



AN EVANGELISM MARKETING MODEL FOR THE GROWTH OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

The study evaluates the relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth and the extent to which evangelism marketing has been adopted in twenty-first-century churches, particularly in the South Eastern States of Nigeria. The survey adopts stratified and linear simple random sampling techniques. The target population of the registered Pentecostal Churches in the zone is 5346, comprising 805, 1208, 960, 1116, and 1257 churches in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, respectively. The sample size of the churches is 382, distributed as follows; Abia(57), Anambra(86), Ebonyi(69), Enugu(80), and Imo(90). Two hypotheses and two research questions guided the study. The primary and secondary data sources are accessed. In-depth interviews, including focus group discussions, are conducted. The researcher adopted the Five-Point Likert Scale Format in structuring the questionnaire. Marketing experts contributed to the questionnaire validation. A reliability coefficient of the research instrument, 0.977, is derived from the pilot study scores. Using Pearson Correlation Analysis and the One-way ANOVA technique, the hypotheses are tested at 0.05 level of significance and the latter at 19 degrees of freedom. The survey reveals that in spite of the strong positive relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth, church leadership has not significantly adopted evangelism marketing for the growth of the twenty-first-century church.

KEYWORDS: Church growth, Consumer behavior, Evangelism marketing, Social marketing

1. Introduction

One aspect of consumer behaviour is that consumers prefer to buy products and services from trustworthy suppliers and usually rely on the recommendations of credible persons such as friends and neighbours. Customers who believe strongly in a product or service spread words about the core benefits of the products or services to their friends and social networks. These

loyal customers invariably become the mouthpiece for promoting the company's products or services to potential customers by word-of-mouth. They act as voluntary advocates by recruiting new customers based on their pure belief in the efficacies of the products or services. The customers are busy spreading words about their product experiences to the public, even when the manufacturers need to be made aware of what they are doing.

Evangelism marketers operate independently and are unremunerated by any corporate body. According to Sajoy (2018), evangelism marketing is the technique of inducing existing customers to recruit new customers. It utilizes the powers of loyal employees, friends, families, and customer base to promote the positive attributes of a product or service to a wide audience (Gupta, 2021). The people see themselves as part of the product or service and become campaigners to voluntarily promote the offering to convince others to buy and use it.

As a subset of church marketing, evangelism marketing adopts social marketing principles to spread gospel messages. Social marketing is a compelling behaviour change approach that seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other strategies to influence behaviour for the greater social good of individuals and communities (Akbar, Ndupu, French, & Lawson, (2021). It focuses on the greater social good that enhances individuals' and societies' long-term best interests. The implication is that churches should adapt marketing techniques to present the gospel messages to meet the members' and host communities' basic and spiritual needs. The assembly of believers in Christ Jesus constitutes the church, and the development of spiritually and emotionally healthy members to reach the broader society with the gospel is the responsibility of the church leadership. The ultimate goal of evangelism marketing strategy is soul-winning and church growth. The strategy helps strengthen converts' faith and encourages them to become part of the church. Therefore, this study focuses on evangelism marketing from a religious perspective. Evangelism marketing implies converting people to Christian faith campaigners (unpaid salesmen) and using their influential power to win souls for Christ.

While evangelism is concerned with proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost world, marketing focuses on how contented believers convince friends, neighbours, and social contacts to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and personal saviour. There are two dimensions of evangelism: mass evangelism and personal evangelism. Mass evangelism was exemplified when the apostles whom Jesus trained received the Holy Spirit and inundated the city of Jerusalem with messages

of the Lordship of the Risen Jesus Christ (Acts 5:30-32). The open-air crusades, breakfast, lunch/dinner outreaches, team witnessing, hotel meetings such as Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship/Sisters Fellowship, and messages during church services, weddings and burials fit into mass evangelism. Personal evangelism entails approaching sinners to reconcile them to Christ Jesus (Luke, 14:23).

It involves person-to-person, door-to-door, house-to-house, welfare and letter evangelism. Evangelism marketing is implicitly an integration of marketing principles into personal evangelism approaches.

Evangelism marketing persists in determining the latent needs of the customers and strives to provide for them in contradistinction to traditional marketing, which attempts to provide for the needs expressed by the customers. It involves face-to-face presentation of the gospel messages to people (indifferent to salvation need) based on personal convictions/experiences and inviting them to accept the gift of salvation. Evangelism marketing focuses on person-to-person witnessing, characterized by an overflow in the testimony of an individual's encounter with Christ. For instance, the Samaritan woman encountered Jesus at the water well and returned to her village with a testimony "Come see a man who has told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (John 4:29). She briefly summarized her experience in a sentence and question. The motivation of the woman of Samaria to witness emerged from a natural response to her encounter with Jesus. She was neither told nor chosen to preach, and the initiative to share the experience emanated from her conviction. By implication, the Samaritan woman instantly received the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) and assumed the duty to reconcile the villagers with Christ.

In essence, evangelism marketing is the duty of believers, and producing converts is the prerogative of God. Apostle Paul says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Corinthians. 3:6-7). It is the Lord's always desire to redeem the lost people of this world, devoid of his exemplary life and engulfed in sin. But the people cannot believe the gospel messages without someone preaching to them (Romans. 10:14). Apostle Paul remarked, "for I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16 KJV). The church can only grow when the word of God is

proclaimed to people and souls are won for Christ. Every believer is commissioned to a lifetime service of evangelism marketing to spread the gospel message and bring non-Christians to the knowledge of Christ while re-focusing old Christians on their divine calling. The study aims at determining the extent to which church leadership has adopted evangelism marketing for the growth of the twenty-first-century church and redact a framework (model) to guide Christians in soul winning.

1.1 Problem Statement

Church growth results from fulfilling the Great Commission by expanding membership size and creating spiritually healthy communities. It encompasses church planting and splitting big churches into smaller sizes without compromising their spiritual health. Evangelism presents Jesus Christ's profile, purpose, passion, plan and power to the world. But the major challenge of evangelism appears to be the Christians themselves, owing to noncommitment to the call to true discipleship of Jesus Christ. Most church meetings are crowded with schedules, devoid of evangelism as the essence of ministry. The hope of making new converts from church sermons is diminishing, and the emerging friendship evangelism tends to conceal the declining enthusiasm for evangelism (Shun, Samuel &Keung, 2021).

The Christians' mode of person-to-person witnessing (evangelism marketing) is rapidly declining as the church programs shift toward cross-less life, where the pain is virtually extricated from the system. The juicy part of life now appears to receive greater attention as Christian responsibility is inclined to self-serving interests and meeting personal goals to the detriment of Jesus Christ's gospel. The Christians are now seeking God to serve them by making their lives sumptuous instead of serving God by ministering to others as Jesus did. The lifestyles of Christians have severe implications for the gospel messages they preach. The sins of moral decadence, including craftiness, puffiness, and extramarital sexual indulgence associated with Christians, lend credence to the caricature of evangelism as manipulation of the masses for personal gains (PopeLevison, 2020).

