

**THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE OF THE NIGERIAN EVANGELICAL MISSION
ASSOCIATION (NEMA) IN IBADAN IN THE LIGHT OF HENRY VENN'S PRINCIPLE
ON MISSION**

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ON MISSION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES,
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CHURCH HISTORY**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Wilson Ehianu in the Department of Religions, University of Benin, Benin City.

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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned do hereby certify that this work was carried out by Favour Juliana Esegbue in the Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my darling husband Pastor Paul Esegbue

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Declaration	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Acknowledgements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vii
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study	3
1.4 Clarification of Terms	4
1.4.1 Missionary	4
1.4.2 Enterprise	6
1.4.3 Evangelism	8
1.4.4 Evangelical	11
1.4.5 Mission	14
1.4.6 Association	16
1.4.7 Principle	19

1.5 Methodology of the Study	
22	
1.6 Justification of the Study	
23	
1.7 Significance of the Study	
23	
1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study	
24	

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Mission	26
2.2 Mission in the Old Testament	27
2.3 Mission in the New Testament	27
2.4 Mission in the Early Church	30
2.5 Mission in the Medieval Period (500-1500)	31
2.6 Mission in Contemporary Times: Prospects and Challenges	33
2.7 Review of Related Documents on Venn's Principle on Mission	37
2.8 Review of Christian Doctrine in Mission	39
2.9 The History of Ibadan City	41
2.10 Synthesis and Identified Gaps	44

CHAPTER THREE: HENRY VENN AND HIS PRINCIPLES OF MISSION

3.1 A Short Biography of Henry Venn/ Missionary Career	46
3.2 Venn's Principles of Mission (the formation of the 3 self)	47

3.2.1 Self Supporting	49
3.2.2 Self Propagating	51
3.2.3 Self Governing	52
3.3 Critics of Venn's Principles	56
3.4 Related Missionary Documents	61

CHAPTER FOUR: THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY TO NIGERIA

4.1 The Niger Mission Expedition of 1841	66
4.2 Christianity at Badagry and Calabar	66
4.3 The Yoruba Mission of 1846	67
4.4 Achievements and Failures of the Mission Churches	68
4.5 The Emergence of Indigenous Churches	69
4.6 The Gospel Charismatic Churches	69

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NIGERIA EVANGELICAL MISSION ASSOCIATION IN IBADAN

5.1 History of the Nigeria Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA)	72
5.2 Aim and Objectives of NEMA	74
5.3 Organisational Structure	75
5.4 Member Agencies	77
5.5 NEMA's Missionary Strategies/Outreaches	81
5.6 Funding	92

CHAPTER SIX: CHURCHES FOUNDED BY NEMA AND HER AGENCIES

6.1.1 Sinai Global Ministry, Ibadan	95
6.1.2 Missionary Purse International, Bodija Ibadan	99
6.1.3 Fellowship Church Lagos	103

6.1.4 Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF)	105
6.1.5 Reach the Rest Ministry, Osogbo	107
6.1.6 First Baptist Church Ipole, Ilesa	109
6.2.0 Analysis of Nema Founded Churches in Relation to Venn's 3 Self Goal of Mission	
6.2.I NEMA and the Principle of Self-supporting	110
6.2.II NEMA and the Principle of Self Propagation	110
6.4 Result Analysis of Questionnaire	114
6.5 Tabular and Graphic Representation of Data	116
6.6 Tabular Representation of Data	116
6.7 Graphic Representation of Data	116
 CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY	
7.1 Summary	120
7.2 Evaluation of the Findings of the Study	123
7.3 Conclusion	127
7.4 Recommendations	128
7.5 Contribution to Knowledge	129
7.6 Suggestions for further study	130
References	131
APPENDIX	137

List of Abbreviations	137
Table of persons interviewed	140
Questionnaire	139
Figures	
Fig 1: Map of Ibadan	46
Fig 11: <i>Modus Operandi</i> (Mode of Operation)	77
Appendix I: Research Questionnaire	115
Appendix II: Data of Respondents	115
Appendix III: Photo Gallery of Respondents	142

Abstract

In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to himself those he desired, and they came to him. The aim of this study was to evaluate the missionary enterprise of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) in Ibadan in light of Henry Venn's threefold principles of mission.

Some churches and mission organisations in Ibadan who are members of NEMA were assessed with the prism of Henry Venn's principles of self-supporting, self propagating and self governing. The methodology adopted for this study was historical and Phenomenological. The level of compliance and achievement of churches and missionary bodies which were registered with NEMA in realising these mission fundamentals informed the application of questionnaires and interview which were thoroughly analysed to secure accurate result.

The findings revealed that through collaboration and networking which were the core principles of NEMA, some member churches and agencies had been better placed to carry out the Lord's command. It further revealed that though NEMA was the umbrella body for missions in Nigeria, many churches were yet to identify with it. Lastly, based on the principles of Henry Venn, churches/mission organisations find it difficult to raise adequate fund amongst nationals, though it was easier for indigens to propagate indigenous work. Therefore, there is the need for collaboration and corporation. Time, finance and the reluctance of participants to divulged necessary information posed some challenge. However, painstaking effort was made to secure the needed information. Efforts should be made towards creating awareness on the goals and *modus operandi* of NEMA and getting churches to key into her vision to be able to meet up with the goals of mission.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to himself those he desired, and they came to him. He appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach and exercise authority over demons (Mark 3:13–14). Over time, the number of disciples expanded. In Luke 10:1–24, seventy others were commissioned and sent out in pairs to proclaim the Good News. Jesus reminded them that the harvest was plentiful but the labourers few, and he charged them to go as sheep among wolves. Upon their return, they rejoiced, reporting that even demons submitted to them in his name.

After his death and resurrection, Jesus gave his disciples what is known as the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:18–20). However, he first instructed them to wait for empowerment from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). On the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4), the Spirit descended on about 120 disciples gathered in the Upper Room, resulting in miraculous signs and the conversion of approximately 3,000 people. Shortly after, another 5,000 were added to the Church, and the movement continued to grow.

The spread of Christianity gained further momentum with the conversion of Constantine in 312 CE, which legitimized Christianity in the Roman Empire and opened Europe to the Gospel (Ehianu, 2024). The sixteenth century brought renewed missionary fervour as the Roman

Catholic Church and Protestant movements expanded globally. Following the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, European missionary bodies penetrated West Africa, introducing the Gospel alongside denominational divisions. While progress was made, denominational rivalry and mutual distrust hindered unity in mission.

The need for collaboration inspired the rise of interdenominational missionary associations to coordinate efforts. By the 1970s, indigenous mission movements such as Calvary Ministries, the Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), and the Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES) emerged, pioneering evangelism in Nigeria's hinterlands. The 1980s marked a further expansion, culminating in the formation of umbrella bodies to provide synergy, recognition, and collaboration. Among these was the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), founded in 1982 with 154 registered member agencies.

Over the years, NEMA has mobilized, trained, and coordinated its members in evangelism, discipleship, and community development. Through its member agencies, schools and health facilities have been established in Ibadan and surrounding areas, while humanitarian interventions have supported internally displaced persons and victims of disasters. Despite challenges, NEMA remains resolute in advancing its mission to reach the unreached in line with the Great Commission. This study evaluates NEMA's missionary enterprise in Ibadan, employing Henry Venn's threefold principles of self-support, self-propagation, and self-governance in order to determine the extent of compliance, identify existing gaps, and propose strategies for enhancing indigenous mission effectiveness.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

NEMA has been in existence in Nigeria since 1982. The association has committed itself to mobilising sister agencies to achieve the common goal of reaching the unreached with the Gospel and providing believers with the atmosphere to flourish with the faith. Though NEMA has operated in Ibadan for over forty years, its origin, progress and impact on mission remain relatively unknown to the people. Hence many mission bodies and church groups cannot avail themselves of the inherent potentials and benefits the body offers in the area of building a truly local and independent church. The study therefore, seeks to evaluate the missionary enterprise of NEMA so as to create an awareness of its potential churches stand to benefit.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study was to evaluate the missionary enterprise of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) in Ibadan in light of Henry Venn's threefold principles of mission in order to determine the extent of compliance, identify existing gaps, and propose strategies for enhancing indigenous mission effectiveness. The specific objectives were:

- I. to ascertain the level of compliance of NEMA churches with the principle of self-supporting;
- II. to examine the extent to which NEMA and its member agencies in Ibadan have realized the principle of self-propagating;
- III. to investigate the degree of compliance of NEMA mission churches with the principle of self-governing;
- IV. to raise awareness on the importance of networking among missionaries and agencies on the field; and
- V. to identify the challenges and prospects of mission agencies in Ibadan.

1.4 Clarification of Terms

For the purpose of conceptual clarity and consistency, it is essential to define the key terms used throughout this study. Since scholarly discourse often employs terms such as mission, missionary, enterprise, evangelical, association, and principle in varying contexts, this section provides working definitions tailored to the focus of this research. These clarifications ensure that each term is understood within the framework of Henry Venn's Three-Self Theory and the operational dynamics of NEMA.

1.4.1 Concept of a Missionary: The concept of a missionary originates from the Latin term *missio*, meaning "to send," and refers to an individual who is commissioned to undertake a designated task beyond their immediate cultural or geographical environment (Bosch, 2011). Within Christian theology and missiological studies, the term denotes a person who participates in the *missio Dei*, the mission of God, by contributing to the realization of God's redemptive purpose among diverse peoples and nations (Wright, 2006). Historically, the missionary enterprise was largely associated with Western expatriates who were deployed to Africa, Asia, and Latin America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This pattern reflected the dominant Western perception of mission as a unidirectional activity, "from the West to the rest." However, with the global shift in the demographic and theological centre of Christianity, contemporary missiology acknowledges a pluralistic paradigm in which mission is now understood as "from everywhere to everywhere," allowing for reciprocal missionary movements between the Global South and other parts of the world (Sanneh, 2008).

Within this evolving framework, the emergence of African-led initiatives such as the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) represents a significant redefinition of the missionary identity. NEMA and similar movements embody the transition from being recipients of mission to becoming active agents of global mission engagement. In this context, a missionary may be defined as an individual or group mobilized by a church or mission agency to engage in activities that promote church planting, discipleship, community transformation, and leadership development. Missionary work therefore extends beyond the narrow focus of evangelism to encompass social and developmental dimensions such as literacy education, healthcare provision, agricultural advancement, conflict mediation, and economic empowerment (Walls, 1996). Such a multidimensional approach integrates spiritual and socio-economic interventions as complementary expressions of the Christian mission.

This understanding aligns with Henry Venn's nineteenth-century proposition that the missionary's role is transitional rather than permanent. Venn conceptualized the missionary as a "temporary scaffolding" intended to support the establishment of an indigenous church capable of sustaining itself through self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation (Venn, 1971). His critique of prolonged missionary control emphasized that dependency weakens indigenous initiative and hinders the long-term vitality of local Christian communities. Thus, the ideal missionary functions as a catalyst for local capacity building and institutional independence.

In the Nigerian context, contemporary missionary engagement reflects both geographical and functional diversity. Missionaries are not limited to international deployment but are actively involved in cross-cultural work within the nation itself, among ethnic groups such as the Fulani,

Baruba, and Kanuri, or in neighbouring countries including Niger, Benin, and Liberia. Many Nigerian missionaries operate as bivocational workers, integrating ministry with income-generating activities such as farming, trade, or skilled labour. This approach embodies Venn's principle of self-support and ensures sustainability within challenging socio-economic contexts. The modern missionary, therefore, functions as a preacher, facilitator, community developer, and cultural mediator who contributes to both spiritual and social transformation.

Accordingly, this thesis defines a missionary as an individual called and commissioned to advance the Christian message across cultural, linguistic, or geographical boundaries through proclamation and practical engagement, with the ultimate objective of establishing indigenous, self-sustaining, and multiplying Christian communities.

1.4.2 Concept of Enterprise in Missiological Context: The concept of enterprise generally denotes a structured, goal-oriented, and resource-driven initiative that involves planning, innovation, and coordinated execution toward achieving a defined objective (Drucker, 1993). In its secular usage, the term is commonly associated with business or entrepreneurial ventures where creativity, organization, and management of resources are applied to accomplish measurable outcomes. Within the field of missiology, however, the term acquires a broader and more purpose-driven meaning. It transcends commercial connotations to describe the collective and strategic undertaking of Christian missions aimed at advancing the Gospel across cultural, linguistic, and geographical boundaries through deliberate organization and sustained collaboration.

In the missiological sense, enterprise captures the systematic dimension of missionary engagement, emphasizing that missions are not spontaneous or haphazard activities but intentional, well-coordinated operations involving vision casting, strategic planning, mobilization of resources, and measurable impact. Thus, missionary enterprise, as used in this thesis, refers to the organized system through which churches and mission agencies conceptualize, finance, and implement evangelistic and developmental programs. It encompasses the processes of defining mission vision and objectives for specific people groups, mobilizing human and material resources through local and international partnerships, deploying missionaries based on research-informed strategies, building the capacity of indigenous leaders through discipleship and vocational empowerment, and evaluating outcomes not merely in terms of numerical growth but through the sustainability of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating church structures, as articulated by Henry Venn.

The enterprise dimension of mission becomes evident in the operational model of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), which functions not as a loose coalition of independent ministries but as a coordinated consortium designed to foster inter-agency collaboration. NEMA exemplifies how missionary work functions as a strategic enterprise rather than a spontaneous act of zeal. Through joint initiatives, member agencies pool knowledge, manpower, and logistical support to accomplish collective objectives that would otherwise exceed their individual capacities. For example, in one documented instance from this study, when a member agency received an opportunity for church planting in the Niger Republic but lacked sufficient resources, collaboration with another agency within NEMA enabled the successful establishment of over ten churches. Such coordinated effort demonstrates that

effective missions require systematic organization, interdependence, and strategic management—attributes characteristic of enterprise.

This enterprise-oriented approach to missions aligns with Henry Venn's nineteenth-century vision of missionaries as “temporary scaffolding” or “spiritual entrepreneurs” whose responsibility is to pioneer Christian work, develop indigenous leadership, and withdraw once local self-sufficiency is achieved (Venn, 1971). Venn's emphasis on sustainability parallels contemporary missiological thought, where scholars such as Sanneh (2008) highlight the necessity for missions to be locally resourced, structurally organized, and globally networked in order to remain relevant in contexts of financial limitation and cultural complexity.

Therefore, within the context of this thesis, enterprise is defined as the intentional, collaborative, and sustainable mobilization of spiritual, human, and material resources for the planting, nurturing, and multiplication of indigenous churches in alignment with Venn's Three-Self Principle. This conception situates missionary activity within a strategic framework that integrates theological vision with practical organization, thereby repositioning missions as a deliberate socio-religious enterprise requiring institutional planning, disciplined coordination, and innovative adaptability.

1.4.3 Concept of Evangelism in Relation to Indigenous Mission and NEMA's Strategic Framework: The concept of evangelism originates from the Greek term euangelion, meaning

“good news” or “glad tidings” (Bosch, 1991). In Christian theology, evangelism refers to the intentional proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ with the purpose of leading individuals or communities into faith, repentance, and discipleship (Stott, 1992). It embodies both a message and a mandate—the message being the redemptive work of Christ, and the mandate arising from His command in Matthew 28:19–20, commonly known as the Great Commission. Within the broader framework of Christian mission, evangelism functions as the central driving force, serving as the spearhead through which the church communicates the message of salvation and extends the influence of the Kingdom of God.

While the term mission encompasses a wide spectrum of activities—including social engagement, community development, and holistic transformation—evangelism remains its essential and initiating component. As Piper (2010) observes, evangelism is the verbal and practical proclamation of salvation, through which mission gains both its direction and vitality. Within the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), evangelism constitutes the operational foundation upon which its member agencies pursue cross-cultural outreach, church planting, and disciple-making among both reached and unreached peoples within and beyond Nigeria. It provides the theological and methodological core around which all missionary strategies are organized.

In the context of indigenous mission, evangelism must be contextual, culturally sensitive, and locally driven to ensure long-term sustainability. This understanding aligns with the self-propagating aspect of Henry Venn’s Three-Self Principle, which emphasizes that a genuinely indigenous church must possess the capacity to reproduce itself without continuous external

dependency (Venn, 1971). Evangelism, therefore, extends beyond mere conversion; it must lead to the formation of communities capable of evangelizing others within their cultural and linguistic contexts.

Among NEMA-affiliated mission agencies, evangelism is expressed through diverse and adaptive models that reflect both contextual realities and theological conviction. Personal and relational evangelism, which involves one-on-one witnessing and family-based outreach, remains particularly effective in rural and Muslim-dominated areas where interpersonal trust forms the foundation for gospel receptivity. Mass or crusade evangelism—through open-air campaigns, film outreaches, and public preaching—serves as a pioneering strategy for entry into new mission fields. Similarly, social-action evangelism integrates gospel proclamation with acts of service such as medical missions, literacy education, and clean-water initiatives, thus opening doors in communities where direct preaching might encounter resistance. In addition, the growing use of media-based evangelism, including radio broadcasts, digital tracts, and mobile communication platforms like WhatsApp, provides innovative avenues for reaching restricted or remote areas.

A critical concern within missiological discourse, and particularly within the framework of this thesis, is whether evangelism as practiced by mission agencies results in empowerment or dependency. Henry Venn's critique of dependency remains pertinent: evangelism must not merely produce converts who rely perpetually on external resources but must cultivate disciples who, in turn, become evangelists and leaders within their contexts (Shenk, 1983). Consequently, evangelism that fails to transition into indigenous ownership and self-multiplication is regarded

as incomplete. NEMA's strategic emphasis reflects this conviction by promoting partnership over paternalism and ensuring that evangelism naturally evolves into discipleship and leadership development, thus fulfilling the self-propagating criterion of an indigenous mission.

In regions marked by resistance and persecution—such as Northern Nigeria, the Niger Republic, and parts of Ondo and Taraba States—evangelism assumes an additional dimension as an act of faith and resilience. In these contexts, where believers may gather in huts, under trees, or in secluded spaces, evangelism becomes both a spiritual and missiological declaration that the gospel advances not through comfort but through conviction (Tennent, 2010).

Within the framework of this thesis, evangelism is therefore understood not merely as proclamation but as a comprehensive missional strategy that embodies identity, purpose, and sustainability. It represents the heartbeat of NEMA's operations, the foundation of indigenous mission growth, and the practical realization of Henry Venn's vision of a self-propagating church. Accordingly, evangelism may be defined as the intentional and contextually grounded communication of the Christian gospel aimed at transforming individuals and communities, fostering indigenous ownership of faith, and establishing self-sustaining, disciple-making church movements across cultural boundaries.

1.4.4 Concept of Evangelical in the Context of Missionary Work: The term evangelical is derived from the Greek word euangelion, meaning “good news” or “Gospel,” and historically referred to individuals and movements devoted to the proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ. In its earliest usage, the term denoted those who emphasized the authority of Scripture

and the centrality of Christ's atoning work as the foundation of faith and practice. Over time, however, and particularly within modern ecclesiastical and missiological discourse, evangelical has evolved from a purely theological descriptor into a broader movement characterized by an active commitment to Scripture-based belief, personal conversion, mission-oriented service, and the expansion of the Christian church (Bebbington, 1989).

David Bebbington's well-known "Evangelical Quadrilateral" offers a framework for understanding evangelical identity through four defining characteristics: biblicism—a high regard for Scripture as the ultimate authority in matters of faith and conduct; crucicentrism—a focus on the redemptive significance of the death and resurrection of Christ; conversionism—an emphasis on personal repentance, spiritual rebirth, and transformed life; and activism—a commitment to evangelism, philanthropy, and missionary engagement. Among these, activism is of particular relevance to this thesis, as it represents the practical outworking of evangelical faith in mission. Evangelicals perceive the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) not as a theological ideal but as a divine mandate requiring intentional, organized, and sustained missionary action.

In the Nigerian missionary landscape, evangelicalism has been instrumental in redefining mission ownership and leadership. It provided the theological and organizational impetus for the transition from Western-dominated missions to indigenous missionary initiatives. The establishment of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) in 1982 exemplifies this shift. Through the collaboration of agencies such as Calvary Ministries (CAPRO), the Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS), and the Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF),

evangelical movements in Nigeria consolidated their shared conviction that missions must be locally envisioned, resourced, and led. This development marked a decisive step in realizing indigenous evangelism and church growth through coordinated evangelical enterprise.

In this context, evangelical does not merely signify adherence to a set of doctrinal beliefs but also connotes a strategic and organizational orientation toward mission. It reflects an intentional mobilization of local churches and believers to reach unreached people groups without reliance on foreign control or denominational paternalism. This orientation aligns closely with Henry Venn's vision of indigenous ecclesiology, which advocates for the establishment of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches as the hallmark of mature Christianity (Venn, 1971). Evangelical identity, therefore, fuses theological conviction with practical initiative, grounding missionary work in biblical fidelity and contextual autonomy.

Furthermore, evangelicalism in Nigeria functions as a catalyst for indigenous church growth by emphasizing grassroots evangelism, lay participation, and discipleship-based expansion. Unlike earlier mission organizations that were closely tied to colonial structures and institutional hierarchies, evangelical missions prioritize relational witness over sacramental ritual, local empowerment over clerical authority, and dynamic church planting over denominational maintenance. This focus has enabled NEMA-affiliated agencies to plant thousands of churches across Nigeria and in other parts of Africa, combining theological urgency with strategic execution informed by Venn's Three-Self Principle.

Accordingly, within the framework of this thesis, an evangelical is defined as a believer, organization, or movement characterized by a Scripture-centered faith, a commitment to personal and communal transformation through the gospel, and an active engagement in cross-cultural mission aimed at establishing indigenous, self-reliant, and reproducing churches.

1.4.5 Concept of Association in Missiological and Organizational Context: The term association denotes a voluntary and organized alliance formed by individuals or groups to pursue shared objectives within a structured yet cooperative framework (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). From an organizational perspective, an association functions as a networked entity in which autonomous members collaborate to achieve common goals through mutual support, resource sharing, and strategic coordination (Salamon & Anheier, 1997). It is distinguished from hierarchical institutions by its participatory nature, decentralized structure, and emphasis on collective purpose rather than authoritative control.

Within missiological discourse, an association refers to a cooperative platform through which churches, mission agencies, and Christian leaders unite to advance evangelistic, educational, and developmental goals. It provides an institutional mechanism for collaboration, strategic planning, and accountability in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Unlike denominational systems that operate under centralized authority, missional associations are characterized by voluntary participation, shared vision, and a commitment to mutual empowerment rather than subordination (Adeyemo, 1997). In this sense, an association functions as both a relational and strategic instrument that harmonizes diverse efforts toward the collective propagation of the Gospel.

The concept of association aligns closely with Henry Venn's missiological philosophy, particularly his advocacy of the Three-Self Principle—self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation (Venn, 1971). Venn envisioned indigenous churches that were autonomous yet collaborative, capable of sustaining themselves while engaging in cooperative partnerships with other mission entities. His model did not negate interdependence but sought to ensure that cooperation strengthened rather than supplanted local initiative. Within this framework, an association becomes a catalyst for strategic interdependence—a structure through which mission agencies can share resources and expertise without undermining the independence and contextual identity of local churches. It is, therefore, both a safeguard against isolation and a platform for coordinated mission advancement.

