

Abstract

Ordering, Disordering and Reordering: Another Look at the Great Commission for Missions and Religious Change in Nigeria

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Mathew 28:18-20 is one the classical Christian passages used to justify the *rationale* for evangelism and transnational missions. From Adoniram Judson to William Carey and even to contemporary missionaries, this passage remains a major biblical theme used to support missionary endeavours. The paper adopts a theological interpretive approach of investigation by undertaking a theological interpretation of the text above *vis-à-vis* Jesus teaching on peace in Mathew 5:7-9; which calls on Christians to show love and to have a peaceful disposition to all. In Africa, particularly Nigeria, the contact of the Portuguese with the Benin Kingdom in the sixteenth century and the exploits of the Methodists, Anglicans, Baptists and the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M) in the nineteenth century among others marked the beginning of missionary adventures of the Western Church in Nigeria — a period identified in this paper as the phase of ordering in missions. However, mission work in Africa and indeed Nigeria in the last few decades have been confronted with the problem of indigenization/contextualization; and more recently with the problems of religious insurgency as well as the postmodern culture, globalization and the need for greater tolerance for other religious (disordering stage). These have necessitated a new look at the task of the Great Commission in Nigeria (Reordering stage). The paper concludes that more dialogue, show of love and efforts to understand the religious psychology of other religions would be a good solution for mission and religious transformation in Nigeria.