (Afolabi, 2014:26).

The Ministry was registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission with the following members of Board of Trustees:

- Revd. Dr. Femi A. Afolabi-----General Overseer
- Pastor Ruth Adeoti Afolabi-----Member
- Pastor Moses Adewusi-----Member
- Pastor Solomon Kolade-----Member
- Elder Muritala Aworinde (now late)—Member

It was registered with the Number 12648 on February 3, 2000.

The Lord has helped the Ministries to plant churches at Iseyin, Ondo, Ile-Ife, Ila Orangun, Ilorin, Jikwoyi (Abuja FCT), Kurudu (Abuja FCT), Haikimi (Abuja FCT), Jaina (Abuja FCT), Aawe Town, Tobacco area Oyo, Jagun (Oyo), Emmanuel Alayande Campus (Oyo), Isale-Oyo (Oyo) (Afolabi, 2014:31).

4. The History of Rev. Dr. Femi A. Afolabi

Femi Adejare, Afolabi was born in 1956 to the family Pa and Madam Afolabi in Oyo Town, Oyo State. Both parents were committed members of Christ Apostolic Church, Oke-Isegun, Baago, Oyo. Thus Femi Afolabi was brought up in an atmosphere of Christian religious influence and activities. There is no doubt that parents are the primary agents of helping children to cultivate beliefs and practices (Falaye, 2010:146). Thus the Christian home is a good ground for introducing the children to the basic doctrine of Christianity in practice and faith. According to Falaye, children can be trained to study and appreciate the word of God before being exposed to the external influence of their peers and colleagues outside the corridors of their homes (Falaye, 2010:146). Falaye, quoting Roberts Liardon even advised parents that they should let their children to be occupied with the move of God as it is essential and important to the teaching and training of the children in the things of God (Falaye, 2010:146).

Though, this belief may be opposed to some children who distanced themselves from the ways of God in spite of the fact that their parents were ablaze for the Lord. Such examples include the children of Eli, Samuel (1Samuel 3-4, 8:1-4). We must not overlook cases where some great men of God brought up and nurture from ungodly or idolatrous homes. For example, Abraham was brought up by idol worshippers before God called (Gen. 12:1-3). Binta Jalingo, a great Evangelist, came from a Muslim home. Falaye made mention of Argyle and Beit – Hallahmi, who argued that many factors determine the religious attitude of individuals. According to him, few of them are hereditary, while a large percentage is environmental (Falaye, 2010:147).

Femi Afolabi attended St. Michael Anglican Primary School, Kano, in Kano State of Nigeria between 1961 and 1968. After his primary school education, he gained admission to Oranyan Grammar School, Oyo, in 1969 and graduated in 1973. He proceeded to St. Andrew's College of Education, now Emanuel Alayande College of Education in 1974, for one year Grade II Teacher Training course. He later gained admission into the Federal College of Education in Dustsin-ma, Kastina state between 1976 and 1979 for his National Certificate in Education, after which he has his NYSC in Mubi, Gongola State because those are the years when NCE graduates were allowed to serve their nation. He went to the University of Ilorin for a first degree in Education from 1982 to 1985 when he studied Educational technology and also bagged his Master's degree and Ph.D. in Educational Technology in 1990-1992 and 2002-2006 respectively (Afolabi 2019). He attended the Proof

Producers Bible College in Ibadan/Oyo campus in the year 1993 for his Diploma in Theology and was fully ordained as the minister of the gospel in that year. Femi Afolabi's working career dates back to 1979 when he worked as a primary and Secondary school teacher (Afolabi 2019). He gained employment with the government of Oyo State after his Masters in Educational Technology in 1993 as a lecturer at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education Oyo, and he retired as a chief lecturer from the Department of Educational Technology in the year 2017 (Afolabi 2019).