In the Nigerian evangelical setting, the concept of association finds its most organized expression in the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA). Established in 1982, NEMA represents a cooperative body that unites more than 180 mission agencies, churches, and theological institutions under a shared mandate of evangelizing unreached peoples. Rather than functioning as a regulatory authority, NEMA operates as a facilitating hub, promoting synergy, coordination, and strategic networking among its members. Its key functions include: Fostering partnerships to prevent duplication of mission efforts and enhance complementary engagement, Coordinating national and continental mission initiatives such as Vision 50/15+, designed to mobilize thousands of missionaries across Africa and the Middle East, Providing capacity-building programs in cross-cultural missions, tentmaking, linguistic training, and indigenous economic sustainability, Serving as a communication and support bridge between field

missionaries, sending churches, and international partners. Through these roles, NEMA exemplifies how associations can operationalize the ideals of Venn's mission philosophy, ensuring that indigenous missions remain both self-reliant and globally connected.

Associations play a crucial role in sustaining indigenous missions by institutionalizing collaboration and providing structures that uphold Venn's Three-Self Principle. In practical terms: Self-Support is enhanced through collective fundraising, joint stewardship of resources, and economic empowerment initiatives. Self-Governance is strengthened through shared leadership development, training, and inter-mission accountability frameworks. Self-Propagation is facilitated through coordinated evangelistic campaigns and unified mobilization strategies that extend the reach of local missions. Without such associative mechanisms, many indigenous mission agencies would struggle with isolation, limited resources, and inefficiency, particularly in cross-cultural or hostile contexts. Thus, within the scope of this thesis, an association is defined as a collaborative and non-hierarchical alliance of mission-oriented entities that unite for strategic cooperation, resource optimization, and the coordinated advancement of the Gospel, while preserving the autonomy and indigenous identity of each member body. In essence, association transforms fragmented individual efforts into cohesive and sustainable movements for global evangelization.

1.4.6 Concept of Principle in Missiological and Organizational Context: The term principle denotes a foundational truth, value, or guiding rule that directs thought, decision-making, and behavior (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Within academic discourse, principles function as normative frameworks or strategic directives that shape policy formation, organizational conduct, and

evaluative standards across various disciplines (Johnson, 2019). They represent not abstract notions but operational norms that sustain coherence, accountability, and purposeful direction within any system of practice. In Christian theology and missiology, the concept of principle carries an even deeper connotation, referring to biblically grounded or doctrinally derived mandates that govern the church's mission, administration, and witness to the world (Bosch, 1991). These principles define how believers approach evangelism, discipleship, church governance, financial stewardship, and inter-ministerial cooperation. Thus, in missional and organizational contexts alike, principles provide the foundational architecture upon which consistent, sustainable, and faithful practice is built.

A classic illustration of principle in mission theory is found in the 19th-century missiological framework of Henry Venn, whose Three-Self Principle became one of the most enduring paradigms of global mission strategy (Shenk, 1983). Venn articulated that for a church to be authentically indigenous, it must exhibit three interdependent capacities: self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation. A self-supporting church sustains its ministries financially without ongoing foreign aid. A self-governing church exercises administrative and leadership authority locally, free from external control. A self-propagating church expands naturally through its own evangelistic initiatives, reproducing itself across new communities. These were not merely philosophical ideals but binding principles—functional standards by which the maturity and authenticity of a local church could be evaluated. Venn contended that Christian communities dependent on perpetual foreign oversight risked spiritual stagnation and structural fragility. Hence, his principles sought to ensure that missions produced empowered, contextually

rooted, and spiritually autonomous churches rather than perpetually dependent congregations (Venn, 1971).

In alignment with Venn's foundational vision, the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) operates as an association guided by enduring missional principles rather than hierarchical control. NEMA's organizational philosophy emphasizes principled collaboration, an approach in which shared values shape strategic operations and collective mission engagement. Among these principles are synergy over isolation, which prioritizes inter-agency cooperation over denominational rivalry; indigenous leadership priority, which entrusts local mission fields to national pastors rather than expatriate leaders; shared responsibility, which promotes joint funding and cooperative deployment of missionaries to mitigate burnout and dependency; and mutual accountability, which ensures ethical integrity and stewardship among member organizations. Through these guiding principles, NEMA sustains an environment in which missions remain contextually grounded, theologically sound, and strategically united.

Within the scope of this thesis, principle refers to an enduring, prescriptive, and evaluative framework that governs missionary operation. It functions simultaneously as a prescriptive standard, defining what ought to be done; an evaluative measure, assessing the effectiveness of ongoing work; and a corrective guide, identifying areas requiring strategic or theological adjustment. Principles, therefore, serve as the compass that ensures alignment between biblical mandates and operational realities in the field of missions.

Principles constitute the backbone of sustainable mission practice, determining whether missionary engagement produces dependency or empowerment. In the absence of clear guiding principles, mission efforts risk degenerating into welfare-oriented activities that yield temporary relief but little long-term transformation. Without the discipline of principle, churches may expand numerically while remaining structurally weak and spiritually immature. Conversely, the consistent application of principles, particularly those articulated by Venn, ensures that mission practice is guided by sound theology, contextual wisdom, and strategic foresight.

For NEMA, adherence to such principles safeguards the balance between cooperation and autonomy. It ensures that collaborative action strengthens rather than substitutes indigenous responsibility. By upholding these principles, NEMA fosters local ownership of mission initiatives, encourages the development of self-sustaining churches, and promotes interdependence grounded in mutual respect. In this sense, principles are not static doctrines but dynamic instruments that continually orient mission practice toward both theological faithfulness and organizational sustainability.

1.4.7 Concept of Mission in Christian and Missiological Context. The term mission originates from the Latin *missio*, meaning “to send,” and in Christian theology it conveys the purposeful sending of God’s people to participate in His redemptive work in the world. At its core, mission derives from the theological concept of the *missio Dei*, the “mission of God”, which emphasizes that all missionary endeavor begins with God Himself. Humanity does not initiate mission; rather, the Church joins in the divine activity that God is already accomplishing among the nations

(Wright, 2006). This understanding situates mission as both divine and participatory: it is God's initiative carried out through human obedience.

Historically, mission was often limited to cross-cultural evangelism conducted primarily by Western expatriates who viewed their task as bringing the Gospel to non-Christian regions. However, contemporary missiology has broadened this understanding to include a holistic engagement that integrates proclamation with practical demonstration. Mission is no longer confined to verbal evangelism but encompasses the full expression of the Gospel through word and deed. It includes evangelism and discipleship, church planting and leadership development, and social transformation in areas such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and advocacy for justice. It also involves cultural contextualization—the adaptation of the Christian message to local worldviews and traditions without compromising its core truths. Bosch (2011) underscores this expanded perspective by asserting that mission is not merely about geographical relocation but about embodying the Kingdom of God wherever one is sent. In this sense, mission becomes a lived reality, a witness to God's reign in every cultural, social, and spiritual sphere.

Within the framework of this study, mission is examined through the influential missiological philosophy of Henry Venn, whose Three-Self Principle; self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation, remains a cornerstone of indigenous mission theory. For Venn, mission was not fulfilled by the mere establishment of churches or the conversion of individuals; its true completion occurred when those churches became self-reliant, culturally rooted, and capable of reproducing themselves (Venn, 1971). He defined mission not as a perpetual dependency on foreign assistance but as a transitional process leading to indigenous maturity. Venn's metaphor

of the missionary as scaffolding, necessary at the early stage of building but removable once the structure stands, illustrates his conviction that missionary presence should always aim toward local autonomy.

This principle revolutionized mission practice by reframing success in terms of sustainability rather than expansion. A mission that produces dependency, in Venn's view, contradicts the essence of the Gospel, which calls believers to spiritual and institutional maturity. His philosophy continues to inform contemporary mission structures and strategies, particularly within the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), where missionary engagement is evaluated not by numerical growth alone but by the degree of indigenous ownership achieved.

In the Nigerian evangelical landscape, the concept of mission has undergone a profound transformation from an externally driven enterprise to a locally owned and globally extended movement. The era of dependency on Western funding and leadership has given way to indigenous initiative, where Nigerian agencies now mobilize missionaries across Africa and beyond. Local organizations such as the Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), Missionary Purse International, Fellowship Bible Church, and Reach the Rest Ministry exemplify this transition. They interpret mission not as humanitarian charity but as a strategic spiritual enterprise anchored in Vennian principles.

Contemporary Nigerian missions increasingly embody self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation in tangible forms. Missionaries sustain their work through tentmaking, engaging in small-scale trade, agriculture, or professional services to finance ministry efforts. Local

leadership structures ensure self-governance, empowering national pastors to assume authority previously held by expatriates. Furthermore, converts are immediately trained and mobilized as disciple-makers, ensuring self-propagation and the organic multiplication of faith communities. Through these practices, Nigerian missions demonstrate that sustainable evangelization is achievable when local believers take ownership of both the message and the means of its transmission.

Within the context of this thesis, mission is therefore defined as the intentional and strategic participation in God's redemptive purpose among all peoples, expressed through evangelism, discipleship, social transformation, and church formation. Its ultimate aim is the establishment of indigenous, self-sustaining, and reproducing faith communities that manifest the presence of the Kingdom of God within their cultural contexts. Mission, thus understood, is both a divine commission and a human responsibility, an ongoing collaboration between God's initiative and the obedience of His people in fulfilling His global redemptive agenda.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

My study used a historical-phenomenological research design to properly evaluate NEMA's missionary enterprise in the light of Venn's Three-Self theory.

1. Historical Approach: The historical method was employed to trace the origin, growth, and development of NEMA within the wider context of mission history in Nigeria. Archival documents, mission reports, books, journals, and NEMA publications were consulted. This was necessary to understand the evolution of NEMA and how its practices relate to indigenous mission models over time.

2. Phenomenological Approach: The Phenomenological approach was adopted to explore the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of those directly involved in NEMA's mission work. This was needed to interpret efforts towards the realisation of NEMA's three self target.

3. Data Collection Methods: This method involved the use of Semi-structured interviews/Questionnaires to gather deeper insights and to generate both descriptive and measurable data.

4. Sampling and Participants: Pentecostal mission bodies were preferred because they seemed to be more aggressive in their evangelistic drive and church planting. A purposive sampling technique was employed, targeting approximately 100 respondents, of which 80 were church leaders actively involved in missions, propagation, and church governance.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Although much scholarly attention has been given to indigenous missions in Nigeria and to Henry Venn's threefold theory, little has been written specifically on NEMA as an Indigenous interdenominational mission association. This study fills that gap by examining NEMA's contributions and challenges, providing fresh insights into how Venn's principles are applied in the Nigerian context. Again, A practical illustration of NEMA's relevance is seen in a mission organization that sought to plant churches in the Niger Republic but lacked the manpower and resources to undertake the work alone. By collaborating with another NEMA member agency, they pooled their strengths and successfully established over ten churches within one local government area. This achievement, which would have been unattainable in isolation, underscores the strategic role of synergy in missions.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several respects:

1. to churches, because it will raise awareness on the urgent need to support mission agencies.
2. to missionary agencies, it offers tested strategies for partnership, networking, and cross-cultural engagement.
3. For theologians, it serves as a resource for contextual theological reflection on indigenous missions.
4. For church historians, it documents the emergence and impact of NEMA as a milestone in contemporary African mission history.

Overall, the study provides both scholarly and practical contributions that strengthens mission practice, promote inter-agency collaboration, and advance knowledge in African missiology.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The geographical scope of this study is limited to Ibadan, Southwestern Nigeria, which is not only the birthplace of NEMA but also a major religious hub hosting diverse Christian organizations. While references may occasionally be made to other locations for comparative purposes, the focus remains on Ibadan.

Limitations include financial constraints and the reluctance of some interviewees to disclose sensitive information. Nonetheless, sustained effort was made to obtain relevant data from both documentary sources and fieldwork to ensure reliability and validity of findings.

So far, chapter one established the foundational framework of the study by presenting the historical, theological, and missiological context in which Nigerian mission praxis operates. It identified the persistent dependency tendencies inherited from early Western missionary

structures and positioned Henry Venn's Three-Self Mission Model as a viable evaluative lens for measuring indigenous sustainability. The chapter also outlined the specific problem of inconsistent self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation across Nigerian mission-founded churches, leading to the formulation of pertinent research questions and objectives.

While this section demonstrated that the Nigerian church has attained considerable numerical growth, it also revealed a gap between expansion and indigenous autonomy. The review of preliminary observations suggested that many mission agencies exhibit strength in leadership independence (self-governance) but continue to rely heavily on external funding and foreign theological paradigms, indicating only partial realization of the 3S framework. This tension justified the need for a systematic investigation into the historical development, organisational dynamics, and practical outcomes of Nigerian mission initiatives through the lens of Venn's model. Consequently, this chapter set the stage for a deeper theoretical exploration, transitioning into the next chapter, which reviews scholarly literature on indigenous mission models and highlights the ongoing global discourse surrounding sustainability in post-mission Christianity. By grounding the study in both historical realities and a conceptual framework, Chapter One provided a firm basis for evaluating whether Nigerian missions are truly self-propagating communities or merely indigenised extensions of earlier foreign-led systems.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Mission

The concept of mission is rooted in the biblical notion of “sending.” The Latin term *mitto* and the Greek *apostello* both signify “to send,” highlighting God as the sender and the apostles as the sent ones (Bosch, 1991). According to Baker’s *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Elwell, 1996), mission entails the divine act of sending either human or supernatural intermediaries to fulfill God’s purpose of judgment or redemption. A missionary, therefore, is one commissioned by God and His church to proclaim the gospel, establish churches, and engage in works of compassion among a specific people group. Mission involves evangelistic outreach as well as educational, medical, and social initiatives, often requiring the crossing of cultural and geographical boundaries (Wright, 2006).

The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (1974) broadened this understanding by framing mission as a movement encompassing evangelism among both nominal Christians and non-Christians, with the goal of establishing indigenous, self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing churches (Lausanne Covenant, 1974/2010). Later, Luis Bush (1989) introduced

the concept of the “10/40 Window”, a region spanning 10 to 40 degrees north of the equator, highlighting it as home to the majority of unreached peoples, extreme poverty, and cultural resistance to Christianity. Despite growing awareness, myths and misconceptions about mission persist. Some assume that the gospel has already reached everyone; however, recent statistics from the Joshua Project (2024) indicate that approximately 42.5% of the global population, about 3.43 billion people across 7,282 people groups, remain unreached. Other misconceptions reduce mission to social work, overlook its evangelistic essence, or regard it as the responsibility of a select few rather than the entire church (Matthew 28:18–20). Moreover, some assume mission only happens overseas, ignoring opportunities for migrant and local outreach, or mistakenly believe God will save the lost without human participation (Romans 10:14–15).

2.2 Mission in the Old Testament

The Old Testament presents mission as God’s redemptive activity from the fall of humanity onward. After the rebellion in Genesis 3, God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Despite widespread moral decline (Gen. 4–11), God called Abraham and covenanted with him to bless all nations through his descendants (Gen. 12:1–3; Gal. 3:6–16). This covenant became foundational for the universal scope of mission (Kaiser, 2000). The prophets consistently reminded Israel of their vocation to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Ps. 2:8). Through Jonah’s mission to Nineveh, God demonstrated His concern for all peoples, while Daniel’s witness in Babylon affirmed God’s sovereignty over the nations. The Old Testament thus anticipates the global mission fulfilled in Christ (Wright, 2010).

While scholars generally agree that Israel's vocation was missional, there is limited exploration of how Old Testament paradigms, such as covenantal blessing and prophetic witness, inform indigenous African mission strategies today.

2.3 Mission in the New Testament

The New Testament affirms and expands the missionary thrust already present in the Old Testament promises. Jesus' earthly ministry reflects this trajectory. At first, he limited his mission to Israel, instructing his disciples: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5–6, KJV). This emphasis highlights God's covenantal faithfulness to Israel. Yet, Jesus simultaneously foresaw the universal expansion of God's kingdom, declaring that "they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29, KJV).

The resurrection and commissioning of the disciples provided the definitive mandate for mission. In the Great Commission, Jesus declared: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18–20, NRSV). According to Bosch (1991), "the Great Commission is not merely one of many texts on mission; it is the climax of Matthew's Gospel, the interpretive key for the church's universal vocation".

The book of Acts illustrates the unfolding of this commission. Before his ascension, Jesus instructed the disciples to await the empowerment of the Spirit: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NRSV). Boer (1961) rightly observes that “Pentecost is the true birth of Christian mission, for the Great Commission derives its power wholly and exclusively from the Pentecostal event”. Indeed, Acts 2 narrates how the Spirit enabled the apostles to proclaim the gospel in multiple languages, resulting in the conversion of about three thousand people.

Persecution further catalyzed mission in the early church. After Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 7), believers were scattered, and Philip evangelized Samaria, performing signs and planting churches (Acts 8). Peter, too, was divinely directed to extend the gospel beyond Jewish boundaries, as seen in his ministry to Cornelius (Acts 10). Paul’s dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) exemplifies divine intervention in mission. The Lord declared concerning Paul: “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15, KJV).

Paul’s missionary journeys provide a paradigm for cross-cultural mission. Beginning with synagogue preaching, he consistently extended the gospel to Gentiles (Acts 13–14). His journeys through Asia Minor and into Europe resulted in the establishment of churches in cities such as Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. As Hurlbut (2017) notes, “by planting churches in strategic urban centers, Paul set in motion a missionary movement that quickly spread Christianity throughout the Roman Empire”.

Doctrinally, the early church had to navigate the inclusion of Gentiles without subjecting them to Jewish ceremonial law. The Jerusalem Council resolved that salvation was by grace through faith alone, requiring Gentile converts only to abstain from idolatry, immorality, and practices offensive to Jewish believers (Acts 15:28–29). This decision safeguarded the universality of the gospel.

Furthermore, mission in the New Testament is eschatological. Jesus proclaimed: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14, NRSV). Thus, the proclamation of the gospel is not merely an ecclesial duty but also a sign of the coming consummation of God’s reign (Wright, 2006). Existing scholarship richly details the apostolic model of mission but rarely examines how its cross-cultural dynamics are mirrored in contemporary African mission movements.

2.4 Mission in the Early Church (Post-Apostolic Era)

The early church inherited the apostolic mandate and lived out its mission in the midst of persecution, social marginalization, and theological development. Mission during this period was not only carried out by church leaders but also by ordinary believers. Stark (1996) argues that Christianity’s spread in the first three centuries cannot be explained merely by organized missionary campaigns, but rather by “the commitment of ordinary Christians, who, wherever they went, carried their faith with them and shared it within their networks”. This reflects what historians call the “lay missionary model,” where evangelism occurred through daily encounters, trade, and even slavery. Origen, writing in the third century, observed that Christianity “spread among people as if by contagion,” carried into households and communities by slaves, women,

and common people as cited in Chadwick, (1993) p. 58. Bishops and pastors also played significant missionary roles. Figures such as Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna embodied the dual function of shepherding local congregations and bearing witness through martyrdom. Smither (2014) comments that “the episcopal model of mission in the early church combined pastoral oversight with apologetic defense, catechesis, and sometimes the ultimate witness of martyrdom”. Apologists such as Justin Martyr and Tertullian defended the Christian faith in a hostile intellectual environment. Tertullian, writing in his *Apology* (c. 197), famously declared: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (*Apology*, ch. 50), emphasizing how persecution paradoxically fueled the church’s growth.

The role of persecution in mission was pivotal. Under Nero (54–68 CE) and later emperors such as Decius and Diocletian, Christians faced intense suffering. Yet, as Eusebius later testified, the endurance of martyrs became “a most wonderful spectacle for the whole world” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 5.1), drawing outsiders to the faith. Josef Tson (1997) reflects that “suffering enables the truth to come to redemptive clarity so that God is recognized and glorified”. Thus, the early church’s mission was inseparably linked with its capacity to witness under persecution.

The legalization of Christianity under Constantine with the Edict of Milan in 313 CE transformed the landscape of mission. While some argue that Constantine’s favor compromised the radical witness of the persecuted church, others note that legalization enabled broader evangelization. Latourette (1975) observes, “the conversion of Constantine opened new possibilities, for Christianity now moved from being a persecuted sect to a faith that shaped the empire”. Mission in this era thus transitioned from survival under persecution to expansion under

imperial support. While scholarship captures the Church's growth and transformation during this period, it often overlooks the theological continuity between early ecclesial autonomy and modern indigenous mission principles such as Henry Venn's Three-Self formula.

2.5 Mission in the Medieval Period

The medieval period witnessed the consolidation and expansion of Christianity across Europe and beyond. Fletcher (1997) notes that "the conversion of Europe between 500 and 1000 CE was not a single event but a long process of persuasion, politics, and persistence". Mission was spearheaded by a variety of agents, including monks, bishops, kings, and eventually military campaigns such as the Crusades.

One of the distinctive features of medieval mission was the role of monasticism. Monastic communities, beginning with Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–547), became centers of prayer, education, and missionary outreach. As Pinholster and Newton (2023) remark, "monasteries were not only spiritual retreats but hubs of cultural, agricultural, and evangelistic transformation". Monks copied manuscripts, taught literacy, cultivated land, and provided hospitality, thereby attracting converts through both word and deed. Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, recounts how monks like Augustine of Canterbury evangelized Anglo-Saxon England in the late sixth century, founding churches and schools that became enduring centers of Christian faith (Bede, 731/1990).

Irish and Celtic missionaries, such as Patrick in Ireland (5th century) and Columba in Scotland (6th century), were instrumental in spreading Christianity to the British Isles and continental

Europe. Their missionary strategy often involved founding monasteries that became both centers of spiritual formation and bases for evangelization. According to Hunter (1991), “Celtic mission was communal, peripatetic, and deeply contextual, adapting to tribal structures and local cultures rather than imposing Roman patterns”.

In continental Europe, Boniface (c. 675–754), often called the “Apostle to the Germans,” worked tirelessly to evangelize Germanic tribes, reform the Frankish church, and bring pagan regions under Christian influence. His work, supported by the Carolingian rulers, reveals the increasing entanglement of mission and politics. As Fletcher (1997) notes, “medieval mission was as much about the baptism of kingdoms as the conversion of individuals”.

The Crusades (11th–13th centuries) represent a controversial aspect of medieval mission. Initiated as military campaigns to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim control, they also carried missionary rhetoric. Riley-Smith (2005) argues that “the Crusades were seen by their contemporaries not simply as wars, but as penitential pilgrimages with a missionary dimension, however compromised by violence”. While the Crusades spread Christianity’s influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, they also deepened hostility between Christians and Muslims, leaving a legacy of division.

Medieval mission also intersected with education and scholarship. Universities, often staffed by monks and clerics, became centers of intellectual formation that indirectly supported mission. Walls (2002) comments that “by preserving classical learning and developing theology, medieval universities provided the intellectual infrastructure for future missionary expansion”. Despite

comprehensive documentation of this period, the literature tends to emphasize European expansion while neglecting how medieval mission structures influenced later Western agencies that operated in Africa.

2.6 Mission in Contemporary Times: Prospects and Challenges

The contemporary missionary movement is marked by both continuity with earlier eras and profound adaptation to global realities. The command of Christ in the Great Commission remains central: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20, NRSV). This universal mandate compels the church to engage diverse cultures and contexts with the gospel.