With the steaming political environment nurtured by a democratic government in Nigeria and the canny behaviour of politicians (mainly professed Christians), secularism tends to increase while the effectiveness of mass evangelism is constantly dwindling. The concept of spiritism connotes that the devil's attack forms the totality of evangelism, leading to the distortion of the

gospel messages. The Church now finds it convenient to adopt revivalism, instead of marketing concepts, as a means of evangelism, resulting in using the pulpit to attack policies clothed in injustice. The church leaders, however, still preach evangelism messages to sustain credibility. In recent times, the functions of the Church seem compromised, and the complete personality of Jesus is no longer being presented to the world as commanded. Churches whose primary goal differs from actively spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and recruiting new people breed presumptuous members, inimical to healthy communities (Shun, Samuel & Keung, 2021). The chaotic situations in our society today, orchestrated by herdsmen attacks, banditry, kidnapping, assassinations, and unknown gunmen, have unwittingly stared at the face of church leadership with amazement (Fulani Herdsmen Archives, Information Nigeria, www.informationng.com). With utter disregard for the sanctity of human life and rising death tolls, many victims have been forced into eternity without accepting Jesus Christ as Lord. Added to the unwholesome environment is the ethno-religious dimension of the conflict.

The diversity of religious groups that lack peaceful co-existence, as evidenced by unrestrained lawsuits in several courts, impedes the gospel's spread. According to Shun, Samuel & Keung (2021), when politics crosses paths with Christianity (e.g., Daniel in the Old Testament), Christians should keep their religious baseline in trusting Jesus Christ instead of worshipping man-made idols from any governing authority. The COVID-19 Pandemic caused millions of deaths, churches were deserted, and evangelism grounded to a halt throughout the period. The mass burials conducted without allowing people access to their relations shattered human hearts and fueled hopelessness. Disappointments abound as people are downcast in sorrow and with no better future in sight.

Since the advent of the early missionaries to Eastern Nigeria, the impact of the Church in community development, especially in providing solutions to the challenges of 21st century society, hardly justifies its sensitization through evangelism. The pathetic state of the nation tends to prove that churches are yet to record remarkable success in providing the needed succour to society through the creation of spiritually healthy communities, with its attendant membership drive. The crisis of leadership succession in the Church also creates disorientation that frustrates evangelism approaches. Given this development, the declining effectiveness of evangelism in fulfilling the Great Commission and freeing people from the powers of darkness is worrisome. When Jesus died on the cross, he left Christians with a mission to go and make all nations his

disciples and teach them to obey everything he commanded and with a promise of his daily presence until the end of this generation (Matt 28: 16-20).

Since salvation is individualistic, seeking out sinners personally (evangelism marketing) and focusing them on Jesus is the antidote. The twenty-first Church in Nigeria needs holistic growth both qualitatively and quantitatively through an effective evangelism strategy. This study, therefore, attempts to correlate evangelism marketing with church growth, determine the extent to which church leadership has adopted evangelism marketing in growing the twenty-first-century church, and framing a model to enable believers to overflow in natural witnessing of Jesus Christ to relations, friends, colleagues, neighbours, social networks, and other acquaintances for a better society.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to appraise the extent of the adoption of evangelism marketing in the growth of the twenty-first-century church. The specific objectives are to determine the relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth. It also assessed the extent to which church leadership has adopted evangelism marketing in growing the church and to frame an evangelism marketing model for the growth of the twenty-first-century church.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the problem statement, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. What is the relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth?
- ii. To what extent has church leadership adopted evangelism marketing to grow Pentecostal Churches in the South-Eastern States of Nigeria?

2. Review of Related Literature

The related literature was reviewed from the perspectives of conceptual, theoretical, and empirical frameworks

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Marketing Management in the Twenty-first Century

The history of early Christianity presented Paul of Tarsus, a Jewish citizen and rabbinical scholar as a renowned evangelist, based on his conversion experience. Paul committed his life to

preaching and writing evangelistic messages in support of the growing Christian movement. Paul's activities snowballed to the transformation of Christianity. In relation to modern marketing, Paul's qualities resonate with the story of Kawasaki, aptly described as "The Father of Evangelism Marketing (Pochhali, 2020). An Apple Company's employee, Mr. Guy Kawasaki, tasked with marketing the Macintosh computers in 1984, was credited with the word evangelist for people who were advocates of Macintosh. In sync with Paul's model, evangelism marketers transform brand messages by reiterating brand mythology and core benefits. They develop groundswell of support at the grass roots level by promoting, and defending the brand against any form of opposition.

An evangelism marketer is a brand believer who sees himself as integral part of the product and has unwavering loyalty to the brand. The Lord gave the word and great is the company of the people who publish it (Psalm 68:11). Jesus is the word of God (John 1:1), made manifest as a brand. Initially, God spoke to His people through the prophets/priests in visions, dreams, and even face to face, telling them his plans piecemeal. In modern times, God has spoken explicitly through His son, Jesus Christ, who died for the forgiveness of the world's sins. The publishers of the word are those who believe in efficacy of the huge sacrifice at the cross of Calvary. Marketing management in the twenty-first century should therefore focus on creating communications around the profile of Jesus Christ. Recent studies have shown that the church has performed poorly in marketing the gospel and should adopt marketing techniques to sell their products to satisfy the consumers. The marketing philosophy of giving people what they want as opposed to what the church leadership feels is suitable for members, should dominate the church programs. But economic reasons seem to underpin most activities with the acceptability of money business in churches. The people are charged consultation fees to see a man of God to solve their personal and family problems. They even pay for deliverance sessions, spiritual breakthrough services, anointing oil, and holy water. The church leadership initiates these schemes, making merchandise of the gospel for wealth acquisition.

2.1.2 The Breathing Brand

Christians should freely communicate the gospel messages as breathing brands to friends, families, neighbors, and social contacts on a person-to-person basis for the salvation of their souls. The totality of the gospel messages is encapsulated in the four Ps (purpose, passion, plan,

and power of Jesus Christ) similar to the four Ps of marketing management (product, price, promotion, and price). The message bearers' mastery of the scriptures embodied in the four Ps enhances his clear communication of the gospel. A call for repentance accompanies evangelistic messages, leading people to surrender their lives to Christ and become part of the church. At this juncture, God begins to reveal Himself to the convert to enable him re-order his life and join His mission. Soon as the believer allows God to manifest through him, he forfeits his willpower. God now takes him anywhere he wants to reveal His glory to a waiting world. The power of choice on assignment, location, humbling experiences, and sanctification resides with the Master, whose ultimate goal is revealing Himself to the convert and then through him to the lost world. The action reflects the call of Christians to true discipleship of Christ Jesus in sync with the Great Commission (Matt 28: 16-20).

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) Theory and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

The study anchors on Service-Dominant Logic and Consumer Culture theories. The S-D Logic is a powerful tool for value creation in business. It posits that customers are co-creators of value (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). The theory implies that customers bring both money and other benefits to exchange transactions. Customers who are satisfied with a product or service willingly share their experiences with friends, social contacts and convince them to buy and use it. Consumer culture theory (CCT) posits that the society revolves around the purchase and consumption of goods and services to improve their well-being (Armould, ,Press,Salminen,&Tillotson, 2019). The process of consumption itself is individualistic, and makes each consumer experience unique relative to owner identity and lifestyle (Siebert, Gopaldas, & Simoes, 2020). The theory underpins the inseparability of culture from consumption and the marketing practices that facilitate interactions with consumers. The consumers' engagement in consumption process in the midst of varieties of goods and services is rather embedded in relationships, intertwined with cultural and social norms (Visconti, Peraloza, & Toulouse, 2020). Consumer culture theory (CCT) influences the way consumers read, make sense, decode, and respond to marketing messages (Stevens, Maclaran,& Browns,2019). Consumers always interpret internalized unique experiences which transformed their psyche about the product or services consumed and relate the benefits to others by word of mouth.