Before December 1, 1973, Femi Afolabi was a young boy who was full of himself. He said:

"I walked tall and often basked in the euphoria of my academic achievements. All through my study in Oranyan Grammar School, Oyo, in Oyo State between 1968 and 1973, there was hardly a subject I did not receive a prize for at the end of each session. If I did not come first, it would be second or third. Girls in the school wanted to associate with me, and I was the focus of every student. I was the boy to beat. Even though I was active in the Students' Christian Movement (SCM), I had no touch with heaven at all; I was full of pride. I considered all my achievements as being the result of my personal effort" (Afolabi 2014:5-6).

He graduated from Oranyan Grammar School, Oyo, in June 1973 but could not gain admission to any University in Nigeria. His dream of becoming a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and a world-renown Conference Speaker became dashed because he has P7 in English Language. His pride beclouded his reasoning, and he decided not to retake the examination. So, he traveled to his elder sister, who was resided in Ibadan to get a job at the Kingsway Stores where she was working then. He considered this a face-saving plan, not knowing that God knew all that was about to happen to him. According to him, "That memorable day came December 1, 1973, by 8 pm, in that big church. There was no altar call, no invitation; in fact, there was no salvation message. Senior Apostle Joseph T. Durojaye was leading a prayer session; while we were praying, I fell into a trance and saw a man carried a kettle of water and was running along a path. I saw myself running after him with great thirst, and instantly the trance went off" (Afolabi 2014:7). The service ended, and they went home. He then asked his aunt, Mrs. Deborah A. Fasoyin, what the revelation meant for, and she said that she has been interceding for him for a long period of time and that it was time for him to give his life to God by accepting Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. Having listened to his aunt's explanation of the revelation, he then gave his life to Jesus Christ

in her home on the same day, and his life was changed.

This testimony tends to confirm that there is a world of difference between being born into a Christian home and being born again. In other words, parental faith cannot confer upon a person the experience of spiritual rebirth. According to Falaye, Regeneration means that change of heart and nature, which a man goes through when he becomes a true Christian (Falaye 2010:149). Falaye says this change of heart in a true Christian is so complete, that no word could be chosen more fitting to express it than that word, "Regeneration" or "New Birth." He explains further; doubtless, it is no outward bodily alteration, but undoubtedly it is an entire alteration of the inner man. It adds no new faculties to a man's mind, but it certainly gives an entirely new bent and bias to all his old ones. His will is so new, his opinions so new, his views of sin, the world, the Bible, and Christ so new, that he is to all intents and purposes a new man (Falaye 2010:149). Apart from this foregoing personal encounter, Femi Afolabi claimed that he was divinely called into the Ministry. Generally, all Pentecostals believe in two kinds of calls. Falaye explains that there is the universal Christian call, and there is a specific call of individuals to special assignments by God. He goes further to explain that the great commission: "Go ye into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Matt. 28:19-20) represents a general call of God meant for all who profess faith in Christ the Saviour. Hence every born again Christian by virtue of that commission is qualified to be a preacher and minister of the word of God (Falaye 2010:150). On the other hand, he explains that there are those who receive specific calls to begin a church or Ministry in order to meet a spiritual vacuum for the spiritual development of his people (Falaye). Femi Afolabi got married in 1981 to his heart rob Ruth Adeoti Afolabi, and the marriage is blessed with godly children.

5. The Vision And Mission Statements Of Cgrem

As clearly listed in a book written by Rev. Dr. Femi Afolabi during his fortieth anniversary on the Pulpit that was held in 2014 at the headquarter, Oyo. The following are described as the Vision and Mission Statement of the Ministry:

- To preach GRACE to those who are ignorant of it.
- To demonstrate love, Jesus' way leading to Evangelism and good human relation.
- To plant churches anywhere, the Lord opens the door and provides the shepherd.

- To demonstrate and preach Jesus' type of holiness in the inward-man, outwardly, and an attitude to life affairs.
- To emphasize a cross-bearing life and victory over M.R. FLESH (Afolabi 2014: 32).