One of the foremost prospects of contemporary mission is its global character. Andrew Walls (2002) famously observed that “Christianity is perhaps the most culturally translatable religion the world has ever seen”. Unlike previous eras when mission flowed predominantly from the West to the rest of the world, mission today is polycentric. Lamin Sanneh (2003) describes this shift as the “new world Christianity,” where churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are no longer merely mission fields but also missionary-sending centers. This reality demonstrates what Jenkins (2011) terms the “next Christendom,” highlighting the demographic shift of Christian vitality to the Global South.

Another prospect is the use of technology in advancing the gospel. Digital platforms, satellite television, mobile applications, and social media have opened new avenues for evangelism and

discipleship. As Kelly (2019) explains, “digital media has collapsed geographical barriers and created unprecedented opportunities for reaching previously inaccessible populations”. This is especially significant in regions hostile to traditional missionary presence, where online ministries can penetrate closed contexts.

Migration and diaspora missions also present unique opportunities. With increased global mobility, unreached people groups are moving into cities and countries with established Christian communities. Mandryk (2020) notes that “God is using global migration to bring the nations to the doorsteps of churches, thus creating opportunities for cross-cultural evangelism without crossing borders”. This reality challenges churches to rethink local mission strategies in light of global demographic shifts.

Contemporary mission also benefits from holistic approaches that integrate evangelism with social action. Bosch (1991) emphasizes that “evangelism and social responsibility are not to be considered as separate, much less opposed activities, but as two dimensions of one mission”. Educational institutions, healthcare ministries, and community development projects have become vital tools in both witness and service. In many contexts, the credibility of the gospel is reinforced through tangible expressions of love and justice.

However, contemporary mission is not without formidable challenges. One of the most persistent is religious pluralism and resistance. Samuel Escobar (2003) argues that “Christian mission today must navigate a world where Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and secular ideologies offer

powerful alternatives, often backed by political and cultural systems”. In many nations, laws restricting proselytism or conversions pose legal and social barriers to mission work.

Persecution and violence also remain pressing realities. The Pew Research Center (2022) reports that Christians are persecuted in more than 140 countries, with incidents ranging from social hostility to state-sanctioned violence. In contexts such as Nigeria, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, terrorism and religious extremism continue to endanger Christian communities and hinder missionary activities (Adeniyi, 2015). Yet, paradoxically, these pressures often intensify faith and witness, echoing the early church experience that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (Tertullian, *Apology*, ch.50)

Financial sustainability is another challenge. Despite global economic growth, mission giving remains proportionally small. Johnstone and Mandryk (2001) lamented that “less than 1% of Christian income worldwide is directed toward mission, and even less to the unreached”. This reality underscores the need for churches to prioritize missions in their budgets and embrace models of local, self-supporting mission.

Another pressing issue is contextualization and syncretism. While contextualization seeks to present the gospel in culturally meaningful ways, it risks being misinterpreted as compromising orthodoxy. Van Engen (2004) cautions that “contextualization is indispensable to mission, but it must be rooted in Scripture to avoid distortion”. Thus, missionaries must carefully balance cultural sensitivity with theological integrity.

Finally, secularism and postmodern relativism in the West present intellectual and cultural challenges. Newbigin (1989) observed that “the most challenging mission field today is not overseas but in the secularized societies of Europe and North America”. The missionary task in such contexts involves rearticulating the gospel as public truth in societies skeptical of absolutes. In summary, contemporary mission stands at the intersection of remarkable opportunities and profound challenges. The prospects include globalization, technological advancement, diaspora opportunities, and holistic witness, while challenges include persecution, pluralism, financial constraints, contextual tensions, and secular ideologies. Yet, as Bosch (1991) reminds us, “mission is not primarily the activity of the church, but the participation of the church in the sending of God”. This conviction ensures that despite obstacles, the missionary mandate remains anchored in God’s sovereign purpose. Although many studies address global missiological trends, few focus on how indigenous African missions, such as those under NEMA, respond to these evolving challenges, particularly regarding financial independence and organizational self-governance.

2.7 Review of Related Documents on Venn’s Principle on Mission

Henry Venn (1796–1873), secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the 19th century, is remembered as one of the most influential mission strategists in Protestant history. His most enduring contribution is the formulation of the “Three-Self Principle,” which advocated that young churches in mission fields should be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating (Shenk, 1983). Venn argued that mission should be temporary in its institutional form, aimed at planting churches capable of independence rather than perpetuating foreign control. He described the goal of mission as “the euthanasia of a mission”, a concept by which missionary structures

should gracefully die once the indigenous church is mature enough to sustain itself (Venn, 1862/1971,325).

Venn's ideas emerged alongside those of Rufus Anderson (1796–1880) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and together they laid the foundation for Protestant mission theory in the modern era. Anderson insisted that “the great end of the mission is the establishment of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches” (Anderson, 1870, 121). Both men were shaped by pragmatic concerns of stewardship and a theological conviction that God had endowed every people with the capacity to bear Christian witness in their own cultural setting (Beaver, 1967).

Scholars such as Bosch (1991) recognize Venn's genius in anticipating modern discussions on contextualization. Bosch noted that “Venn and Anderson formulated a missionary policy which, though born in the nineteenth century, was far ahead of its time in affirming the autonomy of local churches”. The principle emphasized trust in the Holy Spirit's work among indigenous believers rather than permanent dependency on Western structures.

However, the application of Venn's ideas in Africa and Asia was uneven. Walls (2002) observes that while the CMS officially endorsed the Three-Self formula, “in practice, European paternalism and colonial structures often delayed the realization of Venn's vision”. Many mission churches remained under foreign leadership for decades, reinforcing dependence rather than autonomy. Nevertheless, the rise of African-initiated churches in the late 19th and early 20th centuries demonstrated the resilience of the Three-Self principle. Sundkler (1961) noted that

“the spontaneous emergence of African independent churches was itself a protest against missionary paternalism and a realization of Venn’s vision, even if unintended”.

In contemporary mission studies, Venn’s principle continues to inspire. Shenk (1983) remarks, “The enduring value of Venn’s thought lies not in its perfection but in its insistence that missions must aim beyond themselves, to the church that will outlive them”. His insistence on local leadership, financial responsibility, and evangelistic initiative remains highly relevant for mission agencies and churches today, particularly in contexts like Africa where financial and structural dependency still pose challenges. While the Three-Self Principle remains foundational to modern mission theory, few contemporary empirical studies evaluate its effectiveness within African mission agencies such as the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA).

2.8 Review of Christian Doctrine in Mission

The theology of mission is inseparable from Christian doctrine. Mission arises from the very nature of God (*missio Dei*) and is grounded in the central doctrines of the faith. As Bosch (1991) emphasizes, “Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God”. Thus, doctrine provides both the foundation and the orientation of mission.

The doctrine of the Trinity is especially central. The Father sends the Son into the world (John 3:16), the Son accomplishes redemption, and the Spirit empowers and sends the church (Acts 1:8). Moltmann (1991) explains, “The doctrine of the Trinity is the theological basis for the concept of the *missio Dei*, in which the sending of the Son and the Spirit is the foundation for the sending of the church”. Mission is therefore participation in the triune God’s movement toward the world.

The doctrine of Christology also defines mission. Jesus declared, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21, NRSV). Mission is modeled after the incarnation—God entering human culture and history. As Newbigin (1989) argues, “The logic of mission is the logic of the incarnation; the church is called to embody the life of Christ in every human context”. This implies that mission must be contextual, incarnational, and sacrificial.

The doctrine of ecclesiology further shapes mission. The church exists not only as a community of worship but also as a community of witness. Lausanne Covenant (1974/2010) declares that “the church is at the very center of God’s cosmic purpose and is His appointed means of spreading the gospel” (para. 6). The church’s mission is to proclaim, serve, and disciple in ways that demonstrate the kingdom of God.

Finally, eschatology energizes mission. Jesus stated: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14, NRSV). Mission is thus oriented toward the consummation of history. Wright (2006) observes, “Mission is eschatologically significant because it is bound up with God’s plan to sum up all things in Christ”. The anticipation of the final kingdom motivates the urgency and universality of Christian mission.

Christian doctrine frames mission as divine in origin, incarnational in method, ecclesial in community, and eschatological in hope. As Glasser (2003) concludes, “Christian mission without

theology is rootless activism, while theology without mission is lifeless speculation” . Doctrine and mission are therefore inseparable realities, each nourishing and sustaining the other.

This chapter engaged critically with existing scholarly literature on indigenous mission models, particularly the evolution and global application of Henry Venn’s Three-Self Mission strategy. The review established that while the 3S framework has been historically validated in several non-Western contexts, its application varies significantly depending on cultural, economic, and ecclesiastical realities. Studies from Asia, Latin America, and parts of Africa demonstrated that indigenous autonomy is often achieved incrementally rather than comprehensively, with financial self-support frequently emerging as the most challenging component of the model. This insight underscores the need for contextualised interpretations of Venn’s theory rather than rigid transplantation of its Western formulation.

Furthermore, the literature revealed a notable gap concerning empirical assessments of the 3S model within modern Nigerian mission organisations. While several works document the growth of Christianity in Nigeria, few attempt to interrogate the sustainability mechanisms embedded within mission-founded churches or evaluate their governance, funding patterns, and evangelistic reproduction through a structured theoretical lens. This omission presents a critical scholarly vacuum, positioning the present study as a bridge between historical theory and contemporary ecclesial practice in Nigeria.

In summary, the literature review confirmed both the relevance and inadequacy of existing discourse, highlighting that although the Three-Self Model remains a credible paradigm, its effectiveness within the Nigerian context has not been sufficiently measured. This justifies the progression to Chapter Three, which provides a deeper theoretical and conceptual analysis of

Venn's model and adapts it as an evaluative framework for this study. By synthesising global scholarship with local realities, Chapter Two laid the intellectual foundation upon which the methodological and analytical components of the thesis are constructed.

2.9 The History of Ibadan City

Ibadan as the Socio-Historical Context of Indigenous Missions. Understanding the historical and religious evolution of Ibadan is essential for evaluating the missionary enterprise of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) within the framework of Henry Venn's Three-Self missiological principles.

Ibadan, located in present-day Oyo State in southwestern Nigeria, emerged in the early nineteenth century following the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire. It began around 1829 as a military settlement established by displaced warriors and refugees from Oyo, Ife, and Ijebu, who sought security and territorial consolidation in the aftermath of regional upheavals (Falola, 1991). By the mid-nineteenth century, Ibadan had evolved into the most formidable military and political force in Yorubaland, leading major conflicts such as the Ijaiye War (1860–1865) and the Kiriji War (1877–1893) (Ajayi & Smith, 1988).

Economically, Ibadan soon developed into a major commercial hub due to its strategic location between forest and savannah trade corridors. The city attracted traders in agricultural produce, textiles, and kola nuts, contributing to its early expansion and influence (Mabogunje, 1968). With the signing of a treaty in 1893, Ibadan officially became part of the British Protectorate, marking the beginning of colonial administration, infrastructural growth, and integration into a Western economic and political framework (Aderibigbe, 1975). The subsequent establishment of

the railway and educational institutions—including the University College, Ibadan, in 1948—cemented the city's regional influence and intellectual significance.

2.9.1 Religious Development and Missionary Significance. Ibadan's religious landscape has historically been pluralistic. Prior to the arrival of Christianity, traditional Yoruba religion played a central role in governance, culture, and spirituality, with devotion to deities such as Ogun, Sango, and Ifa (Peel, 2000). Islam gained early prominence through migrant traders, clerics, and warriors, leading to the establishment of mosques, Quranic schools, and religious courts by the early to mid-1800s (Kenny, 1996).

Christianity entered Ibadan in the 1850s through mission agencies such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, and the Baptist Mission (Jaiyeoba, 1981). These missions established churches, schools, and medical services, laying the foundations for Western education and expanding Christian influence in southwestern Nigeria. The city became an operational base for evangelistic work across Yorubaland and beyond, shaping Nigeria's Christian trajectory in the colonial and postcolonial eras. By the early twentieth century, Ibadan had emerged as a center of religious coexistence, with Christianity and Islam flourishing alongside residual traditional practices. This diversity created a unique environment in which indigenous Christianity could develop, blending local agency with adapted missionary ideas.

2.9.2 Connection to the Present Study. Ibadan's historical, religious, and missiological evolution makes it a strategic and symbolic context for examining indigenous mission praxis. The city

hosted both early Western missionary activity and the later emergence of African-initiated mission movements. Notably, the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), founded in Ibadan in 1982, represents a modern indigenous response to the limitations of foreign-dependent mission models. Its location in Ibadan aligns with Venn's (cited in Bosch, 2011) insistence on indigenous self-support, self-propagation, and self-governance as essential marks of a mature church. Ibadan therefore provides: A historically grounded environment for assessing mission transitions, A religiously diverse context for evaluating indigenous leadership and ownership, A symbolic base for understanding mission networking and collaboration in Nigeria.

In light of these factors, the inclusion of Ibadan as the geographical scope of this research is not only historically justified but also methodologically relevant to interpreting the contemporary implications of Venn's Three-Self principle within Nigerian missions.

2.10 Synthesis and Identified Gaps

From the reviewed literature, three major gaps emerge:

1. Empirical Gap: There is limited empirical assessment of how Venn's Three-Self Principle has been implemented within Nigerian mission organizations.
2. Theological Gap: Few studies analyze how doctrinal convictions, such as the *missio Dei* and Trinitarian theology, inform indigenous mission praxis in Africa.
3. Contextual Gap: Existing historical and sociological accounts of Ibadan seldom explore its influence on the formation and functioning of indigenous mission movements like NEMA. This study, therefore, seeks to address these gaps by evaluating the implementation of Venn's Three-

Self model within the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association, using Ibadan as the contextual framework for analysis.



Map of Ibadan

Fig 1

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 HENRY VENN AND HIS PRINCIPLES OF MISSION

3.1 A Short Biography of Henry Venn/Missionary Career

Henry Venn (1796–1873) occupies a central place in the history of protestant missions due to his strategic vision and administrative acumen. He was born on February 10, 1796, in Clapham, England, into a family deeply engaged in evangelical reform within the Church of England (Shenk, 1983). Venn pursued higher education at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he matriculated in 1814 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1818 as the nineteenth wrangler, later completing his Master of Arts in 1821 (Pierard, 1992). He married Martha Sykes in 1829, and together they had a son, John Venn, who would later gain prominence as a logician and philosopher (Hastings, 1994).

Venn was ordained as a deacon in 1819 and as a priest in 1821. His early ministry was shaped by wide reading and engagement with contemporary missionary thought, including his study of Moravian missions in the eighteenth century and the work of Francis Xavier, about whom he wrote extensively (Walls, 1996). His encounters with Catholic and Protestant mission traditions deepened his conviction about the necessity of indigenous leadership and contextualization in mission practice.

In 1841, Venn was appointed Honorary Clerical Secretary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), a role he held until his death in 1873. During his 32-year tenure, the CMS witnessed remarkable growth. Under his leadership, the society expanded from employing 107 European

clergy and nine indigenous workers to 230 Europeans and 148 indigenous leaders by the time of his death (Latourette, 1975). This shift reflected his deep conviction that local Christians should be central to evangelization in their contexts.

Venn, together with his American counterpart Rufus Anderson, was one of the first to articulate the concept of the “indigenous church” in the mid-nineteenth century (Anderson, 1872/1979). They emphasized that missionary work should aim at planting churches that were self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. For Venn, these principles were not merely administrative strategies but theological imperatives grounded in the belief that the church should be rooted in its local soil (Shenk, 1983). He famously referred to the “euthanasia of missions,” a metaphor for the intentional withdrawal of missionaries once the local church had matured and was capable of sustaining itself (Walls, 1996).

Venn also cultivated relationships with other mission leaders, such as Dr. Wilhelm Hoffmann of the Basel Missionary Training School, and promoted accountability within the CMS through the systematic collection of field reports and correspondence. His pragmatic approach to mission strategy, combined with his pastoral concern for missionaries, earned him recognition as one of the foremost Protestant mission strategists of the nineteenth century (Bosch, 1991).

3.2 Venn’s Principles of Mission: Formation of the Three-Self

The nineteenth century marked a pivotal period in Protestant mission history, characterized by both the expansion of mission societies and the rethinking of their strategic approaches. Among the most influential voices was Henry Venn, whose articulation of the Three-Self principle, self-support, self-government, and self-propagation—redefined the goals of missionary activity.

These principles emerged as practical solutions to the challenges of colonialism, missionary mortality, and the long-term sustainability of churches in non-Western contexts (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

Venn, alongside Rufus Anderson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, emphasized that the ultimate purpose of missionary work was the establishment of indigenous churches that could thrive without dependence on foreign resources or personnel (Anderson, 1872/1979). In their view, missionaries were not to become permanent pastors of local congregations, but rather temporary catalysts who would evangelize, disciple, and train local leaders until such churches could govern themselves (Bosch, 1991).

The Three-Self formulation arose from Venn's conviction that foreign dependence not only stifled spiritual maturity but also created cultural alienation. As Latourette (1975) observes, Venn's insistence on indigenous leadership was rooted in the belief that "Christianity must be at home in every culture if it is to be truly catholic". Thus, the threefold principle can be summarized as follows: Self-supporting. Churches must rely on their own financial resources rather than on perpetual foreign subsidy, Self-governing. Churches must develop autonomous leadership structures rooted in their cultural context, Self-propagating. Churches must carry forward evangelistic responsibility through local believers who communicate the gospel in culturally meaningful ways.

The notion of "euthanasia of missions" was central to Venn's thinking. He argued that the missionary task should culminate in withdrawal, leaving behind churches that were viable and indigenous in every respect (Walls, 1996). This marked a departure from the prevailing

paternalistic approaches of earlier centuries, in which European missionaries often remained as permanent overseers of local congregations.

While Venn and Anderson are most often credited with formalizing the Three-Self paradigm, John Nevius later applied the principles in Korea and China, emphasizing lay leadership, financial independence, and contextual evangelism. His model of empowering ordinary believers to carry responsibility for church growth resulted in rapid expansion, particularly in Korea (Nevius, 1899/2003). The Nevius Method provided practical demonstration of Venn's theoretical vision, showing that self-reliant churches could thrive without dependence on foreign missionaries. Later missiologists extended the framework. Paul Hiebert and David Bosch (1991) introduced the idea of a 'fourth self', self-theologizing, to emphasize the responsibility of local churches to interpret and apply Scripture within their own cultural contexts. Others have suggested additional "selves," such as self-expressing, referring to forms of worship and ministry that embody the cultural identity of indigenous believers (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004).

Despite these later developments, Venn's Three-Self principle remains foundational in missiology. Its enduring strength lies in the way it sought to empower local churches, affirm indigenous leadership, and ensure sustainability beyond foreign oversight. In doing so, Venn offered a model that not only shaped nineteenth-century Protestant missions but continues to inform contemporary mission practice across Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

3.2.1 Self-Supporting: Financial Independence

The first component of Venn's Three-Self principle, self-support, emphasized financial independence as an essential foundation for an indigenous church. Venn warned that reliance on

foreign funds would hinder local initiative, perpetuate dependency, and prevent churches from developing a sense of ownership over their mission (Shenk, 1983). Instead, he argued that from the very inception of a congregation, members should assume financial responsibility for their church's ministry, staff, and facilities. Seibert (1989) observed, "The implementation of the self-support principle should occur from the beginning of the work. As soon as the first convert becomes a Christian he shall be expected to offer support for the mission". This insistence on early financial responsibility was not intended to burden new believers, but to instill a sense of shared commitment and stewardship.

A self-supporting church, in Venn's conception, not only financed its own activities but also generated resources for evangelistic expansion. Funds raised locally were expected to sustain pastors, maintain church structures, and support outreach into new mission fields (Walls, 1996). Such practices-built resilience by nurturing a faith community that was confident in God's provision and capable of sustaining growth without external dependency.

At the same time, critics have noted that the application of self-support in impoverished contexts has sometimes proved problematic. Missionaries working in regions of extreme poverty often found that local contributions were insufficient to cover even basic needs. Nevertheless, as Bosch (1991) explains, Venn's point was not that foreign aid should never be used, but that it must be temporary, carefully managed, and ultimately directed toward fostering independence rather than creating long-term reliance. In this sense, self-support remains a vital principle in contemporary mission practice. It challenges churches to embrace stewardship as a theological

mandate while calling mission organizations to resist paternalism and to design partnership models that prioritize sustainability and empowerment (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004).

3.2.2 Self-Propagating: Evangelistic Independence

The second component of Venn's paradigm, self-propagation, underscored the conviction that indigenous churches should be responsible for their own evangelistic outreach. A church could only be considered truly indigenous, Venn argued, when local believers themselves bore the responsibility of spreading the gospel within their communities and beyond (Shenk, 1983).

Self-propagation is, as Beker (1979) observed, "perhaps the best thermometer over a period of time to test whether or not a church is truly indigenous". This principle emphasized that evangelism was not the exclusive domain of missionaries, but a responsibility of every believer. Converts, empowered by the Holy Spirit, were expected to communicate the gospel in their own languages and cultural forms, through storytelling, songs, festivals, and communal traditions.

The New Testament provides a model for this principle. Paul commended the Thessalonian church for its missionary zeal, noting that "the word of the Lord rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known" (1 Thess. 1:8, NRSV). Such reproduction by local believers enabled the gospel to spread across the Roman Empire with remarkable speed, often reaching places Paul himself never visited (Bosch, 1991).

For Venn, self-propagation meant that foreign missionaries were to serve as trainers and catalysts, equipping local Christians to evangelize their own people (Walls, 1996). Missionaries were expected to provide biblical teaching, practical methods, and mentoring, but the responsibility

for actual propagation was to rest with the indigenous community. In this way, churches could grow organically and be deeply rooted in their cultural soil. This principle also carried implications for sustainability. By encouraging local initiative, self-propagating churches avoided the bottleneck of missionary-centered outreach. Instead, they became dynamic movements capable of reproducing themselves, adapting to changing contexts, and reaching new frontiers (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004).

Nevertheless, critics have pointed out that the emphasis on rapid multiplication has, at times, led to superficial conversions and poorly disciplined congregations. Bosch (1991) cautioned that self-propagation, when pursued primarily as a strategy for numerical expansion, risks relying too heavily on human effort rather than the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, while indispensable to Venn's vision, self-propagation requires careful balance between evangelistic zeal and theological depth.

3.2.3 Self-Governing: Indigenous Leadership

The third component of the Three-Self paradigm, self-government, highlights the necessity of autonomous leadership within indigenous churches. Venn believed that foreign missionary control stifled the development of local leadership, delayed maturity, and hindered contextualization (Shenk, 1983). He argued that from the earliest stages, converts should be drawn into decision-making, leadership training, and pastoral responsibility. Wilbert Shenk (1983) cites Venn's observation: "When the missionary is of another and superior race than his converts, he must not attempt to be their pastor... If he continues to act as their pastor, they will not form a vigorous native church". For Venn, long-term pastoral control by foreigners risked producing dependent congregations rather than resilient, self-reliant communities.

Reverend William Knight (1868/1970) similarly stressed that national churches should be organized as independent institutions from the outset, ensuring that believers identified their Christian faith with their cultural identity rather than with foreign structures. He argued that missionaries should never assume the role of native pastors, as indigenous leaders could gain the trust of their communities far more effectively than outsiders. The ordination of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther in 1864 as the first African Anglican bishop exemplified the fruition of Venn's principles. Crowther's leadership demonstrated that African Christianity could be authentically indigenous, governed by Africans themselves rather than by Europeans imposing Western ecclesiastical forms (Pierard, 1992). This milestone not only advanced the cause of indigenous leadership but also illustrated the potential for contextualized Christian expressions that reflected African identity.