The S-D Logic postulates that the act of consuming creates personal value and CCT looks at the consumer as a culture creator through his consumption process. The building blocks for identity creation within a culture therefore emanate from acts of consumption. The combination of the two constructs elucidates the act of consumption. In summary, consumption creates value, culture, identity and orchestrates transformation. The transformed consumer shares his experience with friends, colleagues, and social contacts who may become overwhelmed to engage in the purchase and consumption process. The adoption of this customer-centric approach from the perspectives of religion enables church leadership to focus on the unbelievers and their needs for salvation. S-D logic is relational and emphasizes interactions between church members and the people. The people on transformation see themselves as part of the service and enlist in the ministry of reconciliation. They voluntarily share their unique experiences of salvation to others and convince them to accept the Lordship of Jesus. In sequence the converts become brand campaigners and the mouthpiece for promoting the gospel of salvation to their social contacts, family members and other acquaintances in sync with evangelism marketing.

2.2.2 Evangelism Models

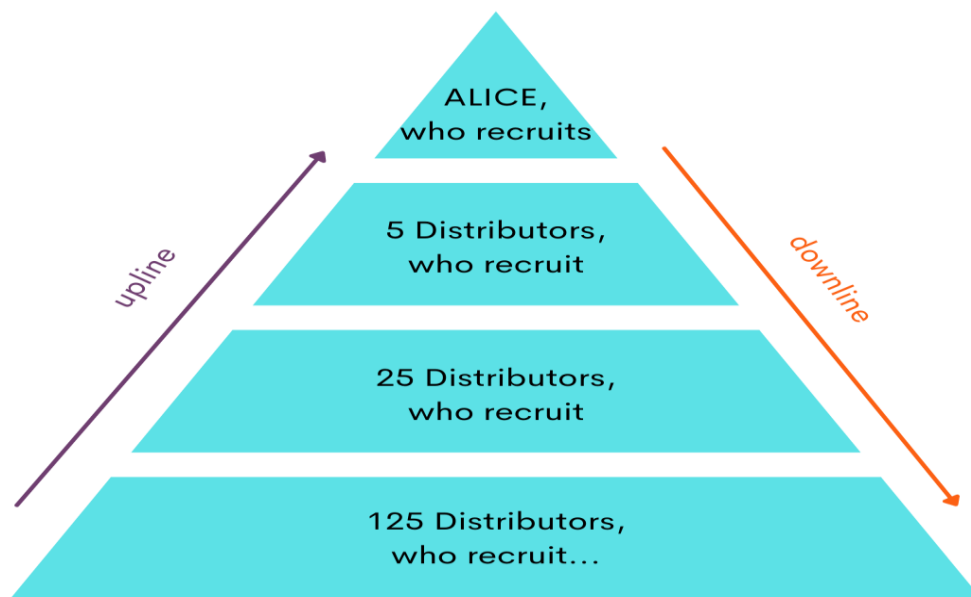
A model is a qualitative or quantitative description of key components of a system and the relationships between them (IPBES, 2021). The study briefly reviewed the models of evangelism by Pope-Levison, Network Marketing Model, Five Finger Gospel Model and Five-Factor Model of Personality for purposes of adaptability to the model of research.

- **Models of Evangelism by Priscilla Pope-Levison**

The model of evangelism postulated by Pope-Levison, (2020), presents five essential ingredients of a model that determine the evangelistic efforts of a congregation, namely, hospitality, relationship, integrity, message bearing, and church rootedness. It serves as a prescription model on how to practically engage in evangelism, reach the local community and raise evangelism marketers in the church. The message bearer should be rooted in the word of God and churchbased, hospitable, and a person of impeccable integrity. The ability of the evangelism marketer to easily cultivate relationship with his contacts creates an enabling environment for soul winning.

- **Network Marketing Model**

The Network marketing model relies on a network of distributors to grow a business (Wolfe, 2022). It is also called Multi-level Marketing model and uses customers to recommend company products to other people. The model prescribes commitment of time, money and efforts for effectiveness. Network marketing is flexible and allows the customer to work around his own schedule uninterrupted. It operates under the premise of partnership and collaborations, support for team formation, harmonization of working rhythm and complementarity between units within the institutions(Rachmawati, Noermijati, Sumiati, Moko,2019).Network marketers nurture interpersonal relationship, generate lead,(locate customers/clients), recruit friends, neighbors, social contacts into the business and build competencies through training and motivating recruits/people. Multilevel marketing begins in-house with employees and extends to building a strong and loyal customer base with quality products and efficient service delivery. The loyalists become the mouthpiece of the company to spread positive information about the brand. Given Multi-Level Marketing model in figure 1, ALICE recruits five distributors who in turn recruit twenty five distributors who subsequently recruit one hundred and twenty five other distributors and the cycle continues to grow exponentially. Going up the pyramid are the uplines and downward the downlines.



MLM Distribution Structure

Figure 1.Multi-Level Marketing Model (forbes.com)

A service-oriented church leadership as mandated by Christ(Luke 22:26),with focus on Christcentric preaching, and reliance of the holy spirit, has the responsibility of continually equipping and transforming believers for the work of ministry. The members in turn take the gospel from the church pulpit to the unbelievers in their homes, streets, factories, market places, and offices in face to face encounter with the message of salvation. The converts are invited to the church for training and equipping and subsequently they take up the task of spreading the gospel. The motivation of the converts to witness emerges from a natural response to their encounters with Jesus. The expansion of the network of evangelism marketers results in church growth.

- **Five Finger Gospel Model**

The Five Finger Gospel Model of evangelism (Figure 2) encapsulates the five key ingredients of the gospel message, viz, God loves me, I have sinned, Christ died for me, and if I believe, I will go to heaven. The model places the gospel message on a Christian's palm for easy presentation. The model posits that the thumb indicates God's love for man (John 3:15), and the index finger confesses that he has sinned (Romans 3:23). The middle finger acknowledges that Christ died for man (Romans 5:8). While the ring finger indicates that if a man believes in the death of Christ Jesus (Acts 16:31), the little finger reveals that he will go to heaven (1 John 5:11). In the hollow of his hand is the affirmation that man is a child of God (John 1:12). The Model presents the sequence of actions sinners would undertake on their eternal journey.

Evangelism marketing is the duty of believers, and producing converts is the prerogative of God. According to Apostle Paul, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (I Corinthians. 3:6-7). But the people cannot believe the gospel messages without someone preaching to them (Romans. 10:14). As Apostle Paul remarked, "for I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel " (1 Corinthians 9:16 KJV). The church can only grow when the word of God is proclaimed to people and souls are won for Christ.