The growth of the church in number, structure, and quality goes on as the Lord permits it.

5.1 Mission Methods In Calvary Grace Evangelical Ministries

Calvary Grace Evangelical Ministries approaches missions from several perspectives. The various ways in which the church approaches mission could be discussed under seven arms of the ministries, namely: Mass Evangelism, Literature Evangelism, Discipleship program, Campus Evangelism, Leadership Development, Youth Ministry, and National Transformation Programme.

6. Mass Evangelism

Mass Evangelism is an aspect of a mission where a large number of people are addressed at the same time. The founder of the church, being an evangelist by calling, adopted open-air preaching as his main approach to Evangelism from the very beginning of the church. The method adopted may perhaps be due to the fact that it is the most popular approach among Evangelists. This form of Evangelism is characterized by speaking in public places, either open field or any public place like civic center, market square or likes as considered convenient by the preacher or the organizers, to a crowd of people at a time using a message, sermon or speech which spreads the gospel. This is the oldest approach to Evangelism. The Ministry has a group known as the Evangelism Group, which goes ahead of time before any open-air crusade in order to get the people ready for the outreach. Through this approach, most CGREM churches (branches) were developed, especially at the very beginning of the church. The General overseer, Rev. Femi Afolabi, like several other pastors, believes in the efficacy of the word of God, which in his words is known as "Power in the Word."

6.1 Literature Evangelism

The literature evangelism of the Calvary Grace Evangelism Ministries started with the sharing of gospel tracts at the initial stage of gospel communication. To further enhance this aspect of the mission, the church later established a publication

unit basically saddled with the responsibility of publishing evangelism materials such as gospel tracts, bulletins, banners, newsletters, and magazines. The Calvary Grace Evangelism Ministries has published several gospel tracts, among which are "What will Be Your End?" "Hell is Real" There is a place of Refuge." Empty Vessels". Among the numerous books published by CGREM are What Every Believer should Know published in 1994, The Model for Pastoral Care Ministry published in 1996, Twenty-three Thing You Need to Know Before Entering into Marriage published in 2002, Power of Tongue (2007), Breakthrough Prayers (2010), My Forty Years on the Pulpit (2014). Testimonies abound as to how many lives have been richly blessed by this aspect of Ministry.

6.2 Discipleship Programme

Discipleship program, a derivative from Jesus' discipleship and leadership approach, is the Calvary Grace Evangelical Ministries' method where people under a leader are a disciple and developed for leadership purposes in the church and in the society at large. It is a structure that allows for every believer to be responsible to another person. House fellowship is an extension of the church, a gathering point for all members of the church at their various locations for fellowship; this recent approach is basically meant for developing leaders. Fundamental in the functions of discipleship program in the mission of Calvary Grace Evangelical Ministries is the fact that it provides a structure for monitoring the growth of members and for filling of leadership vacancies, if they arise, for example, nominations for deacons/deaconess. It helps the Ministry identify people into whose hands responsibilities can be committed, and thus it is a leadership development scheme. The following are the objective of Discipleship Programme:

- To provide a structural framework for fulfilling the five principal purposes of church worship, fellowship, ministries, Evangelism, and counseling.
- To provide an opportunity for personal pastoral care for individual members of the church through visitation, Bible study, and prayers.
- To serve as a dragnet for reaching unbelievers and other prospective members. Due to the small nature of a cell and its mode of operation, it is easier for them to penetrate their immediate environment.

For the personal development of members and subsequent integration into the core leadership of the

church through measurable, practical service (Afolabi, 2014).

The founder states that "There are four hallmarks of a cell church, namely, worship, nurture, fellowship, and Evangelism (Afolabi, 2019). The believer, accordingly spends time in worship of God, resting under the authority and leadership of Christ. Consequently, they nurture each other from the word of God, seeking to apply its teaching to their everyday living. Thus, they seek to fulfill Christ's command to love one another and build up others in fellowship, and finally go beyond considering their needs and shall be motivated to Great Commission by making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).