In contemporary missiology, self-government remains a cornerstone for contextualization and empowerment. Hiebert (1991) emphasized that genuine self-governance prevents paternalism and fosters accountability within cultural frameworks. However, critics have noted risks, including inadequate training, authoritarianism among local leaders, and fragmentation due to competing visions (Tippett, 1987). Despite these challenges, Venn's emphasis on self-government continues to inspire models of partnership and leadership development that respect the agency of local believers.

Henry Venn consistently linked the health of a mission-founded congregation to what he regarded as its ecclesial integrity, the coherence between gospel proclamation and the church's

governance, finances, and witness. In Venn's framework, three responsibilities were non-negotiable markers of integrity: local leadership, financial responsibility, and evangelistic responsibility (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

First, local leadership was essential because prolonged foreign pastoral control impeded maturity. Venn argued that missionaries should not entrench themselves as pastors of indigenous congregations; rather, they were to function as catalysts who train and hand over to qualified local elders and ministers (Shenk, 1983). For Venn, the missionary's success is measured by planned obsolescence, his well-known "euthanasia of missions", in which foreign workers withdraw as soon as a self-reliant local church emerges (Walls, 1996).

Second, financial responsibility was a theological and practical imperative. Venn believed that churches nurtured on perpetual subsidy risked dependency, paternalism, and an inferiority mentality (Latourette, 1975). From the outset, therefore, converts should learn stewardship and share the cost of ministry, including support for pastors, facilities, and outreach (Seibert, 1989). Temporary grants could be used strategically, but always with a view to weaning the church from external reliance (Bosch, 1991).

Third, evangelistic responsibility belonged to the local congregation itself. Venn held that genuine integrity is displayed when believers proclaim Christ within their own languages, networks, and cultural forms, and when congregations reproduce through indigenous initiative rather than missionary direction (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004; Shenk, 1983). In this sense, integrity is missional: a church that governs and funds itself but fails to propagate the faith

remains incomplete. Taken together, these three responsibilities, self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation were, for Venn, the indispensable conditions for a church to stand before God and society with integrity. They protect against the distortions of colonial paternalism, foster accountability and agency among believers, and anchor the church's identity in the gospel as embodied in its own cultural soil (Hiebert, 1991; Walls, 1996).

Closely aligned with Venn's integrity concerns was his insistence on the indigenization of leadership, the development, authorization, and public recognition of local ministers who lead in forms that are both biblically faithful and culturally intelligible (Shenk, 1983). Venn's counsel converged with that of contemporaries like William Knight, who urged missionaries to organize national churches as national institutions from the start, to honor "national peculiarities," and to refrain from occupying pastoral offices that should be held by locals (Knight, 1868/1970).

The point was not romantic nationalism but missional prudence: indigenous pastors gain trust, interpret Scripture within the categories of their people, and adapt church order to local realities without compromising the gospel (Hiebert, 1991; Bevans & Schroeder, 2004).

A notable historical milestone in African Christianity was the consecration of Samuel Ajayi Crowther as the first African Anglican bishop in 1864. His elevation represented more than a symbolic gesture; it demonstrated the emerging conviction that African Christians were capable of leading and shaping their own ecclesial communities (Ajayi, 1965; Pierard, 1992). Crowther's ministry, marked by the translation of the Bible into Yoruba, the training of indigenous clergy, and the establishment of autonomous church structures, reflected Venn's conviction that

Christianity must take root within local cultures while maintaining faithfulness to the universal church (Latourette, 1975; Walls, 1996).

Venn regarded indigenization not as a hasty transfer of authority but as a deliberate process of formation. He insisted that ordination and leadership should grow out of sound instruction, mentorship, and proven Christian character (Shenk, 1983). His emphasis was on producing leaders who were spiritually mature, culturally sensitive, and administratively competent, individuals capable of engaging local customs and social structures without compromising biblical integrity (Hiebert, 1991). In situations where training and accountability were weak, the danger of doctrinal confusion, syncretism, and misuse of power became apparent. For this reason, Venn advocated what he called accountable autonomy: indigenous leadership that remained relationally connected to the broader Christian family for counsel and support (Bosch, 1991; Tippet, 1987).

Ultimately, the indigenization of church leadership served as Venn's practical strategy for realizing the principle of self-governance. It affirmed the dignity and capability of local believers, accelerated contextualization, and provided a sustainable framework for mission continuity, what Venn envisioned as the responsible "handing over" of the church from foreign oversight to indigenous stewardship (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

3.3 Critics of Venn's Theory

However, despite the enduring influence of Henry Venn's Three-Self paradigm, subsequent missiological reflection has revealed its limitations when applied to complex and resource-scarce

contexts. The next section therefore examines key critiques of Venn's theory, particularly regarding its feasibility in impoverished mission fields and its unintended consequences for global mission relationships.

Self-support, while desirable in theory, could inadvertently place undue pressure on missionaries and congregations. Missionaries in particular often struggled to balance ministry responsibilities with the need to secure personal and family support. In contexts of economic hardship, fundraising could become a distraction from evangelism, sometimes leading to lukewarmness in the missionary task (Shenk, 1983). This tension revealed that while Venn's vision was theoretically sound, its practical implementation required adaptation to local realities.

Self-propagation has likewise been criticized for leading, at times, to unhealthy proliferation of churches. When poorly disciplined converts are tasked with planting new congregations too quickly, the result can be weak theological foundations and non-viable church expansion (Bosch, 1991). Moreover, critics have noted that this approach risks prioritizing numerical growth over spiritual depth, relying more on human effort than on the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. As Bosch warned, "The self-propagation approach tends to rely too heavily on human efforts and strategy, rather than on the power of the Holy Spirit" (1991, p. 448).

Similarly, the principle of self-government has been challenged for its potential to create fragmentation, authoritarianism, or insularity. Tippet (1987) argued that self-governing churches may become divided due to competing visions, while Hiebert (1991) cautioned that isolation from the global church could lead to narrow, localized perspectives. Inadequate leadership

training in some contexts has also resulted in mismanagement, power abuse, and doctrinal inconsistency.

Despite these criticisms, the enduring value of Venn's principles lies in their emphasis on contextualization and empowerment. Bosch (1991) highlighted the importance of balancing contextual mission practices with theological soundness, ensuring that local churches are both culturally relevant and faithful to the gospel. Thus, while Venn's model has limitations, it remains foundational in missiology, challenging mission practitioners to adapt the principles with sensitivity to local cultural and economic realities.

The influence of Henry Venn's missionary principles was deeply felt in Nigeria, particularly in Ibadan, where the application of the Three-Self model significantly shaped mission practice. Member agencies of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) introduced strategies that reflected Venn's vision for indigenous empowerment.

3.3.1. Revitalization of Mission Enterprise.

Henry Venn strongly opposed the prevailing nineteenth-century missionary pattern in which foreign missionaries remained as resident pastors over local congregations. He argued that such dependency hindered the maturity and autonomy of indigenous believers. Instead, Venn envisioned a model in which newly established churches would be entrusted to trained local leaders who could minister effectively within their own cultural context. According to Jehu (2004), Venn considered the retention of pastoral authority by expatriate missionaries as a major obstacle to the selfhood of the native church and to the overall progress of the missionary

enterprise. By promoting indigenous leadership, Venn redirected mission strategy toward local empowerment, continuity, and the sustainable growth of the Christian faith.

3.3.2. Recruitment of Skilled Missionaries.

Venn placed a high priority on the recruitment and training of competent missionaries. He believed that mission fields required not just willing workers but skilled individuals capable of equipping local leaders for effective ministry (Shenk, 1983).

3.3.3 Public Engagement. Venn combined evangelical zeal with social activism. He worked with Parliament to sustain the British naval squadron that patrolled the West African coast against the transatlantic slave trade. By lobbying for continued anti-slavery enforcement, Venn contributed to both social justice and the creation of conditions favorable for the spread of the gospel (Walls, 1996).

3.3.4 Financial Empowerment.

Consistent with his self-support principle, Venn promoted economic self-reliance among locals. He encouraged cotton production and other forms of commerce as means of fostering independence, thereby linking Christian mission with social and economic development (Latourette, 1975).

3.3.5. Monitoring and Feedback.

As an administrator, Venn emphasized accountability. He instituted systematic reporting structures, requiring missionaries to submit regular field reports that could be evaluated for effectiveness. This practice encouraged self-criticism and ongoing improvement in mission strategy (Shenk, 1983).

3.3.6 Large-scale Conversions.

The application of indigenous mission principles in Ibadan contributed to widespread conversions. Within Venn's tenure, nearly 500 missionaries were deployed, and indigenous evangelists played a critical role in spreading the gospel throughout Yorubaland (Ajayi, 1965).

3.3.7 Education and Medical Care.

Venn strongly supported education as a means of evangelization. Mission schools and medical services became integral tools for community transformation, paving the way for literacy, social mobility, and openness to Christian teaching (Walls, 1996).

3.3.8 Bible Translation.

One of the most significant outcomes of Venn's strategy was the translation of the Bible into Yoruba by Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. This not only advanced evangelization but also empowered Yoruba Christians to engage Scripture in their mother tongue, strengthening the rootedness of the gospel in African culture (Pierard, 1992).

3.3.9 Emergence of Indigenous Mission Organizations.

Inspired by Venn's principles, Nigerian churches began to develop their own mission agencies. For example, the Nigerian Baptist Convention established the Global Mission Board, while the Redeemed Christian Church of God created the Central Mission Board. These developments laid the foundation for the eventual formation of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) as an umbrella body (Akinade, 2010).

3.3.10. Emergence of Indigenous Churches.

The insistence on self-governance and self-support led to the rise of African-initiated churches, some of which later became known as “Ethiopian-type churches.” These movements asserted African identity within Christianity and reflected Venn’s foresight that indigenous believers would demand ownership of their faith communities (Shenk, 1983).

3.3.11. Economic Empowerment.

In line with the self-support principle, many churches and mission organizations in Nigeria later developed vocational ministries and entrepreneurial ventures. These not only sustained church growth but also empowered members economically, reinforcing the interconnection between faith and livelihood (Akinade, 2010). In sum, Venn’s policies in Ibadan transformed mission from being primarily foreign-led to increasingly indigenous-driven. His principles contributed not only to church growth but also to social, economic, and cultural renewal in nineteenth-century Nigeria.

3.4 Related Missionary Documents and Principles

The legacy of Henry Venn’s Three-Self paradigm did not remain static but stimulated further missiological reflection and adaptation across subsequent centuries. By the twentieth century, scholars and practitioners recognized both the strengths and the limitations of the model, proposing additional principles to ensure contextual faithfulness and cultural relevance.

One of the most significant developments came with the proposal of a “fourth self”, self-theologizing, advanced by Paul Hiebert and David Bosch. Hiebert (1991) argued that while self-support, self-propagation, and self-government addressed structures, they did not fully empower local congregations to interpret Scripture for themselves within their cultural frameworks. “Self-

theologizing” thus emphasized the need for indigenous believers to apply biblical truth to their own context, generating theology that was both faithful to Scripture and responsive to local realities (Bosch, 1991; Bevans & Schroeder, 2004). This principle became crucial in preventing churches from becoming carbon copies of Western ecclesiastical structures.

Similarly, the principle of self-expression emerged to underscore that authentic Christian worship and ministry must resonate with local cultural forms. As Knight (1868/1970) observed, European missionaries often struggled to respect the “national peculiarities” of the peoples they served, a failure that hindered gospel receptivity. Self-expression validated the incorporation of indigenous languages, music, dress, and social customs into Christian practice, ensuring that the gospel was embodied in ways that felt authentic to local communities (Pierard, 1992).

These additional “selves” expanded Venn’s original vision, highlighting the need for mission not only to build sustainable structures but also to foster contextualization, the process of incarnating the gospel in every cultural setting (Bevans, 2002). By affirming indigenous leadership, financial stewardship, evangelistic initiative, theological reflection, and cultural self-expression, mission theory moved toward a holistic vision of empowerment. The work of Norman Thomas, though situated within a twentieth-century context of social justice and political activism, also echoed Venn’s principles. Thomas advocated for community self-reliance and liberation from external control, aligning with the Three-Self model’s insistence on local autonomy (Thomas, 1989). His emphasis on equality and cooperation paralleled Venn’s conviction that mission should cultivate partnership rather than paternalism (Shenk, 1983).

Taken together, these later documents and principles illustrate the adaptive vitality of Venn's framework. While the Three-Self paradigm provided the structural core, subsequent missiologists deepened and broadened its scope, ensuring that indigenous churches would not only survive but thrive as culturally rooted and theologically articulate communities of faith.

A contemporary example of the enduring relevance of Venn's principles is the Vision 3000 initiative of the Assemblies of God Ghana (AG Ghana). Officially launched on December 31, 2014, Vision 3000 sought to plant 3,000 new churches within five years (2015–2019), effectively doubling the denomination's presence across the country (Ampofo & White, **2025**). Its roots can be traced to earlier campaigns such as the "Decade of Harvest" (1990–2000), which had successfully established more than 1,500 churches. At its core, Vision 3000 was framed within the Three-Self paradigm: Self-governance was expressed through a multi-tiered leadership structure (national, regional, and local committees) that decentralized decision-making and contextualized implementation across Ghana's diverse regions (Ampofo & White, 2025). This allowed for adaptability but also presented challenges when local hierarchies clashed with organizational structures.

Self-support was pursued through innovative financial strategies, including grassroots fundraising ("Mission Sundays"), diaspora donor support, and even partnerships with mobile telecom providers such as Airtel Ghana to facilitate micro-donations via mobile money (Ampofo & White, 2025). While this democratized giving, economic disparities between urban and rural congregations exposed the fragility of financial independence.

Self-propagation was advanced through hybrid evangelistic methods, blending traditional outreach (door-to-door, cultural festivals) with modern media (radio, social media). Training

programs equipped lay leaders and bi-vocational ministers to staff new congregations, particularly in rural areas where theological institutions were limited (Ampofo & White, 2025).

A key innovation of Vision 3000 was its training implementation strategy, which recognized that formal seminaries alone could not supply enough pastors. Instead, AG Ghana developed short-term, language-sensitive training for lay leaders, enabling rapid deployment while affirming indigenous ownership of evangelism (Ampofo & White, 2025). This grassroots approach, inspired partly by the Tanzanian Assemblies of God's "Tanzania for Jesus" campaign, accelerated multiplication but raised concerns about theological depth and consistency. The outcomes were striking: by 2019, over 2,100 churches had been planted, achieving nearly 70% of the target. However, challenges persisted in ensuring doctrinal soundness, addressing financial inequities, and managing leadership conflicts in regions dominated by traditional authorities (Ampofo & White, 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic further tested the resilience of the self-support model, as economic hardship led to pastoral attrition and church closures. Vision 3000 thus demonstrates both the promise and the limitations of applying Venn's Three-Self paradigm in contemporary Africa. On one hand, it affirmed the enduring power of indigenous leadership, financial stewardship, and evangelistic ownership. On the other hand, it highlighted the need for hybrid models—balancing local resource mobilization with strategic external partnerships, and combining rapid expansion with sustained discipleship and theological training.

In this way, Vision 3000 reflects the living legacy of Henry Venn's principles: not as static formulas, but as dynamic guidelines to be contextualized in each new mission field. Chapter three provided a detailed exposition of Henry Venn's Three-Self Mission Model, critically

analysing its theological foundations, structural components, and historical applications. It established that Venn's concept of self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation was not merely an administrative strategy for missionary withdrawal but a holistic blueprint for sustainable ecclesial maturity. However, the chapter also demonstrated that the model presupposes a progressive development pattern that may not fully account for the socio-economic complexities of postcolonial mission fields such as Nigeria.

Through comparative assessment of its global applications, the chapter revealed that the Three-Self principles are often realised asymmetrically: indigenous churches tend to achieve leadership autonomy earlier, while financial independence and structured missional reproduction emerge more gradually and inconsistently. This insight suggests that Venn's model should not be interpreted as a rigid formula but rather as a diagnostic spectrum through which degrees of ecclesial maturity can be evaluated.

Accordingly, the chapter reformulated the Three-Self strategy into a contextual evaluative framework tailored for Nigerian mission structures. This provides the analytical lens through which the succeeding chapters will assess the operational realities of mission organisations and church-planting outcomes in Nigeria. Thus, Chapter Three effectively bridges theoretical formulation and practical inquiry, paving the way for Chapter Four's historical contextualisation.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 The Coming of Christianity to Nigeria

4.1 The Niger Mission Expedition of 1841

The period between 1841 and 1891 represents a significant phase in Nigerian church history, marking the last half-century before the establishment of formal British colonial rule. The year 1841, in particular, is notable for the first Niger Expedition, which symbolized the renewed movement to reintroduce Christianity into Nigeria following the earlier failures of Portuguese Catholic missions in Benin and Warri (Ajayi, 1965). Thomas Fowell Buxton and other British evangelicals considered the River Niger as the “natural highway” for penetrating the interior with both commerce and Christianity (Ajayi, 1965; Ayandele, 1966). Although the Niger Mission of 1841 failed due to climate, disease, and logistical setbacks, it laid a foundation for subsequent missionary enterprise and opened the door for later efforts at Badagry and Calabar.

4.2 Christianity at Badagry and Calabar

While the Niger route was initially considered the gateway for Christian missions, the failure of the expedition shifted missionary focus to coastal settlements, particularly Badagry and Calabar. Badagry soon became the principal entry point for Christian activity in the western part of Nigeria (Ajayi, 1965). Historically, Badagry itself was founded in the eighteenth century by migrants from Allada and Whydah fleeing Dahomean expansion (Ajisafe, 1924/2010).

Earlier traces of Christianity in southern Nigeria are linked to Portuguese Catholic missions of the late fifteenth century. Roman Catholic missionaries established churches in Benin and Warri

as early as 1487 but their efforts declined due to harsh climatic conditions, European wars, and their close association with the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Isichei, 1995). Though remnants such as shrines, crowns, and relics survived among the Itsekiri of Warri, by the nineteenth century little of this earlier Catholic presence remained (Ayandele, 1966). The nineteenth-century revival came largely through the return of freed slaves from Sierra Leone, who had embraced Christianity and literacy while in Freetown. Settling at Abeokuta, these returnees appealed for missionary presence to sustain their faith. This call was answered almost simultaneously by the Wesleyan Methodists and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (Isichei, 1995). Thomas Birch Freeman of the Wesleyan Mission arrived in Badagry in September 1842, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. de Graft. Around the same period, Rev. Henry Townsend of the CMS also landed at Badagry in December 1842 and soon proceeded to Abeokuta, receiving a cordial welcome from Chief Shodeke (Ajayi, 1965). Their efforts marked the beginning of sustained Christian missions in Yoruba land. In eastern Nigeria, the Scottish Presbyterian Mission began work in Calabar in 1847. They prioritized language study, producing Efik translations of the New Testament by 1862 and the Old Testament by 1868 (Isichei, 1995). This laid a strong foundation for the growth of Christianity in the Cross River region.

4.3 The Yoruba Mission of 1846

The Yoruba Mission formally commenced in 1846 under the CMS, with Abeokuta serving as the first mission station. By this time, over 500 repatriated slaves had settled in Abeokuta, providing fertile ground for evangelization (Ajayi, 1965). Samuel Ajayi Crowther, himself a Yoruba and a participant in the failed 1841 Niger Expedition, played a crucial role in the expansion of Christianity across Yoruba land. The missionary work quickly spread from Abeokuta to other Yoruba towns, including Oyo, Ijaye, Ibadan, Ife, and Ilesha. Missionaries such as Henry

Townsend and Rev. Adelphus Mann were instrumental in consolidating the work, while Baptist missionary Thomas Jefferson Bowen also established missions in Yoruba towns (Ajisafe, 1924/2010). By mid-century, Yoruba missions had become a vibrant center of evangelization, combining Christian preaching with education, commerce, and social reform.

4.4 Achievements and Failures of the Mission Churches

The missionary enterprise in Nigeria recorded both significant achievements and notable shortcomings.

4.4.1 Achievements: Missionaries facilitated external trade through Abeokuta, leveraging the Ogun River as a transport route (Ajayi, 1965). They introduced new trades, agriculture, and cash crops such as cotton and rice. The CMS established a printing press in Abeokuta in 1852 and, in 1859, launched *Iwe Irohin*, the first Nigerian newspaper, which promoted literacy among the Yoruba. Missionaries pioneered Western education in Nigeria, founding the CMS Grammar School in 1859, followed by Methodist and Baptist schools, and later Catholic institutions (Gwam, 1963).

4.4.2 Failures: Despite these contributions, mission churches often undermined African traditional religion, dismissing it as heathen or superstitious (Isichei, 1995). Their denominational rivalries introduced sectarian divisions among Nigerians, unlike the communal religious life of traditional society. Moreover, their theology was rigidly European, neglecting the contextual needs of Africans. This failure to adapt led to the eventual rise of independent churches that sought to express Christianity in authentically African forms.

4.5 The Emergence of Indigenous Churches

By the late nineteenth century, dissatisfaction with missionary control gave rise to independent or indigenous churches. Leaders such as Mojola Agbebi spearheaded the Native Baptist Church in 1888, while the United Native African Church broke away in 1891. In the Niger Delta, Garrick Braide led a powerful revivalist movement that birthed the Christ Army Church (Ayandele, 1966).

These indigenous churches emphasized African leadership, contextualized worship, and spiritual practices that resonated with Nigerian needs. The Aladura movement, in particular, highlighted prayer, healing, and prophecy, addressing existential challenges such as sickness, poverty, and witchcraft (Peel, 1968/2003). This indigenization of Christianity not only challenged missionary dominance but also enriched the Nigerian Christian experience.

4.6 The Gospel Charismatic Churches

In the twentieth century, another wave of church movements emerged, the charismatic and Pentecostal churches. These groups emphasized the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aggressive evangelism, and problem-solving ministries centered on healing, deliverance, and prosperity. Leaders such as Archbishop Benson Idahosa (Church of God Mission) and Pastor W. F. Kumuyi (Deeper Life Bible Church) pioneered movements that drew large urban followings.

Unlike earlier indigenous churches, many charismatic churches maintained transnational links, particularly with American Pentecostalism, receiving financial and theological support (Ukah, 2008). While this facilitated rapid growth and mass evangelism through crusades, media, and

megachurch structures, critics argue that such dependence on foreign sponsorship risks neo-colonial influence within Nigerian Christianity.

This chapter traced the historical development of Christianity in Nigeria, highlighting the transition from foreign mission dominance to indigenous ecclesial participation. It established that although the early missionary era laid the foundation for Christian expansion, it also inadvertently entrenched patterns of dependency through paternalistic structures and externally controlled leadership systems. However, the rise of African independent initiatives, revival movements, and indigenous mission agencies in the late colonial and postcolonial periods marked a decisive shift toward localized ownership of the faith. This historical evolution demonstrated that Nigerian Christianity did not merely receive and preserve missionary legacies but actively reinterpreted and restructured them to align with local sociocultural realities.