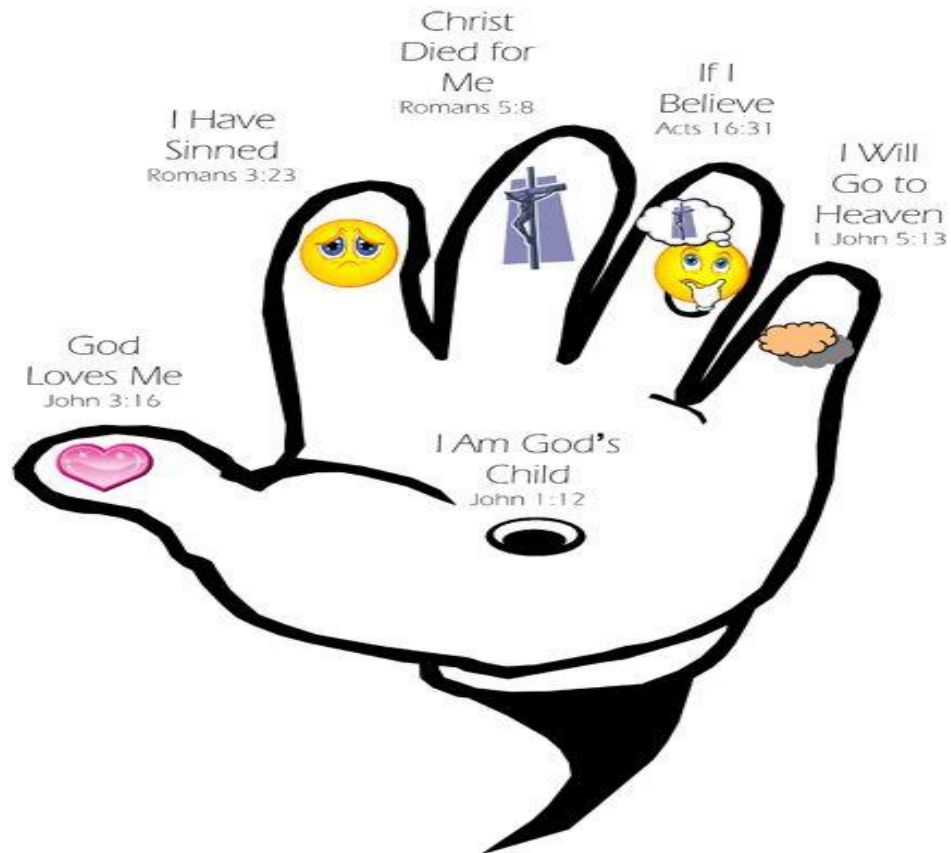


Figure 2: Five Finger Gospel model

(<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/118641771403605199/>) Accessed 21/11/20

- **Five-Factor Model of Personality.**

The Five Factor Model of Personality (FFM) asserts that the personality traits of a person influence his behavior pattern (Soto, and Jackson, 2020). The five personality trait domains include Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Openness to experience trait enables a person to try new things and accept unconventional ideas, and beliefs. Conscientiousness trait enables an individual to exhibit more goal oriented behavior in recognition of the consequences of actions. Extraversion is a personality trait that enables socializing and cultivating of new relationship with people and enjoying the company of others. Agreeableness trait enables trusting people and living in harmony with them. Neuroticism personality trait indicates low emotional stability of an individual, capable of making him to cope with every day stress. Previous studies, including (Aydin, 2017), have shown significant positive correlations between brand evangelism, and the

five personality trait domains. The combination of personality traits of customers and brand features influence behavior patterns relating to brand evangelism.

The task of equipping believers for evangelism is mission-oriented. The disposition of church leadership toward raising evangelism marketers must take cognizance of the personality traits of members for greater effectiveness. While it may not be possible to trace the five personality trait domains in a person, members who have shown evidence of openness to ideas, ability of trusting and enjoying companionship of people, may respond to training and equipping faster, coupled with their experiences of encounter with Jesus. The leadership's interactions with church members may help to identify traits of conscientiousness and neuroticism. Members who are goal-oriented and with the capacity to withstand stress, qualify for conscription into the army of evangelism marketers for soul winning.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Cycle of Creating Brand Evangelists

Evangelism marketing aims at creating a large and ever growing army of brand evangelists, who through the word-of-mouth recruit new customers to increase sales (Sajoy, 2018). It strives to convert new customers into evangelists until a permanent cycle of creating brand evangelist is established. Evangelism marketing is a behavior pattern where a customer buys a product or service and also recommends other people to buy and use it.

To convert loyal customers into marketing evangelists, companies adopt strategies such as making quality product, collecting feedbacks from customers, creating a cause for their product, and making the customers identify with it, in addition to creating community of customers, and a buzz about the brand (Sajoy, 2018). A customer willingly recommends a product to others if the quality is good and would badmouth the product if it is substandard. Analyzing feedbacks from customers and offering solutions which are immediately communicated to them creates satisfaction. A satisfied customer will readily recommend the brand to others. Companies that create cause for their product and persuade customers to identify with it, raise evangelists who spread the word to other customers and convince them to buy the product. Another strategy is to create a community of customers like online communities, such as Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, online bulletin boards, email newsletters, or fans websites. The community of customers like real world clubs or associations meets regularly, and is in close communication with valuable

customers to ensure the brand reputation is constantly positioned in the minds of the loyal customers. The strategy of creating and frequently updating positive buzz about the product in the Facebook pages, Instagram pages, YouTube uploads etc., and encouraging customers who access the social media websites to share the information with their contacts raises brand evangelists.

For the evangelism marketer, the quality product is the gospel message of Jesus Christ who is an unparalleled breathing brand. People's encounter with Jesus constitutes the salvation testimony which provides the feedback and creates a cause for the salvation of souls. The community of customers is the church of Jesus Christ charged with the responsibility of presenting the profile of Jesus to the lost world, and proclaiming that whoever accepts Jesus as Lord and personal savior is saved. The positive buzz about the gospel message either online or offline points to the way of eternity for every mortal. Appointment with death and the accompanying judgment is reserved for every human being irrespective of status in the society and accepting Jesus is the cause for the brand(gospel message). The strategy of equipping loyal church members to enter the mission field to spread the gospel message and recruit souls for Christ is evangelism marketing.

2.3.2 Marketing Orientation

Appah, & George,(2017), described church marketing as the application of social marketing principles through the word of God to convince individuals and groups to willingly accept the gospel and become part of the body of Christ. Evangelism marketing is indispensable to church growth and many Pentecostal church leaders aiming at developing mega-churches ought to adopt the strategy. In line with the opinion of Riley (2015), a marketing-oriented system should react to what people want and not what the church leadership feels is suitable for members. It is pertinent to observe that promoting faith in Christ Jesus and church growth derive from marketing communications. Previous studies have shown that promotional strategies, when combined, exert a more substantial impact on church growth and admonished church leaders to develop their skills to become marketing-oriented in meeting the multiple needs of the congregation. The authors insisted that church management institutes budgetary allocations to deploy promotion strategies for church growth. The methods include newspapers (television/radio), social media, billboards, giant screens, flyers, car stickers, free bible

distribution, church invitation cards, gifts, literature, and books/church directories. Evangelism marketing as an integration of marketing principles with personal selling approaches involves a two way communication between a seller and buyer in face to face encounter designed to influence a purchase decision (Sirak,2018). With the emerging trends in technology, evangelism marketing is conducted over the telephone, through video conferencing and computer links though highly human in interaction.

