

Part 6: GREAT COMMISSION

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The Fulfilment of the Great Commission: A Mozambican Perspective

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Evangelistic campaigns, mass evangelism, and evangelistic preaching from the pulpit are important methods in the fulfilment of the Great Commission, in winning souls for Christ, and in the growth of the Church. In Mozambique the most important has been personal evangelism.

Mozambique experienced this method after independence was won in 1975 because the new government of Mozambique chose Socialism (Communism). This system prohibited churches from open-air evangelism. Children and youth younger than 18 years old were told that God does not exist, and they couldn't be evangelized. For true Christians and the churches of Mozambique, it was a very hard time.

The Church adopted the method of personal evangelism, and it gave good results. There were few believers left in the churches because many turned back from their faith. The church leaders trained these few, instructing them to evangelize first their own children, siblings, and other relatives. We know that Africans have large extended families, so that meant there was a vast field to evangelize. The other field of personal evangelism was with work associates and schoolmates. Nazarenes spoke with them about salvation by the blood of Christ. The youth that were still in the church were encouraged that no one could control their personal conversations, so they could evangelize their schoolmates and friends. This method was very valuable in the winning of souls. Personal evangelism culminated in evangelism from the pulpit and in revival. In 1983 one of our local churches grew more than 100% by using this method of personal evangelism.

When new people come to the church for the first time, they feel welcome

when they are well received by those already in the church. They need to find friends. When the church people do not appreciate or value the new ones, they are losing an opportunity to evangelize. This method of making visitors feel welcome was also effective during the time of crisis in the Church in Mozambique. Friendship, greetings, smiles—these are a good method of evangelizing. When new folk are not given attention by the church people or the pastor, they leave and never again return to church.

Another occasion of evangelism that should not be overlooked takes place at the time of deaths. This method is as effective today as it was in the past. The church comes close to the family that is saddened. Sometimes we only have one person of the church in the whole family or even one child of the family in the church. When someone in the family dies, the church responds to comfort this brother or sister in Christ during this time of pain and sadness. The church people make time to go to the house of the grieving family to pray, to preach the Gospel of consolation, comfort, and hope of eternal life. The church accompanies the grieving family on the day of the funeral, and on this day many people come to be with them at the burial. Then the minister preaches a message which explains that death is not the end of everything, that there is another life after death, so that while we are alive physically we should prepare for the future life. The preacher lets the people know about the two places that people go to after death, either to eternal life in heaven or in hell, and that people, while living, choose where they will go. Then the preacher makes an appeal to those who want to accept Christ as their Saviour.

One lady was converted at the funeral in January 2003 of the wife of our pastor Chilengue. On the last day of the services with the family, Rev Manuel Tsambe was the preacher of the day. God blessed his preaching. This lady was present and was drunk. She says, “Every morning, before I would leave the house, I would look for something to drink. When the preacher read [in the Bible] that in the place where Christians go there will be no drunkards, that it is a holy place where only holy people enter, these words touched my heart. I confessed that I was a drunkard, and since that day I want to always stay on the pathway that Christians are taking.” Even though she was drunk that day, we prayed with her, and she accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour. She went home; near her house we have a Church of the Nazarene where she started attending with her whole family including her husband. Many, many times people have been converted

through this method. When a family who does not know the church experiences the Church of the Nazarene through the sadness of death, the family becomes a friend of the church, and the church gains access to the family and can evangelize this family.

Not only in moments of sadness, but also in moments of joy like at weddings can we evangelize because Africans invite many people to weddings. Many of those who come are not Christians; they see the beauty of the wedding and hear the advice given to the newly-weds on the Big Day. Those who are married are reminded of their vows. In this way people decide to join the church that gives good advice to old and new families.

Many methods of evangelism from an African perspective exist, not only these methods that I have mentioned. It is necessary that Africans utilize their means and methods. We should not hesitate. Experiment and you will see a good harvest. May God bless Africa in her task of evangelizing the African world.