Despite this impressive evolution, the chapter also revealed that the journey toward full church autonomy has been uneven. While self-governance was largely accomplished through the emergence of indigenous leadership and organisational networks, economic self-sufficiency and structured missionary reproduction were achieved at varying degrees across denominations and mission agencies. These inconsistencies reinforce the need for a systematic assessment of whether contemporary Nigerian missions authentically embody Venn's Three-Self Model or simply operate with symbolic rather than functional autonomy.

Therefore, this study provided essential historical context for evaluating present realities. By demonstrating both the achievements and limitations of the Nigerian church's journey toward

self-reliance, it logically transitioned the research into Chapter Five, which narrows the focus to the emergence of organised mission structures, particularly the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), as a case study for analysing structured indigenous mission praxis within the 3S evaluative framework.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 THE NIGERIA EVANGELICAL MISSION ASSOCIATION IN IBADAN

5.1 History of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA)

Prior to the establishment of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), there was no formal indigenous mission body in Nigeria except for the Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) of ECWA, which had been initiated by the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) to complement the work of foreign missionaries among the indigenous peoples of Northern and Middle Belt Nigeria. Up until the mid-1970s, the only notable ecumenical Christian bodies in Nigeria were the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN)—comprising denominations affiliated with the World Council of Churches (WCC)—and the Nigerian Evangelical Fellowship (NEF), made up of denominations aligned with the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), which later became the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in 2002.

Western mission agencies such as SIM and the Sudan United Mission (SUM) played central roles in shaping the NEF and, for a long time, dominated its leadership and vision. Similarly, SIM and the African Inland Mission (AIM) were instrumental in founding the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM)—now the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA)—where they also held considerable influence over leadership and operations. This dominance by Western agencies left little room for non-denominational, indigenous mission structures, both at national and continental levels. Consequently, Africa, including Nigeria, lacked a dedicated indigenous evangelical mission association during this period.

The revival movements of the 1970s, however, catalyzed the emergence of several para-denominational groups and ministries. These ministries, though engaged in mission work as it is now defined (distinct from mere evangelism), had no national forum for connection or exchange of information. News of global mission trends reached them only through newsletters and publications distributed by Western mission agencies. This vacuum created the need for a platform where mission-minded organizations in Nigeria could network and collaborate.

In response, five pioneering agencies came together to establish the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) as a national association of mission agencies dedicated to advancing cross-cultural missions in Nigeria and beyond. Rev. Panya Baba requested Rev. Stephen Akangbe, then General Secretary of NEF, to host the initial meeting, which he graciously did. It was during this inaugural gathering that the association's name was adopted, and substantive officers were elected. Rev. Panya Baba became the first chairman, Rev. Dr. Reuben Ezemadu was appointed General Secretary, and Rev. Nicholas Osameyan was elected Treasurer. These leaders, though unpaid, sacrificially funded the early activities of NEMA from their own resources and those of their organizations.

On 22 February 1982, NEMA was formally inaugurated, marking the beginning of the first and only indigenous national mission association in Africa at that time. Its aim was to mobilize the Nigerian church toward missionary responsibility and to foster indigenous mission initiatives, which were still unpopular at the time. As the first of its kind in Africa, NEMA gained international recognition. Panya Baba continued to serve simultaneously as a member of the

WEF Mission Commission and as a coordinator for AEA. In 1983, Rev. Dr. Reuben Ezemadu represented NEMA at the Wheaton Consultation on the Nature and Mission of the Church (Wheaton '83) in Illinois, USA. Two years later, in 1985, NEMA hosted the International Missions Conference (ICOM '85) in Jos, Nigeria—the first World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) conference held in the country—creating a major breakthrough in missions awareness.

The five founding member agencies were:

Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) of ECWA

Calvary Ministries (CAPRO)

Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF)

His Grace Evangelical Mission (HIGEM)

Christ Ambassadors Evangelistic Team (CAET)

At its first meeting, NEMA also established a constitution drafting committee chaired by Rev. Canon Bayo Famonure of CAPRO, to meet the requirements of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for legal registration. The NEMA logo was later designed by Rev. Canon Timothy Olonade. Over the years, NEMA has grown exponentially in membership and has become a significant influence on both the Nigerian and global missions' movement.

5.2 Aim and Objectives of NEMA

The overarching aim of NEMA is to encourage and facilitate the establishment of indigenous mission agencies among evangelical denominations in Nigeria. Its specific objectives include:

1. To promote cooperation and networking among mission groups.
2. To provide a platform for the collation and dissemination of mission information.

3. To encourage knowledge sharing and exchange of new ideas for stimulating and improving outreach work.
4. To establish research and training institutions for missionaries, as well as to organize conferences, seminars, and workshops.
5. To maintain working relationships with the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) under the auspices of the Nigerian Evangelical Fellowship (NEF).

5.2.1 Vision Statement

NEMA envisions the fulfillment of the Great Commission in all unreached nations of the world.

5.2.2 Mission Statement

NEMA accelerates the fulfillment of the Great Commission through mobilization, capacity building, and fostering local and global partnerships and networks among churches, mission agencies, and individual Christians worldwide.

5.3 Organizational Structure

At inception, NEMA's operations were housed within the office of the General Secretary. In 1989, Rev. Dr. Reuben Ezemadu succeeded Rev. Panya Baba as chairman, while His Grace Evangelical Mission seconded Rev. Kayode Oyejide (of blessed memory) as administrative secretary. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Osameyan, who had served as Treasurer since 1982, later became General Secretary (1989–1995). Other leaders who later occupied this role included Rev. Dr. Olu Peters (United Missionary Theological College Chapel) and Rev. Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam.

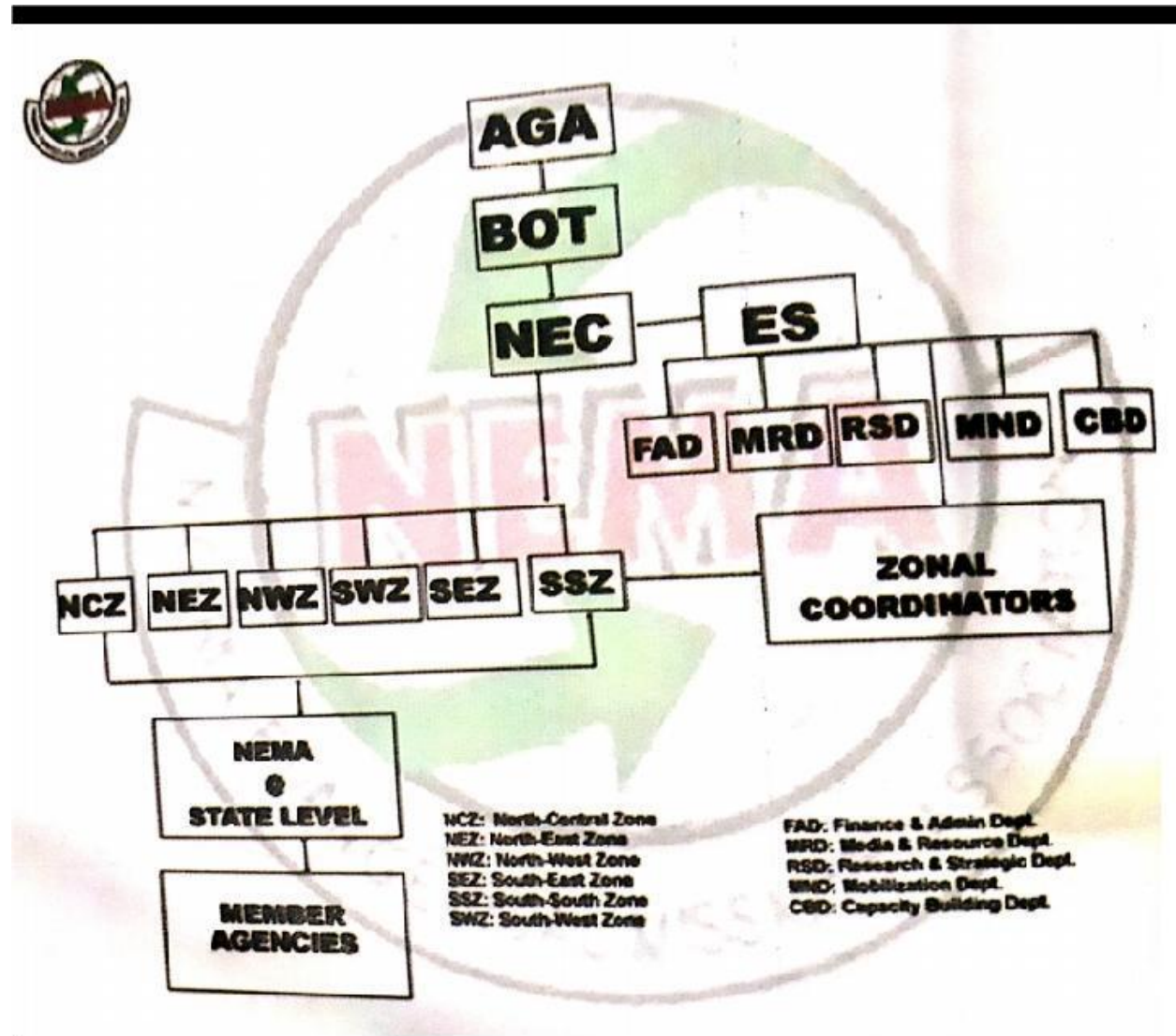
In 2001, NEMA appointed its first Executive Secretary, Rev. Canon Timothy Olonade, to oversee the association's daily operations from the National Secretariat in Jos. He served for

eleven years (2001–2011), after which Mr. Mike Adegbile (2011–2019) and Mr. Andrew Gwaivangmin (2019–present) assumed leadership.

5.3.1 Modus Operandi (Mode of Operation)

The Annual General Assembly (AGA) remains the highest decision-making body of NEMA, bringing together delegates from all registered member agencies. Originally held twice a year, the AGA now convenes annually. The Board of Trustees (BoT), appointed by the AGA, serves as the custodian of NEMA’s assets, liabilities, and policies. Members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) are elected at the AGA for a three-year term, renewable once based on performance. The NEC is responsible for formulating and implementing policies. The Executive Secretary (ES), appointed by the AGA on NEC’s recommendation, administers NEMA’s daily affairs and reports to both NEC and AGA, as outlined in the association’s constitution. For effective administration and grassroots mobilization, NEMA operates across six zones in Nigeria and maintains five departments as reflected in its organizational organogram.

Fig2



5.4 Member Agencies

Membership in the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) is open to corporate bodies such as churches and mission agencies that are actively engaged in mission work or mission-related projects. From the initial five denominations and agencies that came together to establish the association in 1982, NEMA has grown considerably. At present, 154 member agencies are registered, representing all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

Mission Activities of NEMA Member Agencies in Light of Venn’s Principles. The activities of NEMA’s member agencies reflect the association’s commitment to Henry Venn’s Three-Self Principle of mission—self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. Since its inauguration on 22 February 1982 in Ibadan, Oyo State, NEMA has operated as an umbrella body designed to foster indigenous networking and collaboration among mission organizations. One of the key criteria for membership is evidence of an ongoing indigenous work, thereby ensuring that the association remains firmly rooted in locally sustainable approaches to missions. The following case studies highlight the activities of selected member agencies in relation to Venn’s theory of mission.

5.4.1 Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF)

The Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), headquartered in Ibadan, is one of the pioneer member agencies of NEMA. CMF has specialized in planting indigenous churches in rural and unreached areas, deploying well-trained cross-cultural missionaries who adapt effectively to local languages and cultures.

According to Rev. Ezekiel Akintayo, the National Director of CMF, the agency adopted ten unreached people groups in the year 2000, and significant progress has since been made among them. The goal of making disciples of Christ within these communities has largely been accomplished through a strategic focus on educational mission. Today, a number of indigenous believers from these groups are planting churches and discipling their clans without external assistance, thus exemplifying self-propagation. Many of these communities also construct their own local assembly buildings, reflecting self-support.

Among the Kemberi people, CMF's efforts have produced indigenous missionaries who are now extending outreach to other groups. Work among the Kanuri and Mandara has faced major challenges due to insurgency, yet some disciples have emerged and are positioned to reach fellow migrants scattered across Nigeria and Cameroon. The Shuwarab people remain difficult to reach, while ongoing initiatives continue among the Fulani.

In the case of the Bariba people, CMF established medical centers as a strategy for gaining community trust and advancing the gospel, though a fully indigenous Bariba church has yet to be established. Work among the Basa people addressed a long-standing social ill—ritual infanticide of twins and children whose mothers died during childbirth. Initially, CMF adopted endangered children into orphanages, but later transitioned to providing medical services, thereby reducing mortality rates and curbing harmful practices.

Beyond direct mission engagement, CMF also provides mission awareness training to churches, equipping their missionaries with the knowledge and skills required for effective service. Through these initiatives, CMF demonstrates a strong alignment with Venn's principles, especially in its deliberate handover of responsibility to indigenous leaders.

5.4.2 Voice of Mission Ministry (VOM)

The Voice of Mission Ministry (VOM) is a non-denominational, nonprofit agency registered under NEMA. Its primary mandate is the adoption and empowerment of frontier missionaries, particularly those serving in contexts where financial and institutional support is minimal.

Pastor Paul, chairman of VOM, explained that many missionaries face serious challenges in supporting their families, particularly regarding the education of their children. One case he highlighted involved a missionary's daughter who, after completing her primary education, was unable to continue to secondary school due to financial constraints and had to assist her father in teaching villagers. VOM intervened by sponsoring her education up to university level. This intervention prevented what could have become a cycle of educational deprivation and disillusionment with Christianity among missionary families.

VOM also implements empowerment programs, training missionaries and their converts in vocational skills such as soap making, confectionery production, and toiletries manufacturing. Participants are then resourced to start small-scale businesses, enabling them to sustain themselves and their families. Field reports confirm that such programs have significantly reduced reliance on external support. Previously, missionaries often depended on sporadic assistance from relatives and friends, but now they are able not only to support themselves but also to assist others in their communities.

These empowerment initiatives have been implemented in Baruba land, Salawa, and Awo mission fields, among others. By leveraging natural and local resources, missionaries have achieved higher levels of self-support. Furthermore, once spiritual and economic empowerment took root, missionaries began to reproduce themselves by planting new churches and discipleship centers, thereby fulfilling the principle of self-propagation.

A case in point is the local assembly in Salawa, which began with only two families and has since grown to 12–15 families. Without external support, they constructed their own church building, embodying ownership and sustainability. However, VOM leaders note that for larger-scale projects, external assistance and inter-agency networking remain necessary. This underscores the importance of collaboration alongside self-reliance in the mission enterprise

5.5 NEMA's Missionary Strategies/ Outreaches

NEMA's missionary strategies are shaped by Henry Venn's "Three-Self" principle of mission: self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing (Walls, 1996). These principles emphasize the development of indigenous churches that are financially sustainable, able to reproduce themselves, and capable of exercising autonomous leadership. NEMA has contextualized this model in Nigeria and the wider African mission field by promoting synergy among member agencies, facilitating training and capacity-building, and launching collaborative initiatives such as Vision 50:15 (NEMA, 2018).

5.5.1. Agenda Setting for Missions

The growing emphasis on indigenous mission initiatives in Africa has led to a series of strategic responses from national church movements. One notable response is the Vision 50/15 initiative by the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), a long-term mobilization strategy focused on engaging unreached Islamic nations within the 10/40 window (10/40 window is an imaginary block of latitude 10 and 40 degrees North of the equator. A region of the earth that has the highest number of the unreached people groups in the world). Joshua project, (2024). This initiative was Launched in 2005. Vision 50/15 is aimed at repositioning the Nigerian Church as a leading force in global missions through a structured, measurable, and time-bound strategy.

Genesis and Development of Vision 50/15: The conception of Vision 50/15 is attributed to the spiritual burden of Reverend Canon Timothy Olonade, NEMAs pioneering Executive Secretary. Initially, the objective was not to create a grand strategy, but to respond meaningfully to the growing need for intentional, large-scale mission deployment (Olonade, 2013). A consultative retreat involving about 54 church and mission leaders in Miango, Plateau State, between 2000 and 2002, led to critical discussions on national mission strategy and regional focus areas, particularly the core North of Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. These conversations matured into what was later formalized as Project 50:15, and eventually reframed as Vision 50/15 to foster broader Church ownership. By November 2005, during the NEMA Missions Executive Congress, the initiative was officially launched.

The strategic Components of the Vision. Vision 50/15 proposed the mobilization of 50,000 Great Commission advocates, with the goal of training and deploying 15,000 of them to 34 primarily Islamic countries across North and West Africa, including the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Arab Peninsula. The strategy relied on widespread mobilization across denominations, youth groups, and professional sectors, supported by literature, conferences, and digital media campaigns.

The initiative was led by a succession of committed leaders, including Olonade, Mike Adegbile, and later Andrew Gwaivangmin. These leaders worked with denominational heads, mission boards, and networks like the Nigeria Missions Prayer Alert and Encountering the World of Islam to coordinate national synergy. Vision 50/15s geographical focus covered nations between Nigeria and Israel territories collectively identified as resistant to the Gospel due to Islamic

dominance. Inspiration was partly drawn from China's Back to Jerusalem initiative, reflecting a vision for African and Asian Church convergence in mission fields of strategic global significance. According to the final status report by Adegbile (2020), the following achievements were recorded: Manuals, banners, and maps were produced and translated, including Hausa versions for distribution in the North, Dedicated web pages and social media campaigns increased national and diaspora engagement, Weekly prayer initiatives and the publication of the Nigeria Missions Prayer Alert fueled spiritual momentum, In 2011, the vision underwent a comprehensive review leading to the establishment of a dedicated Vision 50/15 department, Tent-making and youth-focused conferences such as GLOPACON (2017) expanded awareness and professional involvement. One notable success is Victor Idakwoji, who transitioned from his architectural career to full-time missions work with NEMA after participating in Vision 50/15 mobilization during his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) year.

Despite commendable progress, the goal of deploying 15,000 missionaries by 2020 proved ambitious due to limited funding, regional insecurity, and the need for deeper theological engagement with Islam. Nonetheless, the vision succeeded in sparking a significant shift in the Nigerian Church's perception of its global mission responsibility.

In July 2019, a strategic review was conducted at the NEMA Field Missionaries Conference in Kwali, Abuja, chaired by Olonade and supported by Gwaivangmins administration. Based on the outcomes, a successor initiative Vision 50/15 Plus was introduced. This new phase seeks to build upon previous foundations and extend the engagement of Nigerian Christians in cross-cultural missions beyond 2020.

5.5.2 Training

NEMA has series of training packages in place for churches and their leadership for effective Great Commission engagement. One of these is the Perspective Training for World Mission Movement. The Perspectives on the World Christian Movement is a globally recognized 15-module missions training course developed by the United States Center for World Missions. Since its introduction in Nigeria in 2002, the program has played a crucial role in awakening and equipping the Nigerian Church for global missions, particularly through the efforts of NEMA.

The pioneer Executive Secretary of NEMA, Reverend Canon Timothy Olanade, was instrumental in adopting the Perspectives training as a major mobilization tool. His leadership led to its widespread adoption and integration into various mission structures across Nigeria. The course was particularly targeted at pastors, church leaders, and mission enthusiasts, creating a strong base of trained personnel to advance the Great Commission. Following him, Mr. Samuel Olatunji briefly coordinated the training before becoming the Principal of the Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute (NEMI). In 2012, Mr. Samuel Akaaka became the National Coordinator for Mobilization and subsequently took over as National Coordinator for Perspectives in 2016. Under his leadership, the course expanded, establishing strategic contacts with institutions such as the Global Missions Resource Center in Benin and the United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA), Ilorin.

Among the most notable beneficiaries of the Perspective Training is Reverend Dr. David Ogbueli, Lead Pastor of Dominion City Church Lagos. He attended the facilitators and coordinators trainings between 2012 and 2022 and significantly mobilized his church members.

Dominion City, one of the most vibrant youth-populated Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, contributed over 1,000 trained participants between 2002 and 2022. The church also played a role in advancing the training into Northern Nigeria and Muslim-majority regions within the 10/40 Window, aligning with NEMAs Vision 50/15 agenda.

Other key figures include Albert Udoh of Great Faith Believers Assembly, Calabar, who, through Sir Hope Ibor, connected with Anglican mission leadership to support the spread of the Perspectives movement. Mr. Victor Idakwoji and the late Mr. Edward Dooga also provided support in media and coordination roles. Impact and Strategic Reach: By 2022, over 8,600 pastors and church leaders in Nigeria had been trained through the Perspectives curriculum. Many of these participants are now deeply involved in cross-cultural missions and Disciple Making Movements (DMM) both within and outside Nigeria. The strategic alignment of the training with the Vision 50/15 and the goal of reaching the 10/40 Window makes it a pivotal element in Nigeria's mission enterprise.

5.5.3 Mission Awareness

One of the strategic operational modes of the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) is mission awareness. This approach is designed to disseminate relevant and timely information on global trends in evangelization to both believers and churches. Mission awareness, in essence, functions for the believer in a similar way that evangelism does for the unbeliever. While evangelism focuses on bringing the Gospel to non-Christians, mission awareness seeks to awaken and equip the body of Christ to understand the current missionary landscape and to respond actively Van Gelder, C. (2007). Through mission awareness campaigns, churches are informed about regions and groups that remain unreached by the Gospel. This initiative aims to

cultivate a sense of responsibility among believers to engage in strategic missionary efforts, including sending missionaries, providing support, and mobilizing resources. It also emphasizes the ongoing need for discipleship in areas where initial evangelization has occurred but where sustained spiritual growth is lacking.

Significantly, the month of February has been designated by NEMA as Mission Awareness Month, marking the anniversary of the organizations founding. During this period, NEMA intensifies efforts to engage churches and ministries across Nigeria by creating greater awareness of the Great Commission. This includes educating congregations on what has been accomplished, what is currently being done, and the missionary frontiers that still require attention.

According to Joshua Project, (2024). approximately 43 groups in Nigeria remain unreached with the Gospel, with no viable church presence among them despite their considerable population sizes. This statistic underscores the urgency of mission awareness as a critical tool in mobilizing the Nigerian church towards completing the Great Commission within and beyond national borders.

5.5.4 Diaspora Mission

In 2018, the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) initiated a Diaspora Missions Movement as part of its strategic missionary operations. This initiative emerged from a growing awareness within NEMA and its affiliated mission organizations about the increasing need to reach migrant populations and diaspora communities residing within Nigeria. The core objective of this movement is to evangelize and disciple migrants, thereby equipping them to serve as conduits for gospel dissemination within their own ethnic and national groups.

This approach is rooted in the strategic realization that many nations, particularly those considered resistant or close to traditional missionary activities, can be accessed indirectly through their nationals residing in more open countries. For example, Chinese nationals living in Nigeria may be reached with the Gospel, disciplined, and subsequently empowered to share the Gospel within their own home countries. This method serves as a form of reverse mission, facilitating access to regions otherwise difficult for foreign missionaries due to legal, cultural, or security restrictions (cf. Hanciles, 2008).

Moreover, NEMA has emphasized the importance of engaging unreached people groups (UPGs) within Nigeria, particularly those originally situated in the northern regions who, due to increasing insecurity and internal displacement, have migrated to the southern part of the country. Historically, missionaries had to travel to the North to reach these groups; however, the present security challenges have rendered such efforts more difficult and hazardous. In the light of this, NEMA advocates that churches in southern Nigeria capitalize on this internal migration to reach UPGs now within their immediate communities.