2.3.3 The Selling Process Model

According to Appah, & George,(2017), personal selling provides more in-depth and precise information than an advert. The selling process model regarded as “seven-steps of selling” include prospecting, pre-approach, approach, sales presentation, handling objections, close, and follow-up (Dubinsky,(1980), cited in Sirak, (2018). Since church growth is not a man’s affair or wisdom, but accomplished by the spirit of God who alters hearts and minds of people to become part of the church. Evangelism marketing may not adopt the principles of the selling process sequentially in growing the church. Prospecting involves compiling the database of acquaintances or social networks who are unbelievers. Qualifying the prospects implies assessing their readiness to spare time for the gospel message. The pre-approach stage entails determining the best time to make the evangelistic call. The approach stage initiates a brief introduction, leading to knowing each other to enable the unbeliever open up to the discussion. The presentation style suitable for evangelism marketing is a need-satisfaction approach that unfolds the unbeliever’s need for salvation. The ability of the evangelism marketer to handle complaints successfully clears every resistance to the acceptance of the gift of salvation by converts. Closing entails allowing the unbeliever decide to surrender his life to Christ through a call for repentance. The standard signals to acceptance of the gospel may include nodding the head, raising the hand, leaning forward, or asking questions from the potential convert on what to do next. The followup involves an invitation to church service, personal visits for bible studies, telephone conversations to reinforce the faith, and answering questions that may arise.

3. Methodology

The study is a survey method and adopts stratified and linear simple random sampling techniques. The choice of the Pentecostal churches was predicated on the advent of the early missionary works in Eastern region of Nigeria. The target population of the registered

Pentecostal Churches in the South Eastern States of Nigeria is 5346, comprising 805, 1208, 960, 1116, and 1257 churches in Abia, Anambra; Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, respectively. The sample size of churches derived from the Yamane (1967) formula is 382. Applying Bowley's proportional allocation formula, the sample size for each State is estimated, viz, Abia (57), Anambra (86), Ebonyi(69), Enugu(80), and Imo(90). Two hypotheses and two research questions guided the study.

The primary and secondary data sources are accessed. To obtain relatively bias-free data with minimal error context, the questions in the questionnaire are designed in simple language and structured in a Five-Point Likert Scale format, viz; Strongly Agree(5points), Agree(4 points), Undecided(3), Disagree(2) and Strongly disagree(1). The A1A10 item statements are crafted to solicit responses on the relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth while B1-B10 item statements sought the opinions of respondents on the extent to which church leadership has adopted evangelism marketing strategy in their programmes. The research instrument was subjected to face-to-face validity by presenting it to the marketing experts to ensure they are in line with the study objectives. The structure and language of the questionnaire are modified as recommended.

To ensure reliability, questions in the questionnaire are grouped to measure the same concept. The instrument was checked for reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha technique. The Alpha technique measures consistency among individual items in a scale but does not provide reliable estimates for single items. Pilot survey is used and the scores processed to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.977, indicating high degree of internal consistency of the research instrument. In-depth interviews, including focus group discussions, are conducted to obtain free expressions of respondents' views on the evangelism marketing-church growth interlink and adoption of evangelism marketing strategy by church leadership. With the Pearson Correlation Analysis, hypothesis one is tested. Using the One-way ANOVA technique and Minitab Statistical software package, hypothesis two is tested at 0.05 level of significance and 19 degrees of freedom.

4.0 Result

The study adopts the use of statistical methods (frequency distribution) and econometric techniques, coefficients (correlation/determination), and P-value. The F-distribution is used to test whether two samples emerged from populations that have equal variance while ANOVA is

applied for a simultaneous comparison of two or more population means. P-value refers to the probability of finding a value of the test statistic that is large, when compared with the confidence interval. Correlation Coefficients of correlation and determination measure the strength of the linear relationship between two variables and the proportion of the total variation of dependent variable accounted for by the variation of the independent variable respectively.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents.

Parameters	Total	Percentage (%)
<u>Category</u>		
Abia	114	15.0
Anambra	172	22.5
Ebonyi	138	18.0
Enugu	160	20.9
Imo	180	23.6
<u>Age</u>		
20-30	50	6.5
31-40	170	22.3
41-50	252	33.0
Above 50	292	38.2
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	444	58.0
Female	320	42.0
<u>Marital status</u>		
Married	598	78.3
Single	166	21.7
<u>Qualification</u>		
Ph.D.	51	6.7
MSc/MBA	96	12.5
BSc/HND	236	31.0
ND/NCE	204	26.7
WASC/GCE	132	17.2
FSLC	45	5.9

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 shows the profile of respondents of the study. About 23.6 percent of the respondents are selected from the Pentecostal Churches in Imo State, followed by 22.5, 20.9, and 18.0 percent from Anambra, Enugu, and Ebonyi States, respectively. Abia State had 15.0 percent of the respondents. About 71.2 percent of the respondents are above 40, while 28.8 percent are between

20 and 40. The male respondents constitute 58.0 percent of the sample size and females 42.0 percent. 78.3 percent of the respondents are married and singles 21.7 percent. The literacy rate of the respondents, ranging from WASC/GCE to Ph.D., is 94.1 percent. First School Leaving Certificates (FSLC) holders are about 5.9 percent.

4.1 Use of Criterion Mean in Answering the Research Questions.

The five points Likert Scale in the study was rated as under- listed;

Strongly Agree (SA)	=	5 points
Strongly Agree	(SA)	= 5 points
Agree	(A)	= 4 points
Undecided	(U)	= 3 points
Disagree	(D)	= 2 points
Strongly Disagree	(SD)	= 1 point
Total Scores	=	<u>15 points</u>
Number of responses	=	5
Mean cut-off point (or criterion mean)	=	$\frac{15}{5}$
	=	3.0

The mean, 3.0, was used as a criterion for accepting or not accepting the item statements of the questionnaire in order to answer the research question (Nwankwo, 2011). The rule is that any item statement with mean score of 3.0 and above is accepted as a true statement and any with mean score below 3.0 is unacceptable.

Research Question 1: Is there any positive relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth?

Table 4.2 Mean (\bar{x}) scores of respondents on the relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth.

Factor	Items statement	Agree. SA+A	Disagree. U+D+SD	Total scores	Total no of respondents.	Mean score	Result
A1	Majority of the members of your church received Christ through evangelism marketing.	797	1296	2093	764	2.74	Not accepted
A2	Evangelism marketing discerns people’s need for salvation and offers hope to the lost.	814	1633	2447	764	3.20	Accepted
A3	Evangelism marketing presents the gospel messages based on personal experience/conviction	889	1844	2733	764	3.58	Accepted

A4	The power of salvation testimony creates conviction and induces acceptance of the gospel message.	1009	1972	2981	764	3.90	Accepted
A5	Evangelism marketing persuades people to accept the free gift of salvation.	1101	2284	3385	764	4.43	Accepted
A6	Evangelism marketing exerts effect on the numerical strength of the church.	1119	2724	3843	764	5.0	Accepted
A7	Evangelism marketing serves as public relations tool for the attraction of people to a Church.	1134	2096	3230	764	4.23	Accepted
A8	A believer's overflow in natural witnessing of Jesus Christ to acquaintances leads to church growth.	1173	1955	3128	764	4.09	Accepted
A9	Evangelism marketing builds trust in the minds of converts (new births) ,leading to their retention in church.	862	1685	2544	764	3.33	Accepted
A10	Evangelism marketing converted you to a Christian faith campaigner.	956	1931	2887	764	3.78	Accepted
	Total	9854	19,420	29,274	7640	3.83	Accepted
	Mean	985.4	1942.0	2,927.4	764.0	3.83	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4.2 shows that item statements A2-A10 have mean scores of 3.0 and above. Item statement A1 has mean score of less than 3.0. The responses indicate positive relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth.

Research question 2: To what extent has church leadership adopted evangelism marketing for the growth of Pentecostal Churches in the South-Eastern States of Nigeria?