6.3 Campus Evangelism

This is another method in which CGREM carries out its mission. They move around campus to establish fellowship centers in order to minister to younger people. They applied to catch them young approach. CGREM has branches in campuses like Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Ajayi Crowther Universities, and Polytechnic of Ibadan, to mention a few.

7. Social Ministry

CGREM cares for the physical needs of its members and especially the needy ones in society. As they feed people spiritually, they are taking care of their material's needs as well.

7.1 The Administration Of The CGREM

The church is governed by the councils of a pastor, who are guiding it in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

There eight ordained pastors who are working with the general overseer in the headquarter, and more than twenty other pastors are on branches throughout the federation. They do observe their annual general convention program every Easter period at the headquarter.

7.2 The Finance Of The Church (CGREM)

The following are the sources of the income in CGREM:

- Systematic tithes and regular offerings: these are the offering usually and always collected every Sunday Service.
- Special offerings such as thanks-giving, marriage, house warming: These are offering collected when there is a special

program. They are occasional offerings not like systematic tithes and offering.

- Funds from real estate management (shops, apartment, and other): These are the funds gathered from church investment and businesses.
- Funds from school established. These are the income generated from school, i.e., nursery and primary. This is a fund known as gain after the staff have been paid, and all taxes have been settled.
- Donations: These are the funds got from self will offerings, a gift from church members, distance members, and other people (Afolabi, 2019).

7.3 Expenditure Of CGREM

The following are the monthly expenses in CGREM:

- Wages and salaries of the staffs
- Mission and evangelism activities
- Purchase of church literature like Sunday school and Hymnbooks
- Attending meetings (Associational, Conference, Convention)
- Maintenance of church facilities and equipment.
- Contribution to other Christian Organization (CAN, BBN and ministers' fellowship)
- Various purchases (stationery items).
- Help ministry (Benevolence, sponsorship student to higher institutions, disadvantages, and disaster-affected people).
- Seminars, Conference, and Retreats (Afolabi, 2019).

7.4 Problems And Challenges Of The Church (CGREM)

These are some of the challenges confronting CGREM:

- The Problem most Problem confronts CGREM is financial challenges, which, as a result, has led them to close down some of their branches.
- Lack of committed people for the work of Evangelism. The harvest is plenty, but laborers are few. People that are ready to give all it takes to the mission work are not many compared to the magnitude of the assignment.

8. Solutions And Recommendations

Paul's activities are sources for renewal of our faith and in Evangelism. We should develop a sense of aggressive Evangelism. Evangelism should not be

viewed only as a religious belief but also as an important work and an urgent task for Christians of all ages (Acts 1:8). The "Great Commission" in Matthew 28:19 must be seen as the primary assignment of all Christians. Evangelism must take important priority in our lives, churches, and society at large. We must do as much as possible to care for the physical needs of our members and especially the needy ones in our community. We must use our stewardship of "influence or connection" to find jobs for numerous Christian that are around us. We can give them money to start a petty trade, to learn a trade and pay for their training. They need peaceful co-existence is highly needed in our midst, so as to focus our attention equally on the "Great Commission."

Above all, Christians and all the stakeholders must get to know that we are sources of nation/world renewal, transforming and rebinding according to the injunction of the Scripture, comparing us as the SALT AND LIGHT of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Christians should have a burning desire and compassion for the lost souls.

9. Conclusion

As seen in this paper, CGREM, as a ministry, believes and teaches that the program of Jesus was a holistic one. As man is a tripartite being, possessing spirit, soul, and body, so are his needs. That is the reason the Ministry believes in ministering to all aspects of human life. In order to achieve this, certain arms like those highlighted above in this study were formed. This is a lesson to all other churches and even other religions so that there could be peaceful co-existence in society.

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