This strategy not only facilitates access to these groups but also promotes culturally appropriate evangelism. By discipling individuals within these communities, who then take the Gospel back to their kinsmen, the issue of cultural imperialism is mitigated. The approach ensures that the Gospel is shared in culturally sensitive ways, minimizing cultural shock and resistance, while enhancing the authenticity and acceptance of the message among indigenous populations.

In sum, NEMAs Diaspora Missions Movement reflects a contextually adaptive and missiologically sound response to global migration patterns and internal displacement trends, positioning local churches as key agents in reaching the nations within and beyond Nigerias borders.

5.5.5 Bible Translation

The Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) has prioritized bible translation as one of its core operational modes. This initiative focuses on Nigerian languages that currently lack scripture in their native tongue. Over the past four years, the number of languages involved in this translation effort has significantly increased. In a collaborative effort with the Bible Society of Nigeria, a member agency of NEMA, a complete Pidgin Bible was published and launched in Warri, Delta State, on April 12, 2025. NEMA's ongoing objective is to ensure that all Nigerian languages have a complete bible translated into their respective dialects in the near future.

5.5.6 Media and Resource Development

The Media and Resource Development Department of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) was established by Pastor Victor Idakwoji, who served as the pioneer National Coordinator for Media and Resource Development in 2012. His initial major assignment was the compilation, editing, and publication of the 30th-anniversary magazine of NEMA, which chronicled the history of the Church and missions in Nigeria. The magazine's initial print run of 5,000 copies sold out during and after the 30th-anniversary celebration at DRACC, Lugbe, Abuja.

Key Publications and Initiatives: In 2012, numerous leaders proposed the inclusion of content not covered in the magazine. This led to the publication of a subsequent magazine edition that

captured the impact and efforts of Mary Slessor and other pioneer Presbyterian missionaries in the Calabar province. In 2014, the department launched *NEMATODAY*, a quarterly newsletter. A major production of the department in 2013 was the "Vision 50/15" mid-term review manual, which was released at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) of NEMA. Book of records of NEMA, (1982-2022).

Mark Garba succeeded Mr Victor Idakwoji as National Coordinator for Media and Resource Development. He was tasked with overseeing the Relief and Rehabilitation unit of NEMA. The Media Department is also responsible for the distribution of thousands of pocket Bibles to disciples across the country. Additionally, it compiled and published the "Disciples Making Manual" (DMM), which was later rebranded and revitalized. Efforts are underway to establish an e-library and a multi-media studio.

The Media Department is currently engaged in efforts to digitize the "Perspectives course" and other mobilization training programs into an application called "NEMAEQUIPAPP."

The Media and Resource Development department came into existence under the leadership of Mike Adegbile, who was the Executive Secretary in 2012. He was succeeded by a predecessor who initiated a series of media projects, such as the *NEMATODAY* newsletter and the "Nigeria Missions" magazine, which were directly overseen by the office of the Executive Secretary.

5.5.7 The NEMA Relief and Rehabilitation unit was activated during the "Re-Engaging the North-East Project." Many widows and refugees have directly benefited from the Adopt-A-Family Project of this unit. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the department was mobilized to distribute relief funds through NEMA member agencies to many missionaries in distress. Many

churches and mission leaders have completed the "Church and Community Mobilization Process" (CCMP) training to enhance the community development and transformational response of the churches and member agencies.

5.5.8 Challenges to Nema Strategies

In her effort to realise set vision, NEMA is confronted with the following challenges:

1. Limited stakeholder commitment: There is difficulty in securing full recognition and active participation from all churches and mission organizations.
2. Funding constraints: Insufficient financial resources to sustain large-scale initiatives like Vision 50/15 and Bible translation projects.
3. Security challenges: Insecurity in Northern Nigeria and other target areas hinders missionary deployment.
4. Overambitious targets: Some strategic goals, such as the proposal to deploy 15,000 missionaries by 2020, appears utopia.
5. Need for deeper contextual training: There is limited theological and cross-cultural engagement skills, particularly in Islamic contexts.
6. Cultural and language barriers: In engaging diaspora communities and unreached people groups effectively, culture poses difficulty in achieving the mission vision.
7. Slow translation progress: Many Nigerian languages still lack complete Bible translations which poses a major challenge to NEMA strategies.
8. Technological and resource limitations: There is delays in fully digitizing training resources due to limited resources and ensuring widespread accessibility.
9. Humanitarian resource strain: Relief and rehabilitation efforts risk diverting attention and funds from core missionary work.

10. Dependency risks: Aid projects, if not paired with discipleship, can foster dependency rather than empowerment.

5.5.9 Prospects of Nema Strategies

Despite the challenges identified, NEMAs strategies in Ibadan present significant prospects for the advancement of the Great Commission. These prospects highlight the continuing relevance of NEMA as a unifying and catalytic platform for missions within Nigeria and beyond. The following key areas underscore its future potential:

1. **Strong Networking Platform:** NEMA provides a veritable framework for unity and collaboration among churches and mission agencies, reducing denominational barriers and fostering collective action.
2. **Proven Mobilization Models:** Initiatives such as Vision 50/15 have reshaped the Nigerian Church's perception of global missions, providing a tested model for mobilizing large-scale participation.
3. **Established Training Infrastructure:** The Perspectives training program and other mobilization courses have created a pool of mission-minded leaders and pastors, equipping the Church for sustained engagement.
4. **Expanding Diaspora Mission Opportunities:** Internal displacement and global migration trends present fresh opportunities to reach unreached people groups within Nigeria and to indirectly access restricted nations.
5. **Strategic Bible Translation Partnerships:** Collaboration with agencies such as the Bible Society of Nigeria enhances the possibility of delivering scripture in multiple local languages, strengthening indigenous evangelism.

6. Media Innovation Potential: The development of the NEMAEQUIPAPP and other digital tools opens new frontiers for mission education, training, and mobilization, especially among young people.
7. Prayer and Advocacy Momentum: Nationwide prayer movements and advocacy initiatives have already strengthened spiritual commitment and remain a promising force for mobilization.
8. Flexibility: The transition from Vision 50/15 to Vision 50/15 Plus demonstrates NEMAs ability to review, innovate, and realign its strategies to changing realities.
9. Youth Engagement Growth: Increasing involvement of young professionals and students through mission conferences and training initiatives secures the next generation of missionaries.
10. Global Partnerships: Opportunities for collaboration with global mission movements, such as Asia's Back to Jerusalem initiative, expand NEMAs role in shaping international mission frontiers.

5.6 Funding:

The financial base of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) is sustained primarily through resources mobilized from its member agencies and partners in the diaspora. Each of NEMA's operational zones and state chapters contributes to this pool through prescribed dues, ensuring that financial responsibility is shared across the network. In addition, the association periodically organizes special fundraising events, such as dinners and partnership drives, to supplement its income and provide additional support for its programs. These combined mechanisms enable NEMA to maintain its administrative functions and advance its mission objectives.

In line with Henry Venn's principle of self-supporting, NEMA's funding model demonstrates a deliberate attempt to reduce dependency on external aid by encouraging indigenous churches and mission organizations to contribute toward the sustainability of the association. Although support from diaspora partners remains part of its structure, the emphasis on member-driven funding underscores the organization's commitment to building local ownership and financial responsibility within the Nigerian mission enterprise.

In sum, this chapter examined the emergence and organisational structure of the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), positioning it as a pivotal institutional expression of indigenous missionary collaboration in Nigeria. The analysis demonstrated that NEMA successfully consolidated fragmented mission efforts, providing structural coordination, strategic mobilisation, and training platforms that enhanced the operational capacity of local mission agencies. In many respects, NEMA's framework reflects substantial progress toward self-governance and self-propagation, particularly through its emphasis on indigenous leadership networks and coordinated evangelistic deployment across unreached regions.

However, the chapter also revealed that while NEMA has achieved notable organisational cohesion, the sustainability of its operations remains uneven among member agencies. Financial self-support continues to pose challenges, with several mission bodies still dependent on external partnerships or donor inflows to maintain field operations. This indicates that while the association exemplifies structural unity and visionary leadership, the economic dimension of Venn's Three-Self Model is not uniformly realised across its network.

Therefore, Chapter Five reinforced the relevance of applying the Three-Self framework to Nigerian mission contexts and justified the transition to Chapter Six, which evaluates specific NEMA-affiliated mission-planted churches against the 3S criteria. This progression ensures that the study moves from organisational theory to practical outcomes, testing whether mission policies have effectively translated into self-sustaining ecclesial communities.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CHURCHES FOUNDED BY NEMA AND HER AGENCIES

This chapter presents an evaluative analysis of selected churches established by member agencies of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), using Henry Venn's Three-Self missiological framework, self-support, self-governance, and self-propagation, as the guiding lens. The aim is to determine the extent to which these churches reflect indigenous ownership, financial responsibility, leadership autonomy, and missionary reproduction. Each church is examined based on its history, leadership structure, funding patterns, numerical growth, and missional impact. By doing so, this chapter provides practical evidence of how Venn's theory has been implemented, whether fully, partially, or not at all, within different mission contexts. The subsequent sub-sections analyse the selected churches individually.

6.1.1 Sinai Global Ministry, Ibadan.

Sinai Global Ministry, a member agency of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), has pioneered significant mission work among the Fulani communities in Baruba land (Nigeria) and in neighboring Benin Republic. These church-planting initiatives are supervised from the ministry's coordinating center in Ibadan. Sinai commenced its church-planting endeavors three years ago among the Fulani communities in the Oke Ogun axis of Oyo State, Nigeria, and the Warmaa tribe in northern Benin Republic. Initiated by a missionary couple and supervised from the coordinating center in Ibadan, these congregations, currently averaging

between 50 and 70 members, with the Benin congregation numbering approximately 80, demonstrate the strategic integration of the Three-Self Mission Principle (self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating).

In terms of Venn's Three-Self Principle, the planted churches, supervised from Ibadan, reveal varying levels of progress. First, regarding self-support, most of the congregations demonstrate a commendable degree of financial independence. Local members contribute toward the upkeep of the churches and community outreach, reflecting Venn's insistence that indigenous assemblies should sustain their own ministries without perpetual reliance on external subsidy (Seibert, 1989; Shenk, 1983).

The congregations actively engage in agricultural initiatives, particularly large-scale farming, as a means of generating internal resources for church operations. Additionally, veterinary services and nomadic schools function both as community service platforms and as mechanisms for economic sustainability, reducing external financial dependency.

Second, with respect to self-propagation, the Fulani congregations are already exhibiting signs of reproduction. Several discipleship centers have been formed as offshoots of the original churches, with the potential to develop into fully structured assemblies in the near future. This aligns with Venn's vision of indigenous churches multiplying themselves through evangelistic initiative (Walls, 1996). Evangelistic creativity is evident in the translation of biblical narratives into Fulfulde, the Fulani language, and in the composition of contextualized gospel songs, both of which enhance the sense of ownership and cultural rootedness in worship (Bosch, 1991).

The use of audio Bibles in women's discipleship, alongside testimonies of miraculous healings, has stimulated interest in the gospel among resistant Fulani groups and even among Muslim clerics. Furthermore, secret believers are facilitating the multiplication of house churches, thereby extending the Christian witness organically within their communities.

Third, the principle of self-government remains underdeveloped. Many of the churches are still in their formative stages and have not yet raised indigenous leaders with sufficient maturity to assume full pastoral responsibility. For this reason, missionaries from nearby areas are currently deployed to serve as interim pastors. Nevertheless, leadership training is underway, and the process of developing indigenous pastors and elders is being intentionally pursued to align with Venn's conviction that local believers must govern their own churches (Shenk, 1983).

The establishment of more than thirty house fellowships and the nurturing of about forty secret disciples illustrate a pattern of indigenous leadership and contextualized governance. This decentralized structure enables local believers to sustain communal worship and discipleship within their socio-cultural context, even in the face of religious pressures.

A particularly innovative strategy employed by Sinai Global Ministry is its veterinary outreach program. Recognizing the centrality of cattle to Fulani livelihood, missionaries administer medical treatment and vaccinations to livestock as a form of service. This practical act of compassion creates bridges of trust and provides opportunities to share the gospel with herders. In several cases, Fulani families have embraced Christianity through these encounters,

demonstrating that holistic mission approaches—meeting social and economic needs alongside evangelism—are effective means of contextual witness (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004).

The Fulani churches planted by Sinai Global Ministry exhibit encouraging compliance with Venn's principles of self-support and self-propagation, while the dimension of self-government remains a developmental priority. The intentional focus on discipleship, cultural contextualization, and holistic outreach indicates that the ministry is on a trajectory consistent with Venn's enduring missiological vision. In sum, while modest in numerical strength, the churches pioneered by Sinai Global Ministry represent significant missiological advances. By embodying the principles of self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation, these congregations constitute resilient footholds of Christian witness among semi-nomadic and historically resistant peoples.

Salawa Mission Church, located in Ode Irele Local Government Area of Ondo State within the riverine axis, was founded in 2015 by Mr. George Iwaye following an evangelistic outreach that resulted in the conversion of several villagers. The church began with fewer than twenty members but has since grown significantly, reaching a congregation of about 200 persons. Initially, the church was led by Pastor Fedra Woni, later by Pastor Peter, and subsequently by Pastor Moses. Presently, the congregation is shepherded by Pastor Felix Ojediran, an indigenous minister, which reflects a key element of Henry Venn's principle of self-governance. The transition from external to indigenous pastoral leadership indicates progress toward ecclesiastical maturity and contextual relevance (Venn, 1971; Bosch, 2011).

From a financial perspective, the church records a monthly income of between ₦30,000 and ₦45,000 through offerings. While modest, this level of income has been sufficient to meet the day-to-day operational needs of the church. Such financial independence demonstrates adherence to the principle of self-support, which emphasizes that indigenous churches must develop the capacity to sustain their ministries without perpetual reliance on external resources (Sanneh, 2008). However, it should be noted that although the church sustains itself, its limited income may constrain larger projects, such as infrastructure expansion or mission initiatives, thereby highlighting the ongoing need for strategic partnerships and capacity building.

In terms of self-propagation, Salawa Mission Church has not yet reproduced itself by planting new congregations, despite being strategically located near neighboring villages such as Ajagba and Akotogbo. The absence of church multiplication reveals a gap in fulfilling the third component of Venn's principle. Scholars have observed that self-propagating churches are vital for the spread of the gospel across cultural and geographic frontiers (Walls, 1996). Thus, while the church has made commendable progress in governance and self-support, its lack of missionary extension underscores the need for intentional discipleship and mobilization strategies aimed at church planting in surrounding communities.

In summary, Salawa Mission Church represents a developing indigenous congregation that has achieved partial compliance with Venn's Three-Self Principle. Its growth in membership, indigenous leadership, and capacity for financial self-support demonstrates significant progress. Nevertheless, the absence of self-propagation highlights the need for strategic renewal in

evangelistic outreach and discipleship so that the church may become fully aligned with the vision of an indigenous, self-sustaining, and mission-oriented body of Christ.

6.1.2 Missionary Purse International, Bodija Ibadan:

Missionary Purse International (MPI), a registered member agency of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), has made significant strides in church planting within Rijua Local Government Area of Niger State. The agency has established multiple congregations which, though still developing, reflect varying degrees of progress toward the Three-Self Principle proposed by Henry Venn (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

6.1.2a Kauna Baptist Church, Abuka: Kauna Baptist Church in Abuka was one of the earliest congregations planted by Missionary Purse International (MPI). The church, with an average attendance of 35–40 members, is currently led by Pastor Aariah Yusuf Bitrus, an indigene of the community. The pastor recounted in an interview that the process of establishing the church was arduous, highlighting the challenges of evangelism in an environment where nominalism and poverty are prevalent. Although the church has not yet reproduced itself through new congregations, it demonstrates a measure of self-government by being under indigenous leadership. However, it remains financially dependent, with a monthly income of only ₦3,000, which hinders full compliance with Venn's principle of self-support (Seibert, 1989). Despite these limitations, members testify to ongoing conversions and spiritual growth, indicating that the work is bearing fruit.

6.1.2b Aheri Baptist Church, Gajaja: Founded in 2018, Aheri Baptist Church in Gajaja represents another MPI initiative. The church is shepherded by Pastor Dalami Jonathan, with a modest

membership of 17 persons. Establishing the congregation was described as a difficult process, yet the pastor reports that the Lord continues to add new members. The church records a monthly income of ₦13,655, reflecting some ability to sustain its basic operations. Remarkably, this congregation has already begun to reproduce itself by establishing new preaching centers, aligning closely with Venn's principle of self-propagation (Bosch, 1991). While still small, the church's evangelistic initiative points to its potential for multiplication in the future.

6.1.2c Salvation Baptist Church, Atudu Shambo: The newest of MPI's church is Salvation Baptist Church, Atudu Shambo, established on December 28, 2024. Now pastored by a local indigene, the church has grown to 40+ members, up from just a handful at its founding. Despite the encouraging increase in attendance, the congregation remains economically weak, with a monthly income of only ₦2,000. This heavy reliance on outside support demonstrates that the principle of self-support has not yet been achieved. Literacy levels in the community are also low, creating challenges for discipleship and leadership training. Nevertheless, God's providence is evident at its inception, the church was granted a parcel of land free of charge for its building project, and numerous testimonies of healing have drawn new converts. These experiences reinforce a sense of divine favor and community ownership, which, in Venn's terms, are crucial for building a truly indigenous church (Walls, 1996).

Evaluation of Venn's Three-Self Principles: Self-Governance: The transition of pastoral leadership to local indigenes, as seen in Salvation Baptist Church Atudu Shambo, demonstrates progress toward Venn's principle of self-governance. According to Venn (1971) and Bosch (2011), self-governing churches are vital for ensuring cultural relevance and long-term sustainability. However, not all churches under Missionary Purse International have fully

matured in leadership. Some remain dependent on external missionaries or external oversight, indicating partial compliance. The presence of indigenous pastors nonetheless marks a significant step toward contextual leadership.

Self-Support: Financial independence remains one of the greatest challenges facing Missionary Purse International churches. Kauna Baptist Church Abuka, for instance, reports a monthly income of only ₦3,000, which is insufficient to sustain the congregation without external aid. Similarly, Salvation Baptist Church Atudu Shambo records a monthly offering of about ₦2,000, reflecting economic limitations within its community. Aheri Baptist Church Gajaja fares slightly better with ₦13,655 in monthly offerings, yet this amount still restricts the scope of ministry and outreach. While these churches demonstrate some capacity for local giving, they remain heavily constrained financially, underscoring Sanneh's (2008) argument that self-support is particularly difficult in impoverished contexts.

Self-Propagation: In terms of self-propagation, progress has been uneven. Aheri Baptist Church has reproduced itself by establishing new centers, indicating a measure of missionary vision and expansion. By contrast, Kauna Baptist Church and Salvation Baptist Church are yet to reproduce, largely due to financial hardship and limited resources. According to Walls (1996), the vitality of indigenous churches is measured by their ability to multiply themselves; thus, the inability to extend mission efforts beyond their immediate communities remains a critical gap.

Overall Assessment: Missionary Purse International demonstrates partial adherence to Venn's Three-Self Principle. While the presence of indigenous pastors show commendable progress in self-governance, financial sustainability (self-support) remains weak, and church reproduction

(self-propagation) is inconsistent. These churches highlight both the promise and the challenges of indigenous missions in resource-constrained environments. Strategic networking with other mission agencies, capacity building, and intentional discipleship are essential if these congregations are to become fully aligned with the Three-Self vision of Henry Venn and sustain long-term impact.

6.1.3 Fellowship Bible Church, Lagos.

Fellowship Bible Church (FBC), with headquarter in Nigeria, has extended its missionary reach across West Africa, planting churches in Togo, Benin Republic, Ghana, and Liberia. These churches were initially pioneered by Nigerian missionaries but have since transitioned into indigenous-led congregations, demonstrating significant alignment with Henry Venn's principles of mission (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

The Liberian branch of FBC has proved particularly fruitful. The Buchanan County congregation, established in October 2001, began with a membership of about 90 persons and is now pastored by Pastor Kloh, an indigenous leader. The church is financially self-supporting through member contributions and demonstrates effective self-governance.

The Paynesville Congregation, founded in August 2007 in ELWA, Nanugbe, Monrovia, currently has a sitting capacity of approximately 200 members. It is led by Rev. Dan and Pastor Shola Alioha. This church also demonstrates financial independence, sustaining itself through offerings that average about \$100 per month, which cover basic expenses.

In October 2009, another congregation was planted in Magibi County with an average membership of 50 persons, pastored by Pastor Kodjo and Sister Mathe Banje. The Paynesville

Congregation played a key role in this expansion, highlighting the principle of self-propagation through local church-planting efforts.

According to Allwell Juachi, one of the Nigerian missionaries involved in the founding process, the establishment of these churches in Liberia was relatively smooth due to government permission. While initial evangelism faced slow responses, the churches eventually gained momentum and are now experiencing steady numerical and financial growth.

Challenges to church planting work in Ghana and Benin Republic: The expansion into Ghana faced setbacks. A congregation planted there eventually closed down when pastoral leadership could not be sustained after the early missionaries departed. This highlights a gap in leadership development, which Venn's self-government principle seeks to address by training and ordaining indigenous pastors. Despite Ghana's strong Christian identity, shallow religious commitment among many adherents continues to limit meaningful discipleship and growth. Encouragingly, a newer congregation at Oblogo-Weija in Accra is now gaining ground, with reports of conversions and discipleship programs.

In Benin Republic, the churches face a different challenge. While congregations exist, they are located in a context where syncretism and false teachings are widespread, drawing many away from biblical Christianity. Nevertheless, the church has made innovative use of educational mission strategies, such as weekly evangelism in schools, which has yielded fruit among pupils.

Evaluation of Venn's Three-Self Principles: The evidence from Fellowship Bible Church's mission work shows significant alignment with Venn's model.

Self-Support: The Liberian Congregations, particularly in Buchanan and Paynesville, are financially self-sustaining, meeting their needs through local offerings.

Self-Government: All the established congregations are now under indigenous leadership, reflecting successful transfer of authority from foreign missionaries to local pastors (Seibert, 1989; Bosch, 1991)

Self-Propagation: The reproduction of new churches, particularly Paynesville's planting of the Magibi congregation, demonstrates indigenous evangelistic initiative.

Despite these successes, certain weaknesses remain: Ghana's experience underscores the fragility of church plants without sustained local leadership, while Benin Republic illustrates the difficulty of combating syncretism and contextual religious distortions. Liberia, though fruitful, continues to grapple with the social effects of civil war, particularly youth delinquency and immorality.

Overall, Fellowship Bible Church demonstrates a robust application of Venn's principles in its West African mission. Its Liberian congregations especially exemplify churches that are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating, even amid economic and social challenges. While contextual issues such as nominalism, syncretism, and leadership shortages persist in Ghana and Benin Republic, the trajectory of FBC's mission affirms the enduring relevance of Venn's paradigm for building sustainable, indigenous churches across Africa.

6.1.4 Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), Ibadan.

The Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF) has contributed significantly to mission work in Niger State, Nigeria, through the planting of churches in Unguwan Makeri, Rukuna, Dugge, and Unguwan Kwulki. These congregations are supervised from CMF's headquarters in Ibadan.

Membership across these churches ranges between 45 and 140 persons, indicating steady growth despite challenging beginnings.