Table 4.3. Mean (x) scores of respondents on the adoption of evangelism marketing strategy by church leadership.

Factor	Items statement	Agree. SA+A	Disagree. U+D+SD	Total scores	Total no of respondents.	Mean score	Result
B1	Integrating marketing principles into personal evangelism approaches is a powerful strategy for church growth.	2063	261	2324	764	3.04	Accepted
B2	Making disciples of all nations is achievable through adoption of evangelism marketing strategy	354	1859	2213	764	2.90	Not Accepted
B3	Church leadership struggles to convince members engage in evangelism marketing.	1636	462	2098	764	2.75	Not Accepted
B4	Converting loyal members to evangelism marketers expedites soul winning and church growth.	482	1247	1729	764	2.26	Not Accepted

B5	Evangelism marketing strategy is yet to find its place in the mainstream of church activities	1820	348	2168	764	2.84	Not Accepted
B6	Most church meetings are crowded with tight schedules, shifting toward cross-less life.	524	1609	2130	764	2.79	Not Accepted
B7	Church leadership should devise methods of raising evangelism marketers among members.	870	889	1759	764	2.30	Not Accepted
B8	The declining members' enthusiasm for evangelism underpins the adoption of evangelism marketing strategy by church leadership.	814	1051	1865	764	2.44	Not Accepted
B9	Evangelism marketing is cost- saving when compared with other modes of evangelism.	1286	957	2243	764	2.93	Not Accepted
B10	The hope of making new converts from church sermons/crusades is fast diminishing.	1217	979	2196	764	2.87	Not Accepted
	Total	11066	9662	20728	7640	2.71	Not Accepted
	Mean	1106.6	966.2	2072.8	764.0	2.71	Not Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 shows that item statements B2-B10 have mean scores less than 3.0 and B1 has mean score of 3.04. The findings show that evangelism marketing has not been significantly adopted by church leadership in growing the congregation. However, there is an affirmation that the integration of marketing principles with personal evangelism approaches is strategic for church growth (item B1 refers).

Table 4. Relationship between evangelism marketing and church growth.

Item	No. of respondents: Agree	Scores of respondents: Agree	No. of respondents: Disagree	Scores of respondents: Disagree	Total no. of respondents.
A1	258	797	506	1296	764
A2	214	814	550	1633	764
A3	348	889	416	1844	764
A4	339	1009	425	1972	764
A5	283	1101	481	2284	764
A6	331	1119	433	2724	764
A7	360	1134	404	2096	764
A8	370	1173	394	1955	764
A9	291	862	473	1685	764

A10	297	956	467	1931	764
Total	3090	9854	4550	19,420	7640
Mean	309	985.4	455	1942	764

Sources: Field data, 2022.

Table 4 shows that 66.33 percent of the respondents (Disagree score, 19,420 divided by total score (i.e., $9854 + 19,420 = 29,274$) multiplied by 100) are of the opinion that significant relationship exists between evangelism marketing and church growth. About 33.67 percent (Agree score, 9854 divided by total score of 29,274) multiplied by 100) opined that the relationship is insignificant. The strength and directions of relationship (negative or positive) are subject to determination by hypothesis testing.

Table 5 .Adoption of evangelism marketing strategy by church leadership.

Item	No. of Respondents. Agree: A	Scores of Respondents. Agree: A	No. of Respondents. Disagree: D	Scores of Respondents. Disagree: D	Total No. of Respondents
B1	612	2063	152	261	764
B2	213	354	551	1,859	764
B3	491	1636	273	462	764
B4	381	482	383	1,247	764
B5	550	1820	214	348	764
B6	279	524	485	1609	764
B7	284	870	480	889	764
B8	440	814	324	1051	764
B9	424	1286	340	957	764
B10	409	1217	355	979	764
Total	4083	11,066	3557	9662	7640
Mean	408.3	1,106.6	355.7	966.2	764

Source: Field data, 2022.

Table 5 shows that 53.40 percent of the respondents (Agree score; 11,066 divided by total score; $11,066 + 9,662 = 20,728$) multiplied by 100) affirm that evangelism marketing has not been significantly adopted by church leadership, while 46.60 percent (Disagree score, 9662 divided by total score of 20,728) multiplied by 100), differed in opinion.

Section 4.1 Tests of hypotheses

4.1.1. Hypothesis one: Ho: Evangelism marketing has no significant positive relationship with church growth.

Pearson Correlation Analysis. (Data from Table 4).

Pairwise Pearson Correlations

Sample 1	Sample 2	N	Correlation	95% CI for ρ	P-Value
Disagree	Agree	10	0.787	(0.313, 0.947)	0.007

Decision: Hypothesis one. From the analysis, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is 0.787. The conclusion is that evangelism marketing has a significant positive relationship with church growth.

4.1.2. Hypothesis two: Ho: Church leadership has not significantly adopted evangelism marketing for church growth.

	DF	Adj SS	MS	F-Value	P-Value
Factor	1	98561	98561	0.32	0.581
Error	18	5622054	312336		
Total	19	5720615			

Model Summary

S	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq(pred)
558.871	1.72%	0.00%	0.00%

Decision: Hypothesis Two

Section 4.1.2 shows that the F-critical (4.41) is greater than F-computed (0.32) at a 95 percent confidence interval (0.05 level of significance) and 19 degrees of freedom. In applying the decision rule, the null hypothesis is not rejected. The p-value provided additional insight into the decision. Assuming the null hypothesis is true, p-value would report the probability of getting a value of the test statistic, at least as extreme as the value actually obtained. The procedure involves a comparison of the p-value with significance level. The p-value, (0.581), is greater

than the significance level of 0.05, (i.e., $p > 0.05$), and the coefficient of determination, R^2 , is zero percent. The alternate hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis is upheld, confirming that the extent of church leadership's adoption of evangelism marketing, with effect size of zero percent, is non-significant for church growth.

5. Discussions

The literacy rate of the 764 leaders (respondents) selected from the sample size of 382 Pentecostal Churches in the South Eastern States of Nigeria is about 94 percent ranging from WASC/GCE to Ph.D. The profile of these literate respondents, constituting about 58 and 42 percent of males and females respectively, provided enlightened responses suitable for this study. The survey findings reveal that evangelism marketing has a strong positive relationship with church growth. The findings from the Focused Group Discussion revealed that the evangelistic efforts of members and church growth are mutually related. The group resolved that church membership and activities are bound to grow when the leadership creates an environment of lifestyle witnessing. The report of the study is in agreement with earlier studies linking evangelism with church growth. An example of a product of personal evangelism is Peter, the apostle of Jesus (Mathew 4:18-19). When Peter entered the mission field to present the profile of Jesus, three thousand people accepted Christ and were baptized (Acts 2:40-42). Personal evangelism has been proven to be the most effective method of evangelism (Azuka, 2020). The church's membership increases when the gospel message is proclaimed to people to make them realize their latent need for salvation endowed by the mystery of Christ's death. They are persuaded to accept the free gift of salvation and finally become part of the body.