6.1.4a Church Formation and Early Struggles: The churches were pioneered by two Missionaries Gabriel Eyube and Ishaya Shambo, who encountered considerable obstacles during the initial phase of evangelization. Low response from indigenous populations, scarcity of fund, harsh climatic conditions, and community hostilities threatened to derail the mission. Several times, the missionaries considered abandoning the work altogether. Nevertheless, through perseverance and reliance on God, they eventually experienced a breakthrough, leading to the establishment of stable congregations.

6.1.4b Current Status and Leadership: Today, the churches planted by CMF are self-sustaining and have become important centers of Christian witness in Niger State. Financially, they support themselves through the contributions of local members, reducing dependence on external aid. The congregations have also demonstrated capacity for self-propagation, planting new churches in other nearby communities. In terms of leadership, the congregations are now under indigenous pastors, notably Pastor Musa Yohanna and Pastor Isah Uman, who provide contextualized pastoral care and direction. This development reflects the principle of self-government as envisaged by Venn (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

6.1.4c Evaluation of Venn's Three-Self Principles: The experience of CMF churches shows strong alignment with Venn's paradigm:

Self-Support: The congregations sustain themselves financially, covering ministry costs through local resources, in line with Venn's principle that dependency on external funding hinders maturity (Seibert, 1989).

Self-Government: Indigenous leadership has been fully established, with local pastors overseeing church governance, reflecting contextual ownership and decision-making (Bosch, 1991).

Self-Propagation: The congregations have successfully reproduced themselves by planting new churches in other locations, demonstrating evangelistic initiative rooted in local agency. CMF's work in Niger State illustrates the resilience and adaptability of mission in difficult contexts. What began as a fragile and nearly abandoned enterprise has matured into a network of indigenous, self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches. This trajectory not only validates Venn's principles but also underscores the transformative power of persistence in mission, even in the face of financial and cultural resistance.

6.1.5 Reach the Rest Ministry, Osogbo.

Reach the Rest Ministry (RTR), a member agency of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), has made significant strides in planting churches across Taraba and Bauchi States. These congregations are strategically located in Joroape, Yelwa Kontijasa, and Sati (Taraba State), as well as in Kumi Gore, Kumin Dan Kosta, Kumin Balli, Kumin Dare, Kokoli, and Kumin Tela (Bauchi State). Despite operating under difficult circumstances, RTR churches reflect notable compliance with Henry Venn's principles of self-support, self-government, and self-propagation (Shenk, 1983; Walls, 1996).

6.1.5a Church Formation and Membership. The planted congregations typically have a membership ranging from 30 to 50 persons. These small but vibrant communities often meet in unconventional spaces—private homes or under trees—instead of traditional church buildings. This deliberate choice is a strategic response to the threat of terrorist attacks targeting Christian

gatherings. By minimizing physical visibility, RTR ensures the continuity of worship and discipleship without drawing unnecessary attention.

6.1.5b Indigenous Leadership and Local Sustainability. Reach the Rest churches are self-supporting, with members contributing to sustain ministry expenses without reliance on external funding. Furthermore, leadership has been fully transferred to indigenous pastors and elders, enabling contextual decision-making and affirming Venn's principle of self-government (Bosch, 1991). The congregations, though modest in size, exhibit resilience and independence in governance and financial administration.

6.1.5c Evangelistic Drive and Reproduction. One of the most remarkable features of RTR churches is their commitment to evangelism. Despite security challenges, these congregations have proven viable and vibrant, reproducing themselves through aggressive outreaches. New discipleship centers are continually established, often evolving into stable congregations. This dynamic expansion demonstrates clear evidence of self-propagation, aligning with Venn's vision of churches multiplying themselves through indigenous initiative (Seibert, 1989).

6.1.5d Evaluation of Venn's Three-Self Principles. Self-Support: Churches sustain themselves financially through local contributions, without foreign subsidy. Self-Government: Leadership is entirely indigenous, fostering ownership and contextual authority.

Self-Propagation: Congregations reproduce through intentional evangelism and discipleship, forming new assemblies even in hostile environments.

The experience of Reach the Rest Ministry illustrates how mission can thrive under persecution. By leveraging local leadership, minimizing dependency, and focusing on grassroots evangelism, RTR congregations embody the essence of Venn's Three-Self Principle. Their model highlights

the resilience of indigenous churches in fragile contexts, where adaptability and spiritual vitality compensate for material limitations.

6.1.6 First Baptist Church, Ipole Ilesha.

First Baptist Church Ipole, also known as Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ipole-Ilesha, Osun State, was planted in 2004 by the Nigerian Baptist Convention, one of the member agencies of NEMA. At inception, the congregation began with about 40 members and has continued to function as an indigenous assembly.

6.1.6a Church Formation and Indigenous Leadership. The church is presently led by Pastor Gentle Idowu, an indigene of the community, which positions it firmly within the scope of Venn's principle of self-government. The presence of local leadership ensures contextual decision-making, cultural sensitivity, and stability for the congregation (Walls, 1996).

6.1.6b Financial Sustainability and Challenges. Despite having established indigenous leadership, the church remains financially weak. Its average weekly offerings amount to approximately ₦4,000, totaling about ₦20,000 per month. This income barely sustains the running of the congregation, thereby limiting its ability to engage in wider mission work. As Venn (cited in Shenk, 1983) emphasized, self-support is a crucial factor for the long-term health and independence of indigenous churches; hence, financial dependence represents a critical area of weakness for the Ipole congregation.

6.1.6c Capacity for Reproduction and Evangelistic Outreach. The limited financial base directly affects the church's capacity for self-propagation. While members maintain strong faith and community presence, the economic constraints hinder the ability to plant new preaching stations

or reproduce additional congregations. This aligns with the observation that financial sustainability is often a prerequisite for effective expansion in mission contexts (Bosch, 1991).

6.1.6d Evaluation of Venn's Three-Self Principles. Self-Support: Not yet achieved, as the congregation remains financially constrained and unable to sustain broader mission initiatives. Self-Government: This has been achieved, with Pastor Gentle Idowu providing indigenous leadership and ensuring community ownership.

Self-Propagation: Currently limited due to financial challenges, although the church has the potential to expand with improvement in resources. First Baptist Church Ipole exemplifies a partially indigenized congregation within the framework of Venn's Three-Self Principle. While self-government is firmly in place through indigenous leadership, the challenges of self-support hinder the ability to fully engage in self-propagation. Strengthening the church's economic base and mobilizing resources remain critical if this congregation is to fulfill its mission potential as envisioned by Venn.

6.2 Findings from Questionnaires and Interviews with NEMA Member Agencies

This section presents and analyzes the data collected from interviews with leaders of selected NEMA member agencies, alongside results from questionnaires administered to pastors, missionaries, and organizational leaders. The responses provide insight into how NEMA member agencies understand and practice Venn's Three-Self Principle (self-support, self-propagation, and self-governance), as well as their level of collaboration, challenges, and prospects for indigenous mission.

6.2.0 NEMA and the Principle of Self-Support

6.2.1 Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF). Dotun Adeboye, former National Director of CMF

and current Deputy Chairman of NEMA, categorized missionaries into first-generation (those directly called and deployed to the field) and second-generation (those converted under earlier missionaries who subsequently received a call to ministry). He observed that first-generation missionaries often raised support from family and friends, while second-generation missionaries sustained themselves through local means, including farming (Interview, Adeboye, 2025). Ezekiel Akintayo, current National Director of CMF, reinforced this by stressing that churches planted in mission fields are expected to generate their own funds through communal farming and bi-vocational practices. As he explained, “we believe in bi-vocational ministry; no one preaches 24 hours, so missionaries should work with their hands to make ends meet” (Interview, Akintayo, 2025). Victor Obadofin, another CMF leader, suggested that missionaries can avoid distraction by investing funds raised from friends and acquaintances into small businesses, allowing the proceeds to support their ministry.

6.2.2 Sinai Global Outreach Ministry (SGOM). Deji Abioye, SGOM Director, emphasized

human-centered mission over financial preoccupation. He advocated that missionaries engage in local farming practices as a sustainable form of support, underscoring the value of communal integration (Interview, Abioye, 2025).

6.2.3 Missionary Purse International. Samson O. Oyekale, founder of Missionary Purse,

highlighted the importance of having a sending base (a supportive home church or

organization). He compared this to Paul's missionary model in the New Testament, where local churches served as bases of prayer and financial support.

6.2.4 Go International. Tunde Adesanya recommended entrepreneurial approaches such as food processing, supply chain management, online marketing, and livestock rearing. According to him, "missionaries must think innovatively about self-support using available resources, such as solar power and agriculture" (Interview, Adesanya, 2025).

6.2.5 Global Mission Board (GMB). Nigerian Baptist Convention

John Adewumi argued that resources for sustainability are already available in local communities.

He emphasized training missionaries in skill acquisition and investments, while also affirming the need for a strong support base or sending church (Interview, Adewumi, 2025).

6.2.6 NEMA Leadership Perspectives. Adeoluwa Olarewaju, Administrative Director of NEMA, stressed intentionality in discovering local resources, citing historical examples of European missionaries who introduced orange cultivation in Benue and vegetable farming in Plateau. Similarly, Victor Idakwoji, NEMA's Director of Mobilisation, encouraged missionaries to engage in small-scale commerce and skill acquisition, while also building networks with mission bodies to receive recommendations and support.

Other Respondents: First Baptist Church Ipole (Osun State). Gentle Idowu lamented that his 40-member congregation, with an average monthly income of ₦20,000, was not financially independent, making it difficult to plant new churches or sustain pastoral welfare.

Spoken Word Ministry: Toluwase Olumide advised missionaries to liquidate unused assets before deployment, invest funds for sustainability, and maintain accountability to foster trust with supporters.

Across agencies, there was strong consensus that financial self-support is central to sustainable mission, though approaches vary—from communal farming and skill acquisition to entrepreneurial ventures and support bases. These findings affirm Venn’s principle that indigenous churches must strive for economic independence (Shenk, 1983; Bosch, 1991).

6.2b NEMA and the Principle of Self-Propagation

Respondents highlighted the importance of networking and collaboration in enhancing indigenous mission work.

CMF: Adeboye and Akintayo pointed to partnerships with organizations such as Mission Supporters League, Gospel Bankers, and Voice of Mission Ministry. These partners provided training, palm plantations, boreholes, and skill acquisition for sustainability. Obadofin likened networking to Luke 5, where Peter’s boat was made available to Jesus, meeting mutual needs.

Go International: Adesanya underscored honesty and transparency as key to effective networking.

Calvary Ministries (CAPRO): Andrew Oliko described networking as a “force,” using the example of Jerusalem sending Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22-24).

Missionary Purse: Samson Oyekale reiterated that collaboration is the foundation of NEMA’s mission strategy.

Sinai Global Ministry: Abioye affirmed that partnership brings expertise and resources to advance the Great Commission.

NEMA Headquarters: Olarewaju called partnership the “atmosphere where self-support works”. Idakwoji affirmed that networking is NEMA’s primary mandate, citing Vision 50:15 Plus, where agencies collectively committed to sending 15,000 missionaries to 34 Islamic nations.

Other leaders, including James Olarinre (Reach the Rest Ministry) and Gentle Michael (First Baptist Church Ipole), described partnership as a “live wire” for sustaining mission momentum.

Collaboration enables NEMA agencies to overcome financial and manpower limitations, confirming Bosch’s (1991) claim that mission thrives where there is synergy among Christian communities.

6.2c Extent of Commitment to Indigenous Work (Self-Propagation). Most agencies confirmed active engagement in indigenous leadership development and church reproduction. Missionary Purse International: Samson Oyekale highlighted church planting efforts where local pastor lead congregations. D4D (Discipleship for Development) equips indigenes with livelihood skills to sustain themselves and the church. Fellowship Bible Church: Juachi Alwell admitted manpower shortages sometimes forced reliance on non-indigenous pastors, though the long-term goal remained indigenization.

NEMA Headquarters: Olarewaju and Pastor Idakwoji emphasized that NEMA itself is indigenous, and membership requires indigenous leadership. Bible translations into Nigerian languages were also ongoing. New Covenant Church Orogun: Elizabeth Oyeniyi reported that daughter churches had already been planted in Oyo State, led by indigenes like Adeboye Samuel. CMF: Akintayo stressed that self-propagation is the heart of NEMA’s mission identity.

Respondents agreed that indigenous leadership and contextual reproduction are non-negotiable, reflecting Venn’s (as cited in Walls, 1996) principle that sustainability depends on local ownership of mission.

6.2d NEMA and the Principle of Self-Governance

Practical examples confirmed that several NEMA member churches are self-governing:

Unguan Makeri (Niger State) – now led by Musa Yohanna, an indigene.

First Baptist Church Ipole (Osun State) – pastored by Gentle Idowu, an indigenous leader trusted by the community. These cases affirm Knight's (1868/1983) insistence that missionary work must quickly transition to indigenous leadership for authentic ownership and rapid growth.

Questionnaire Result Analysis

A total of 100 questionnaires were administered, targeting pastors, deacons, and organizational leaders.

Gender: 90% male, 10% female.

Age: Majority (57%) were 40 years and above, indicating maturity and responsibility.

Marital Status: 74% married.

Position: 57% were organizational leaders (pastors, deacons, directors), enhancing validity since leadership has firsthand knowledge of missions.

Section B: Key Research Questions

1. Awareness of NEMA: 75% affirmed knowledge of NEMA, while 25% had limited awareness.
2. Commitment to Indigenous Work: 60% confirmed active involvement; 40% were less engaged.
3. Networking and Collaboration: 80% agreed these are essential for advancing indigenous self-propagation; 20% disagreed.

1 Whether or not NEMA is known to them?

	Number	Percentage(%)
YES	75	75
NO	25	25
TOTAL	100	100

2 Are they Committed to Indigenous Work?

	Number	Percentage (%)
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YES	60	60
NO	40	40
TOTAL	100	100

3 Does networking and collaboration provide way forward in actual propagation towards the great commission

	Number	Percentage (%)
YES	80	80
NO	20	20
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2025)

6.2f Graphic Representation

Figure 6.1: Awareness of NEMA

(Bar chart – 75% Yes, 25% No)

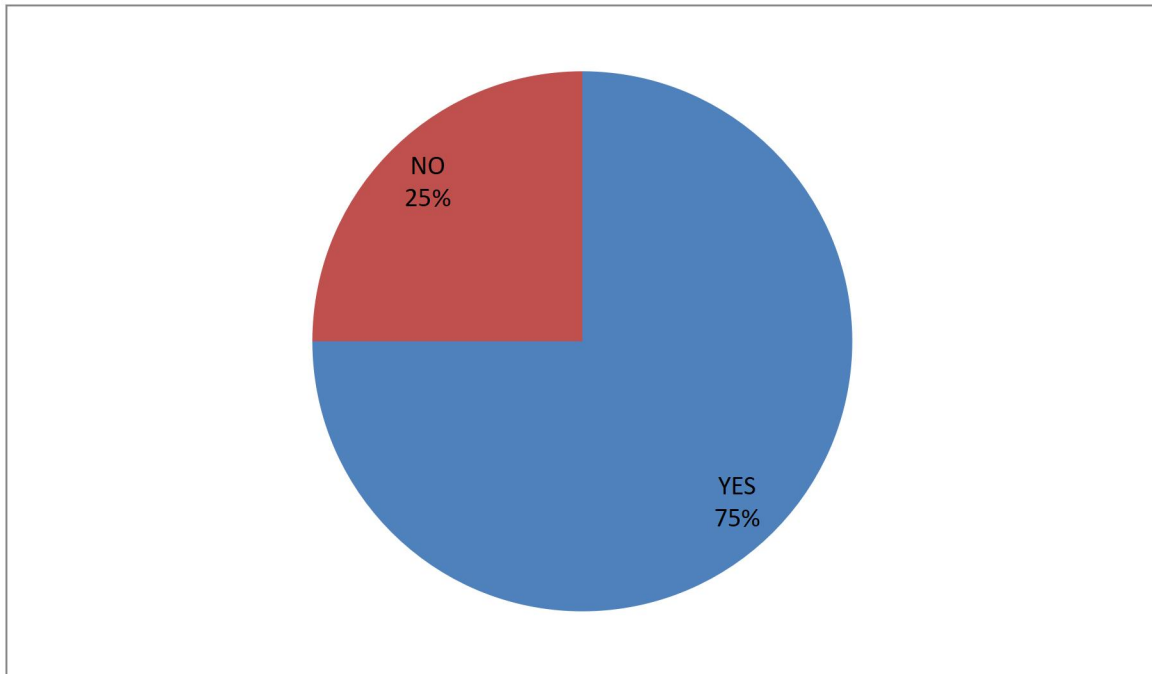
Figure 6.2: Commitment to Indigenous Work

(Pie chart – 60% Yes, 40% No)

Figure 6.3: Value of Networking for Self-Propagation

(Bar chart – 80% Yes, 20% No)

Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2025)

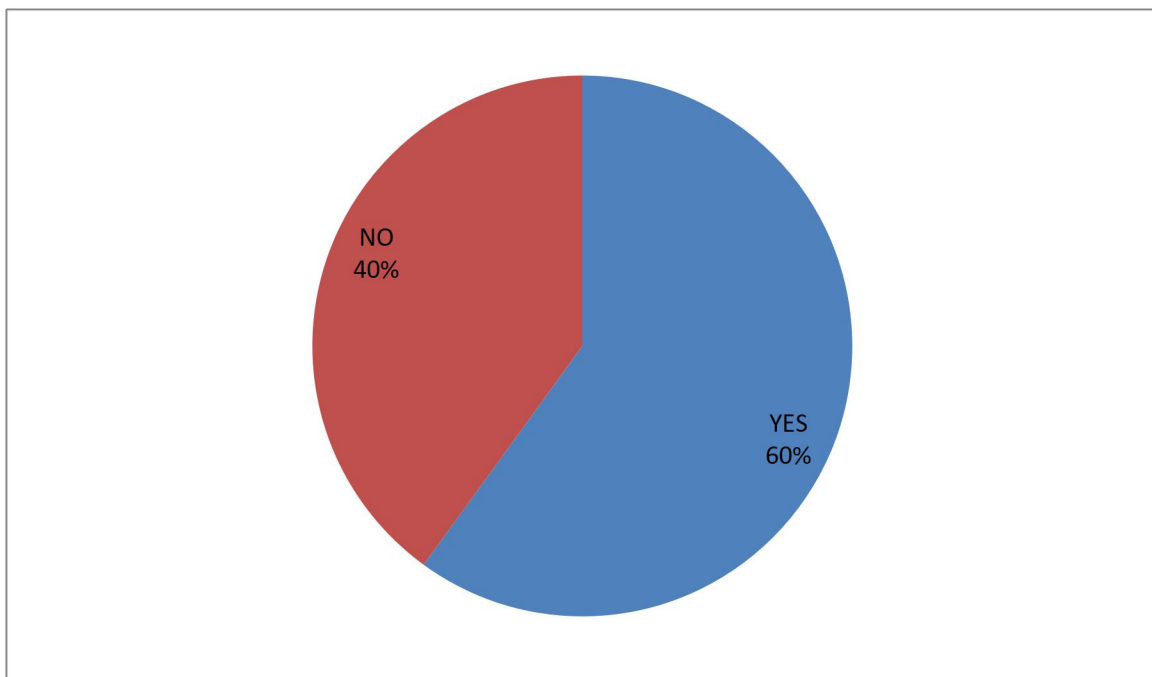


6.7.2 Graphic Representation of Data

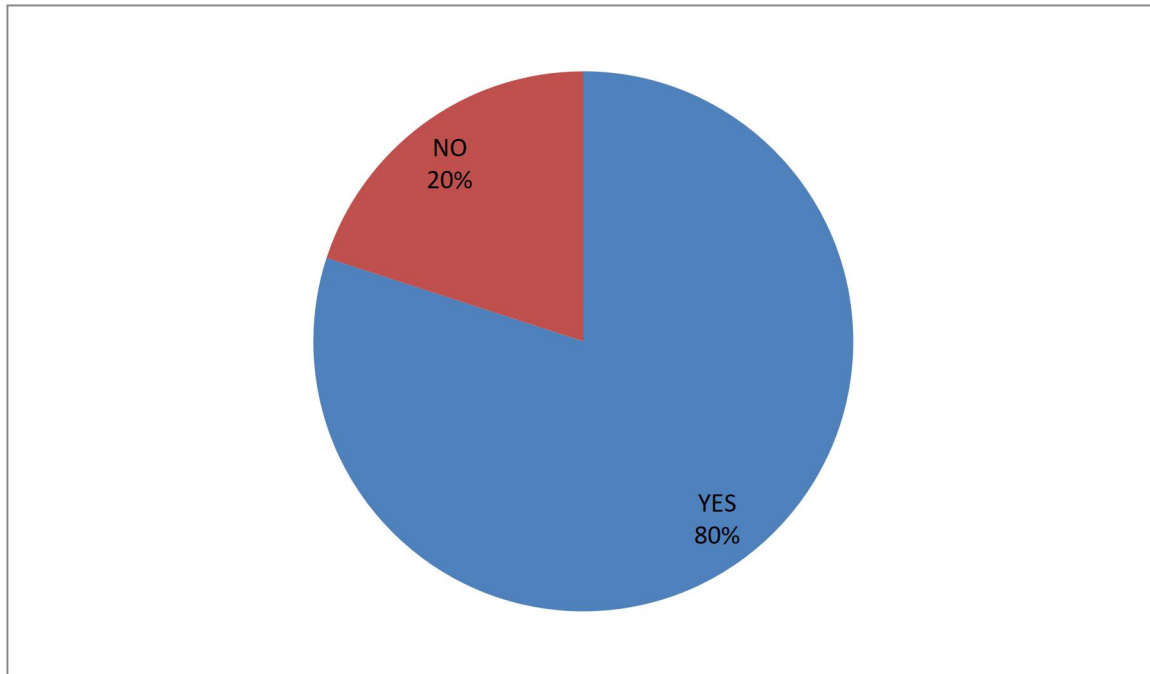
Pictorial representation

1.

2.



3.



Source : Researchers compilation.

This chapter presented a critical evaluation of selected NEMA-affiliated mission-founded churches using the Three-Self Model as an analytical framework. The assessment revealed that while the churches under review demonstrated commendable progress in self-governance — particularly through the emergence of indigenous leadership, contextualised worship practices, and locally managed administrative structures — their performance in the areas of self-support and self-propagation remained varied. Some congregations exhibited strong internal resource mobilisation and locally funded evangelistic initiatives, whereas others continued to rely significantly on external donor inputs or intermittent support from parent mission agencies.

The findings further indicated that self-propagation was more pronounced in rural or frontier mission contexts where conversion momentum naturally contributed to evangelistic expansion,

while urban-based mission churches showed slower replication rates due to socio-economic pressures and competitive ecclesiastical environments. This disparity suggests that the sustainability of indigenous mission efforts is not merely a function of organisational vision but is also shaped by contextual constraints such as economic capacity, cultural receptivity, and leadership development mechanisms.

Overall, the chapter concluded that Nigerian mission-founded churches are on a progressive trajectory toward fulfilling the Three-Self paradigm, but their achievements are asymmetrical rather than holistic. Governance autonomy has been largely secured, yet financial independence and structured missionary reproduction require further strengthening. These observations set the stage for the general conclusion in Chapter Seven, where the study synthesises key findings, revisits the research objectives, and proposes recommendations for deepening indigenous sustainability within Nigeria's contemporary mission movement.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 SUMMARY, EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

7.1 Summary

Christian mission across Africa has undergone a remarkable transition, from foreign-led evangelization to indigenous ownership. This thesis explores that transition through the lens of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), a coalition of over 150 mission agencies founded in 1982 to foster indigenous participation in the Great Commission. Drawing on Henry Venn's 19th-century "Three-Self" missionary paradigm, self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches, it evaluates the extent to which NEMA and its member agencies embody Venn's ecclesiological vision in contemporary practice.

The study roots itself in both Scripture and mission history. The apostle Paul modeled multiplication by appointing local elders in every town (Titus 1:5) and urging churches to sustain

their ministers rather than depend perpetually on external aid (1 Corinthians 9:14). Likewise, Venn, then Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, contended that a mission is only successful when it renders itself unnecessary, having birthed a fully indigenous and reproductive church. His vision was not merely administrative but deeply theological: the body of Christ must take root in every culture, not remain dependent on foreign scaffolding.

Against this backdrop, the thesis investigates how NEMA's structure, operations, and field activities align with this enduring missionary principle. Data was gathered through field surveys, interviews with 20 mission leaders, and analysis of selected church plants across Nigeria and neighboring nations. Churches founded by agencies such as Missionary Purse International, Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), Reach the Rest, and Fellowship Bible Church were examined to measure progress toward self-support, local leadership transfer, and reproductive capacity.

Findings present a nuanced reality. On one hand, NEMA has succeeded in catalyzing indigenous ownership. Unlike the colonial-era mission structures where African believers remained perpetual dependents under foreign hierarchy, most NEMA-planted churches today are pastored by indigenes, governed internally, and contextualized to suit their cultural environments. Testimonies abound of previously hostile or unreached communities now shepherded by their own converts. In places such as Magibi (Liberia), Rijau (Niger State), and riverine Salawa (Ondo State), former recipients of mission are now agents of mission.

However, financial self-sufficiency remains the greatest tension point. While spiritual independence is largely achieved, economic autonomy lags behind. Many rural churches, particularly among poorer or nomadic peoples, generate offerings insufficient to sustain ministry. Several congregations average between ₦2,000 and ₦20,000 monthly, rendering pastoral livelihood difficult without external supplementation. Venn insisted that overdependence on foreign subsidy stifles faith and initiative, yet the thesis discovers that in contemporary low-income settings, rigid withdrawal of assistance could suffocate fragile works. Thus, rather than absolute financial detachment, a moderated model of strategic partnership, what some scholars term “assisted indigeneity”, appears more contextual to current African realities.

Self-governance, on the other hand, is a notable strength. Nearly all churches surveyed have transitioned leadership to local pastors, some of whom were once converts of the same mission fields. Agencies such as CMF have successfully disciplined formerly unreached groups like the Kemberis and Kanuris to the point where they now send missionaries themselves, a fulfillment of Psalm 68:11, “The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it.” Nonetheless, governance gaps remain in administrative training, accountability structures, and conflict resolution. Several leaders expressed concern that unchecked autonomy can result in doctrinal drift or leadership abuse, a critique also echoed in literature on post-mission ecclesiology.

Self-propagation, the third principle, reveals mixed outcomes. Certain mission agencies like Fellowship Bible Church and Reach the Rest exhibit strong reproductive cycles, planting second- and third-generation churches voluntarily. Others, such as Missionary Purse International's Kauna Baptist Church and Atudu Shambo congregation, remain inward-focused due to economic

and literacy limitations. One interviewee admitted, “We desire to plant another church, but how can we send when we are still receiving?” The research concludes that evangelistic zeal alone does not guarantee multiplication; capacity building, discipleship systems, and mission theology must be nurtured continuously.

A powerful insight emerging from the study is the indispensable role of collaboration. Contrary to the rugged individualism of earlier mission structures, most NEMA breakthroughs occurred through synergy. One striking example involved a mission agency sensing a call to Niger Republic but lacking manpower and capital. Rather than abandoning the vision, it appealed to another NEMA agency for partnership. Together, they planted over ten churches across a Muslim-majority local government, an outcome that would have been impossible in isolation. This affirms Ecclesiastes 4:9, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.” Networking is not merely administrative; it is missiological strategy.

Yet the study also reveals a troubling deficit: many Nigerian churches and mission agencies remain unaware or unaligned with NEMA’s vision. Despite its national platform, NEMA has yet to reach saturation within its own Christian constituency. The thesis recommends aggressive sensitization so that the Pentecostal, evangelical, and mainline blocs might see NEMA not as a bureaucracy but as a kingdom mobilization force.

In conclusion, the research affirms that NEMA is a providential instrument in advancing Henry Venn’s Three-Self mission philosophy within Africa. It has largely succeeded in promoting self-governance, moderately succeeded in fostering self-support, and variably succeeded in

encouraging self-propagation. Its greatest strength lies in networking, and its greatest vulnerability lies in economic dependency. To fully realize Venn's vision and Christ's mandate in Matthew 28:19, Nigerian churches must rise beyond dependency structures and embrace sacrificial generosity toward mission. The harvest is ripe, but the sustainability of the laborers remains the hinge upon which the future of African mission swings.

The Great Commission remains a finishable task, and NEMA, if strengthened in financial strategy, training systems, and wider church integration, stands positioned not merely to assist foreign mission, but to lead it. Africa is no longer the mission field alone; she has become the mission force.

7.2 Evaluation of the Findings of the Study

The findings of this research affirm that Henry Venn's Three-Self Mission Principle, Self-Support, Self-Propagation, and Self-Governance, remains an indispensable missiological framework for evaluating the effectiveness of indigenous mission structures in contemporary Africa. Applied to the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA), the data reveal both strong alignment with Venn's ideals and practical limitations requiring contextual adaptation.

The study confirms that self-support is both the foundation and the most challenging aspect of indigenous mission work. As Venn asserted, a church that depends perpetually on foreign aid risks stunted growth and psychological dependency (Bosch, 2011). However, evidence from the field indicates that in economically underdeveloped regions, full financial autonomy at the pioneering stage is often impractical. For instance, Missionary Purse Ministry International reported that while indigenous workers were encouraged to farm and trade for livelihood, external sponsorship remained necessary during crisis moments (Oyekale, personal

communication, 2024). This suggests that partial but strategic external support, not domination, can coexist with Venn's vision, provided it leads to eventual local ownership.

Biblically, this aligns with Apostolic models of balanced support and independence. Paul the Apostle made tents to avoid burdening churches (Acts 18:3), yet he also welcomed partnership from the Philippian church (Philippians 4:15). Thus, both self-labour and interdependence are not contradictory, but complementary strategies in mission sustainability.

One of the strongest findings is the centrality of networking and collaboration in sustaining missionary work. Participants consistently acknowledged that no mission agency can fulfil the Great Commission in isolation. A striking example emerged from a case where one mission organization received an open invitation to plant churches in Niger Republic but lacked manpower and logistics. Rather than abandoning the vision, they partnered with another NEMA agency, and together planted over ten churches across a local government district. This achievement would have been impossible without missional synergy, validating the scriptural principle that “two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour” (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Similarly, in Liberia and Benin Republic, Fellowship Bible Church congregations reproduced daughter churches not through external missions, but through indigenous disciples, a classic fulfilment of 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul urges Timothy to “commit these things to faithful men who will teach others also.

Consistent with Venn's warnings that “foreign control stifles local initiative,” the study reveals that indigenous leadership yields higher resilience, loyalty, and contextual relevance. Churches

such as Unguwan Makeri in Niger State and Salawa Mission Church in Ondo State, led entirely by local pastors, demonstrate growth in attendance and financial stewardship, even under rural hardship. However, the absence of proper leadership training sometimes delays self-propagation, as seen in Salawa Mission Church where growth in governance did not translate into church multiplication. This reinforces the need for structured discipleship pipelines rather than mere pastoral installation.

While NEMA is widely recognized as Nigeria's central mission coordination body, findings indicate that a significant number of churches and individuals remain uninvolved or unaware of its operations. This gap limits the spread of its resources, training, and mobilization potential. If more churches aligned with NEMA's network, resource pooling and mission deployment across unreached regions could accelerate exponentially.

The study underscores the following critical imperatives:

Self-support must be taught, modeled, and gradually scaled, rather than imposed prematurely. Partnerships, not paternalism, must define external involvement in indigenous missions. Leadership multiplication systems are essential for long-term sustainability. Awareness campaigns and mobilization structures must be expanded within NEMA to convert passive observers into active contributors. Missional collaboration must remain institutionalized, not merely relational, to avoid disruption when leadership changes.

Key Findings

The following are the findings of the study based on the objectives:

1. Partial Compliance with Self-Support. Most NEMA-affiliated churches in Ibadan demonstrate basic financial independence through indigenous giving and local offerings. However, some still rely on supplementary funding from partnering agencies.

2. Self-Propagation is Evident but Slow. NEMA churches and member agencies show a willingness to engage in evangelism and outreach, yet only a few have successfully planted additional congregations. Growth is often hindered by financial constraints, inadequate training, and limited manpower.

3. Indigenous Leadership Exists but Needs Strengthening. Many mission-founded churches are now led by local pastors, some are in the process of attaining self-governance status.

4. Networking is a Catalyst for Sustainability. Collaboration among mission agencies has proven essential in pooling resources, gaining access to unreached areas, and overcoming manpower deficits. Examples include joint planting efforts in Niger Republic and the shared training initiatives in Ibadan.

5. Challenges and Prospects Remain Intertwined. Key challenges identified include insufficient funding, limited theological training, socio-cultural challenges and non committal attitude of some denominations. However, there are strong prospects through indigenous leadership, mission partnerships, community acceptance, and increased urban interest in cross-cultural missions.

7.3 Conclusion

This study set out to evaluate the missionary enterprise of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) in the light of Henry Venn's Three-Self Principle—self-support, self-propagation, and self-governance. The research confirms that NEMA has emerged as a strategic

catalyst in advancing indigenous missions across Nigeria, particularly through its emphasis on collaboration, leadership development, and cross-cultural engagement. Its networking platforms and training structures continue to equip mission agencies and churches to function beyond dependence on foreign structures.

However, the findings also reveal a significant gap between awareness and participation. While NEMA is recognized as the foremost umbrella body for missions in Nigeria, many churches and potential mission actors remain passive observers rather than active contributors. The lingering challenges of inadequate indigenous funding and limited local ownership indicate that Venn's vision, though biblically sound and conceptually embraced, is yet to be fully actualized on the field.

Notwithstanding these challenges, NEMA's ongoing flagship initiative—Vision 50/15 Plus—stands as a compelling testament to what corporate synergy can achieve. The mobilization of 4,000 missionaries between 2005 and 2020, and the ongoing goal of deploying an additional 4,000 by 2028 to 34 Islamic nations across the Sahel, North Africa, and the Middle East, demonstrates that the Great Commission is indeed a finishable task when pursued through unified indigenous effort.

In light of these findings, this conclusion calls for a renewed paradigm within the Nigerian Church. Mission must no longer be treated as a charitable extension of church life but as its very essence. Local congregations must restructure their financial priorities, embrace sacrificial generosity, and transition from mission awareness to mission ownership. Moreover, mission

agencies must sustain a balance between indigenous responsibility and strategic partnerships, ensuring that assistance strengthens rather than weakens local autonomy.

In summary, the sustainability of indigenous missions in Nigeria—and the fulfillment of Venn’s Three-Self ideal—rests not merely on institutional frameworks but on intentional commitment, shared responsibility, and a rediscovery of the Church’s apostolic mandate. When self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating principles are fully embraced, the Nigerian Church will not only sustain itself but will rise as a global missionary force to the nations.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- I. NEMA should intensify awareness campaigns among churches and mission organizations to broaden participation and maximize its networking capacity;
- II. churches should increase their annual mission budgets to facilitate self-support, church planting, and missionary welfare;
- III. mission organizations should strengthen collaborative partnerships, recognizing that isolated efforts are insufficient to fulfill the Great Commission;
- IV. further strategies should be developed for indigenous fundraising, considering the persistent challenge of limited financial resources at the local level.

7.5 Contributions to Knowledge

This study has made the following contributions to academic and practical knowledge:

1. it highlights the resourcefulness of NEMA as a catalyst for the Nigerian church towards the realisation of the Great Command;

2. it establishes the importance of collaboration in achieving organisational goals;
3. the study shows how Henry Venn's Three-Self principle works in a real Nigerian context, not just in theory;
4. partnership among mission groups holds immense benefits for the missionary enterprise now as always; and
5. being a multidimensional research approach, the study offers a research approach other scholars may adopt when studying missions in Africa.

7.6 Suggestions for Further Study

The findings and limitations of this study highlight several areas that warrant additional investigation in order to deepen scholarly engagement with indigenous missions in Nigeria and beyond. Further research would not only enrich existing literature but also provide practical

insights for mission organisations, churches, and policymakers seeking to strengthen indigenous missionary efforts. The following suggestions identify promising directions for continued inquiry:

1. Geographical Extension of Study: Future research may apply the same evaluative framework to NEMA's work in other Nigerian regions to offer comparative insight across diverse socio-cultural contexts.
2. Comparative Financial Models for Indigenous Missions: Broader research could examine alternative sustainability models among African mission bodies to deepen understanding of funding beyond foreign aid.
3. Impact Assessment of Vision 50:15 Plus: Researchers could conduct longitudinal studies on the outcomes of Vision 50:15 Plus, particularly its influence on unreached and restricted-access regions.
4. Youth Engagement in Missions: Further study could investigate the mobilisation of young adults, students, and emerging leaders in sustaining indigenous missionary movements.
5. Digital and Media-Based Mission Strategies: With the rise of virtual evangelism, researchers may explore the role of digital platforms and technology in advancing missions within and beyond Nigeria.
6. Gender and Leadership in Mission Practice: Another area of study could focus on the participation and leadership roles of women in indigenous mission with organisations affiliated with NEMA

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APPENDICES

List of Abbreviations

AEA – Association of Evangelicals of Africa
AEAM – Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar
AGA – Annual General Assembly
AIM – Africa Inland Mission
BoT – Board of Trustees
CAET – Christ Ambassadors Evangelistic Team
CAPRO – Calvary Productions (Calvary Ministries, CAPRO)
CCN – Christian Council of Nigeria
C.M.S. / CMS – Church Missionary Society
CMF – Christian Missionary Foundation
EMS – Evangelical Missionary Society
HIGEM – His Grace Evangelical Mission
ICOM – International Conference on Missions
N.E.F. / NEF – Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship
NEMA – Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association
NEF – Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship
SIM – Sudan Interior Mission
SUM – Sudan United Mission
UMTCC – United Missionary Theological College Chapel
VOM – Voice of Mission Ministry
WEA – World Evangelical Alliance
WEF – World Evangelical Fellowship
WCC – World Council of Churches

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of my Ph.D research thesis at the university of Benin, Benin city, Edo State, I am coordinating a survey that investigates the activities of The Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) in Ibadan in the light of Henry Venn's theory on Mission which emphasize's Self-support, self-propagation and self-governing. I will appreciate if you could complete the following table. Any information obtained will be treated with ought most discretion.

SECTION A: BIODATA

Kindly give correct information about yourself by ticking (✓) the appropriate option.

1. Gender: Male ☒ Female ()
2. Age: 18 - 25 Years () 26 - 40 Years ☒ 40 and Above ()
3. Marital Status: Married ☒ Single ()
4. Church Office/Membership
(a) Pastor (), (b) Deacon () (c) Member ()

SECTION B: Assessing the missionary enterprise of the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) in Ibadan through her Agencies, in light of Henry Venn's theory on Mission which is self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing for effective indigenous work.

Kindly indicate your answer with a YES (Y) or No (N)

1. Have you heard of Nigeria Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) ? YES
2. Is your church/ organisation member of NEMA? YES
3. If yes, does networking and collaboration help your work in any way? YES
4. Does your church have indigenous church planted? YES
5. If yes, is it pastored by an indigen ? YES
6. Does your church have any Evangelistic work going on among the unreached people? YES
7. Does your financial support come from the Nationals? YES
8. Or does your financial support comes from foreigners? YES
9. Do you think networking and collaboration with other NEMA member agencies will help your evangelistic work? YES
10. Since NEMA is resourceful in training and assisting churches in their quest of fulfilling the Great Commission, do u think your organisation would be needing her help? YES

APPENDIX II BIBLOGRAPHY

TABLE OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Oral interview

S/N	Name	Age	SEX	Occupation	Place of interview	Date of Interview
1.	Deji Abioye	40	MALE	Missionary	Ibadan	22/08/24
2.	Dotun Adeboye	60	MALE	Clergy/ Missionary	Ibadan	24/08/24
3.	Elizabeth Onyeniya	56	FEMALE	Teacher	Ibadan	25/08/24
4.	Ezekiel Akintayo	60	MALE	Missionary	Ibadan	24/08/24
5.	Gentle M.Idowu	29	MALE	Clergy/missionary	Ibadan	24/08/ 24
6.	James Olarinre	45	MALE	Missionary	Ibadan	25/08/24
7.	John Adewumi	63	MALE	Clergy	Ibadan	28/08/24
8.	Juachi C. Allwell	50	MALE	Clergy	Ibadan	29/08/24
9.	kola	45	MALE	Civil Servant	Ibadan	30/08/24
10.	Nathaniel	48	MALE	Clergy	Ibadan	22/08/24
11.	Olarewaju	43	MALE	Missionary	Jos	30/08/24
12.	Paul Akpoviri	56	MALE	Clergy/ Educationist	Ibadan	25/08/ 24
13.	Reuben Ezemadu	72	MALE	Clergy	Ibadan	30/08/24
14.	Samson O. Oyekale	59	MALE	Missionary	Ibadan	25/08/24
15.	Tayo Adeyemi	58	MALE	Clergy	Ibadan	30/08/24

16.	Toluwase. Olumide	51	MALE	Clergy	Ibadan	25/08/24
17.	Tunde Adesanya	54	MALE	Missionary	Ibadan	29/08/24
18.	Victor Idakwoji	45	MALE	Missionary	Jos	23/08/24
19.	Victor Obadofin	41	MALE	Missionary	Ibadan	30/08/24



The Researcher with Pastor Ayodele Samuel in Ibadan

The Researcher with Pastor Ayodele Samuel in Ibadan



The Researcher with Rev. Juachi C. Allwell



Pastor Gentle M. Idowu and the researcher 20/10/24



The Researcher with Pastor Paul Akpoviri on 23rd November 2024



The Researcher with Rev. Dr. S. O. Oyekale on 28th August 2024.



Rev Dr John Adewumi and the Researcher 28th August, 2024.



Apostle Deji Abioye and the researcher 28/09/2024.



Dr. Dotun Adeboye and the researcher. 29/08/2024



The Researcher with Apostle Deji Abioye 29/09/2024



Rev. Dr. James Olarinre and the researcher. 29/08/2024



The Researcher with Pastor Tayo Adeyemi. 29/09/2024



The Researcher with Pastor Victor Obadofi 29/09/2024



The Church in Dugge Niger State



The ordination of indigenous leaders (self Governing) in Unguwan Makeri Niger state.

The Church in Dugge Niger State



Economic Empowerment of the church in Awo Ondo state, for self support





Late Mr Isiaka the kings maker of Imua also a disciple in the church who had grown to become the church leader.



Discipleship ongoing via film show in OKE Ogun axis



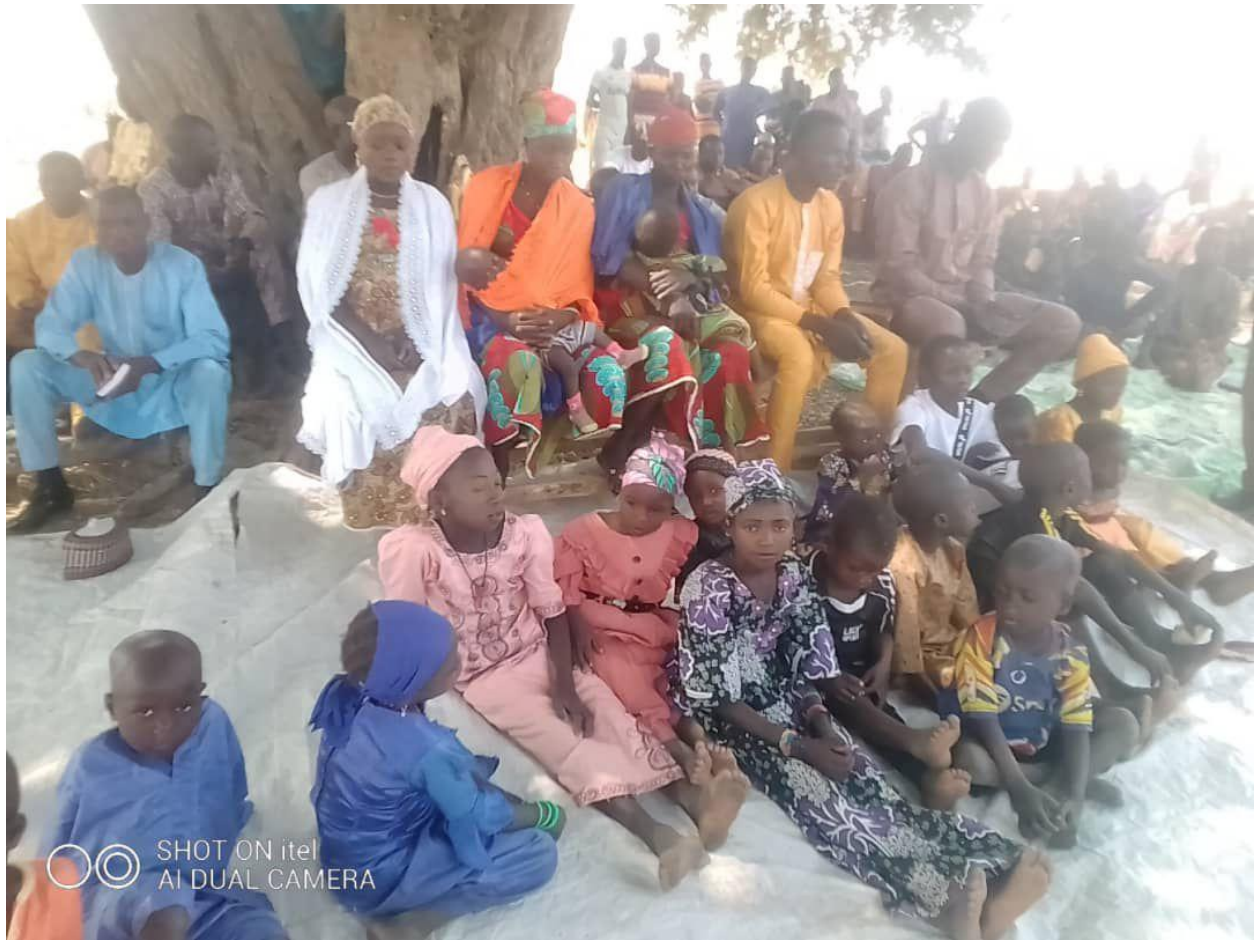
Salawa Mission Church Growing in Population



Kauna Baptist Church Abuka Planted Another Church Here, Building In Progress



Self-Sustaining Church in Liberia



Kumin Dan Kosta church meeting under the tree because of insecurity.



Church in Dugge , Niger State