The findings of the study also show that leadership of the Pentecostal churches has not significantly adopted evangelism marketing strategy. The Focus Group Discussants affirmed that the leadership of the church has not significantly deviated from the age-long practice of mass evangelism. There is the preponderance of the church leaders' preaching of evangelistic messages during church services, weddings, and burials aimed at soul winning, with minimal application of evangelism marketing strategy. Jesus, after his resurrection, provided a living example of personal evangelism when he converted Paul on his way to Damascus to an evangelism marketer (Acts.9:1-10). According to MacArthur (2010), the church has performed poorly in marketing the gospel and should adopt modern techniques to sell their products to

satisfy the consumers. Evangelism marketing entails face-to-face interaction. Church leaders should understand how believers and unbelievers behave concerning choices and decision patterns in order to market the gospel effectively. Evangelism marketing is less expensive than crusades or mass evangelism. The souls won at crusade grounds easily slip away unaccounted for unlike personal evangelism. Some categories of people who rarely attend crusades could be reached by carrying the gospel of Jesus to their homes. The unbelievers, who are extremely difficult to get their attention, could privately be reached without the intervention of detractors, by adopting evangelism marketing strategy. Evidence abound that many Christians who relentlessly serve God today are recruited through one-on-one evangelism.

Appah, & George,(2017)., noted that the consumer of a religious product does not make decisions in a vacuum. An understanding of the decision-making process of faith consumers therefore calls for the establishment of market-oriented programs in the church. Earlier studies posit that the church is not the maker of the products it sells but rather an agency of God, the ultimate granter of faith products. The authors noted that salvation is an individualized good, and mass marketing with sweeping promises will not yield meaningful impacts. Evangelism marketing sinks the gospel message into people's minds, leveraging on personal interactions while encouraging them to adhere to faith and remain in the church. Arli, & Pekerti, (2016), postulate that consumers of faith-related products should adopt the marketing decision model of need recognition, information search, evaluating alternatives, making a decision, and postpurchase behavior to make a choice. The adoption of the need recognition model led to the growth of the Christian community in Antioch, where each member showed concern for the welfare of the other, and the gesture attracted the attention of the neighborhood, who called them Christians(Act.2:43-47). The gospel message must capture people's needs (physical and spiritual), expectations, and aspirations to win them for Christ.

The target of evangelism marketing strategy is church growth. For evangelism marketing to permeate the fabrics of the skeptical society, it must embrace economic activities, political involvements, culture, and psychology of the people. Jesus Christ exemplified the role of Christians in building an enabling environment for the spread of the gospel. He impacted every sphere of human life, including paying personal taxes and attending social functions. The involvement of Christians in the affairs of society, including politics, should not overshadow the gospel of Jesus Christ but serve as a springboard for soul winning, mainly through lifestyle. In

summary, the survey shows an insignificant adoption of evangelism marketing strategy by the Pentecostal church leadership. Pope-Levison, P. (2020), remarked that a vital promising future for evangelism would happen when models uniquely suited to each particular context emerge. Therefore, a model designed explicitly for evangelism marketing becomes inevitable to guide churches to package the unadulterated word of God in meeting the needs of the people sequent to the great commission.

5.1 Network Model of Evangelism Marketing (N-MEM)

The center of evangelism is Jesus. Evangelism is the work of God, and His divine presence drives the process. He opens doors for the souls of men to be snatched from eternal damnation. Soon as the individual receives the gift of the Holy Spirit by confessing Christ as Lord and Savior, his walk-on righteous path with Christ commences. As a guarantee, God has given his Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:5), which transforms the hearts and minds of people and works within them (2 Corinthians 3:18), to become members of the church. The twenty-first century church is struggling with how to convince members to participate in evangelism.

The reluctance of most Christians to share their faith in Christ emanates from feelings of ill-preparedness. According to Appah,& George,(2017), church leaders should develop effective marketing models to spread the gospel message. The Network Model of Evangelism Marketing (N-MEM) posits that church leadership establishes an environment that fosters the creation of evangelism marketers starting from the top to down where members are excited about the gospel and enthusiastically share their experiences with others. The model advocates enthronement of permanent cycle of creating evangelism marketers among loyal members who in turn convert their recruits to evangelists, and sequentially the new evangelists recruit and create more evangelism marketers, resulting in ever growing army of evangelists, and church growth. The church leadership harnesses the volunteer labor source of evangelism marketers in an attempt to raise the next Paul of Tarsus for the gospel of Jesus Christ and in turn every Paul grows his own evangelists.

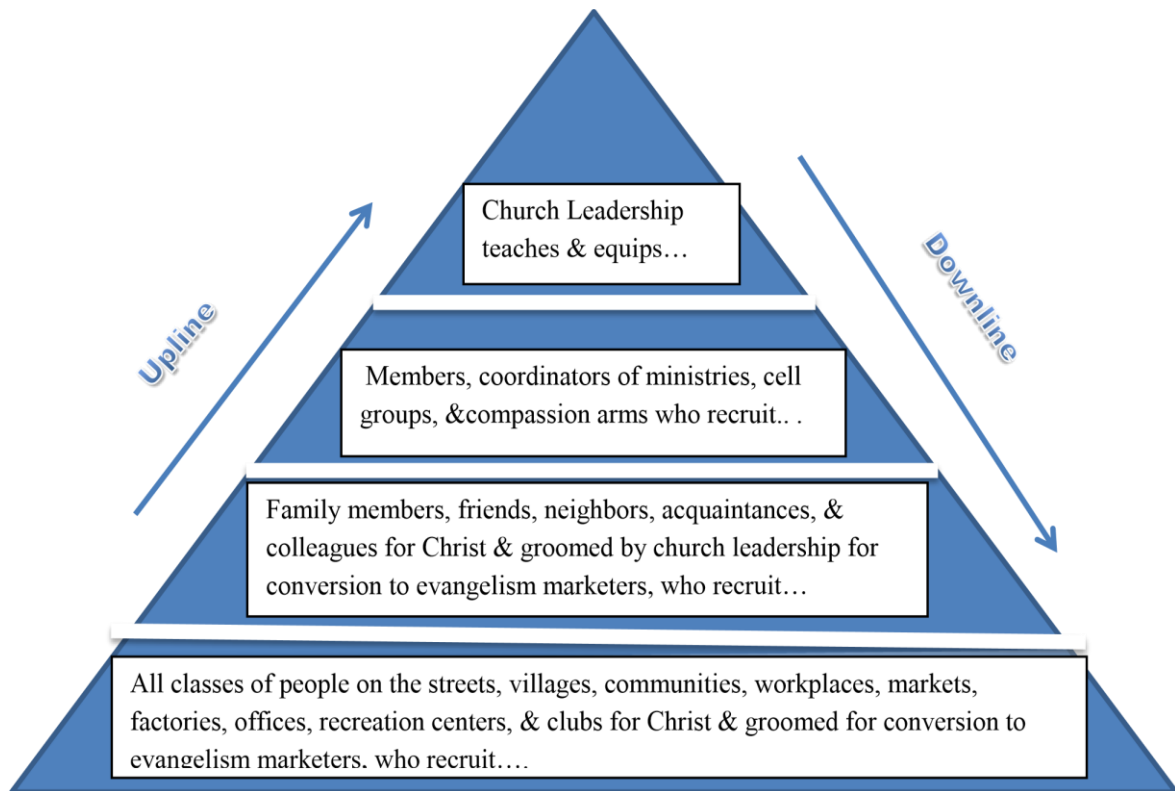


Figure 2. Network Model of Evangelism Marketing (N-MEM)

Source: Adapted from Multi-Level Marketing Model. forbes...forbes.com, Pope-Levison Models of Evangelism, Five Finger Gospel Model & Five Factor Personality Model.

The N-MEM attempts to blend the theory and practice of evangelism marketing without compromising the spiritual aspects. At the top of the pyramid is the church leadership (upline) who interacts, teaches and equips loyal members, including coordinators of various ministries, cell groups, ushers and compassion arms. Equipping embodies teachings on the timeless principles inherent in the call of God, assurance of salvation for the new birth, baby seating, gift identifications, and mentoring. Teachings encompass the process of knocking down the impelling old structures in the unbelievers' lives and replacing them with the word of God to form Christ in their hearts. The converts learn to cultivate the lifestyle of face-to-face presentation of the gospel (ministry work) to jointly build up the body of Christ to a position of strength and maturity (Ephesians 4:12). They become evangelism marketers and enthusiastically share their experiences of salvation with family members, friends, social contacts and acquaintances. The marketers should be extraverts, rooted in the church, hospitable, emotionally resilient, and of unquestionable integrity to showcase the personality of Jesus.

With the substance of the gospel message, viz, God loves me, I have sinned, Christ died for me, and if I believe, I will go to heaven, on their palms as memory tool, the new recruits move into the mission field with inward fire to minister one-on-one to people, door to door, along the streets, in the markets, workplaces, factories, government offices, clubs and invite the unbelievers (downline) to church. Apostle Paul once remarked that “I have become all things to all men, that I might, by all means, save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). Christians should break barriers of racism, gender, clannishness, social status, religious bigotry to build personal relationships with people of diverse ethnicities, modeling the Christian faith, and season every conversation with gospel references. Church leadership and experienced evangelists should be accessible to the new recruits and motivate them to continually fuel their passion for lifestyle witnessing. Passionate communities of volunteer sales force online and offline, or blog are created through the evangelistic efforts of these recruits from all works of life, to meet regularly with church leadership. The community should be committed to the teachings of the church leadership, communal life, common meal, and prayers (Acts 3:41-42.MSG) and create buzz of excitement about the gospel. The ultimate goals of this network model are the creation of levels of evangelism marketers for the spread of the gospel and the influx of new converts to the church. The needs-driven activities such as hospitality, welfare, compassion, and visitations should form church programs to encourage converts to remain active in faith.

5.2 Implications of the study

The study initiates a paradigm shift from the church leadership’s age-long evangelism practices to continually creating a volunteer labor force of evangelism marketers who in turn raise their own evangelists to pursue soul-winning, and sustain membership drive, for the growth of the twenty-first century church.

5.3 Conclusion

The bedrock of Christian faith is the reality and hope of salvation revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (atonement). “God is the absolute reality that everyone in the universe must come to terms with. Everything depends utterly on His will” (Piper,(2003) cited in Baeza, (2013). The sin of the world is unbelief in Christ Jesus (John16:9, TLB). The sinners cannot believe the gospel messages except someone preaches to them because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:14-17). Therefore, the responsibility of

every Christian is to witness Jesus one-on-one to the lost world until Christ is formed in their hearts. The survey reveals a strong positive relationship between life witnessing (evangelism marketing) and church growth. Frequent exposure of people to the unadulterated word of God convicts them to become church members through the power of the Holy Spirit. Church growth is manifested through church attendance, activities, and membership size. The findings of the study also show that the leadership of the Pentecostal Churches in the South Eastern States of Nigeria has not significantly adopted evangelism marketing strategy in their programs.

Church leadership should exhibit inexhaustible enthusiasm for evangelism marketing culture and direct all efforts to effectively raising evangelism marketers among loyal members. Any church leadership with crowded programs, devoid of converting members to evangelism marketers needs a re-focus. To enlist in the timeless global purpose of God, enshrined in the Great Commission, the church's leadership needs marketing orientation for enhanced performance. The church's programs should incorporate marketing philosophies/principles and provisions for budgetary allocations to effect marketing communications geared toward church growth. The fullness of the gospel manifests when believers live sinless and strongly connected to Christ. The evangelism messages should give confidence at precarious times such as the Covid-19 pandemic era, insecurity, banditry, kidnapping, and political assassinations. With the preponderance of hopelessness in today's world and everybody crying for help, including the rich, and without success, Jesus is the only solution to man's challenges.

Evangelism marketing would exert a strong influence in society when it touches every sphere of human life, including economic activities, political involvements, culture, and psychology. Through marketing-oriented activities, the church leadership should aim at elevating members to a new threshold of faith in Christ where they can embrace life with the newness of hope, courage, resistance, and enthusiastically share their experiences of salvation with others. The true face of evangelism marketing reflects victory over sin, oppression, and temptation. The measure of church growth should go beyond its membership size to include the commitment of church leadership to the responsibility of raising gospel enthusiasts who in turn would create evangelists and keep alive the hopes of people in despair. The gospel message should capture the needs (physical and spiritual), expectations, and aspirations of the people to win them for Christ. The Network Model of Evangelism Marketing (N-NEM) reiterates the establishment of

permanent cycle of creating evangelism marketers among loyal members who in turn convert their recruits to evangelists for soul winning and church growth. The church leadership ought to take advantage of the volunteer labor source of evangelism marketers in an attempt to raise the next Paul of Tarsus for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The twenty-first-century church leadership in the Eastern States of Nigeria needs to adopt the Network Model of Evangelism Marketing in creating pools of gospel marketers to stimulate hunger for the salvation of souls and fast track church growth.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations would enhance soul-winning and church growth activities through the window of Network Model of Evangelism Marketing.

- i. The church leadership should adopt the Network Model of Evangelism Marketing and create a strong base of volunteer force (loyalists) for conversion into evangelism marketers to fast track church growth.
- ii. The church leadership should establish an enabling environment for continuous teaching and equipping of new recruits and other believers to foster a cycle of creating evangelists.
- iii. The evangelism marketers should be rooted in the word of God, extraverts, hospitable and of impeccable integrity to reflect the personality of Jesus Christ.
- iv. The Church leadership should be accessible to the new recruits at all times to fuel their passion to share experiences of encounters with Jesus within the vicinity (friends, colleagues/acquaintances) and to people on the streets, at home, offices, marketplaces.
- v. Christians should endeavor to build and maintain relationships with people and effectively utilize every contact point to express the mystery of Christ Jesus. People tend to listen and believe those they have relationships with than strange fellows.
- vi. Christians should break barriers of racism, gender, clannishness, social status, to interact with new converts and nurture them for evangelistic mission.
- vii. The Church leadership should make annual budgetary allocations for the church's marketing promotional activities and welfare programs, including hospitality.
- viii. The church leadership should establish community of gospel enthusiasts online, offline or blogs and encourage regular meetings to clear objections/obstacles to spread the gospel.
- ix. Evangelism marketers should create a buzz of excitement about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to pave the way for soul winning and church growth.
- x. The church leadership should incorporate needs-driven activities such as hospitality, welfare, compassion, and visitations into its programs to encourage new converts.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

With the advent of the early missionaries through Asa-Ugbobeke in Ukwa, Abia State, to the rest of Eastern Nigeria, the South-East zone provided a veritable environment for the research work. The study is limited to Christian leaders in the 382 selected Pentecostal Churches in the South Eastern States of Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The church leadership comprises the General Overseers and most Senior Pastors of each Church. Gaining access to the respondents in the entire region in view of the fragile security situation in the country required the services of paid research assistants. The respondents' apathy orchestrated frequent visits to the selected churches to collect the questionnaires with its cost implications. However, further research may be necessary over time to determine the impact of the Network Model of Evangelism Marketing on church growth.

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