

EXAMINATION OF HINDRANCES TO MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM
AMONG THE BAMUNKA PEOPLE OF THE NORTH WEST REGION OF
CAMEROON

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By
Nsabunda Leonard Nfor
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ABSTRACT

This research examined hindrances that have been responsible for the low response to the Gospel message among the Bamunka People of the North West Region of Cameroon. Considering the length of time the church has been in Bamunka from its inception to present date, one finds it difficult to understand why its growth has been slow and why there has been very little or no impact on the lives of the people. In order to come out with a comprehensive and all-encompassing result for this research, the researcher made an oral interview on the historical background of the Bamunka people and life at present in Bamunka. Also, the researcher made a research on publications on the history of the church in Cameroon from its inception to present date. The interview conducted sampled the opinion of a cross section of Bamunka people of different age groups living in Ndop central alongside some non-natives who have lived among them for a considerable period of time now. There are hindrances that stemmed majorly from the socio-cultural life of the people, their religious beliefs and practices, and their polity and style of governance. Also, the failure of the early missionaries to contextualize the Gospel that was brought to the people greatly hindered its receptivity. Moreover, the laxity, indifference and complacency of the existing churches in Bamunka to the Great Commission have equally contributed immensely to hinder missions and evangelism among the people. A good number of recommendations have been made in this research work, key among which are the following; a missionary/evangelist among the Bamunka people must be one who lives a Christ like lifestyle, a man who spends time in fasting and prayer, he must not ignore the people's culture and religious beliefs and practices. He must also focus exclusively on the preaching of the Gospel. He must involve the new converts in discipleship immediately they are won. Love and care should be shown to the people through social missions to attend to their needs and most preferably, door to door evangelism should be adopted in Bamunka to reach the people.

6.2 Conclusion

This research was an attempt to know the hindrances to missions and evangelism among the Bamunka people of the North West Region of Cameroon. Furthermore, the researcher also intended to recommend some principles and/or methods through which the Bamunka people could be better reached with the Gospel message today. The research exhibited the fact that hindrances to missions and evangelism has been a common phenomenon around the world, which scholars have developed keen interest in. Secondly, the research has also done a deep study into the historical background of the Bamunka people, examining their origin, cultural life, religious practices, social life and polity. Thirdly, the history of the church in

Cameroon starting with the early missionaries to date has been examined. Lastly, the research has critically examined the hindrances to missions and evangelism among the Bamunka people which includes; cultural barrier, religious barrier, political barrier, social barrier and language barrier. It is, however, important to state that despite the hindrances to missions and evangelism among the Bamunka people, the church has been established, has survived and continues to thrive, though slowly. There are nevertheless principles, methods and strategies which if properly considered and applied, will lead to an exponential growth of the church in Bamunka.

6.3 Recommendations

The Bible states clearly in (John 3:16) that God loves the world and has sent His Son to die for her so that men should not perish, but be saved. God intends the Bamunka people as well to be saved from sin. The Bamunka people must therefore be reached with the Gospel at all cost. The question is that who is qualified to carry out this task? And what must be taken into consideration? The researcher, who happens to have lived among the Bamunka people for close to eighteen years, proposes the following recommendations to help missionaries/evangelists intending to effectively witness Christ to the Bamunka people of the North West Region of Cameroon:

1. Any missionary and or evangelist, who would work among the Bamunka people should first ensure that he is a born again child of God who has grown to a certain level of spiritual maturity. This is because it is impossible for one to give Christ when he does not have Christ.
2. The missionary/evangelist must consciously live a Christ like lifestyle among the people, as action speaks louder than words.

3. The missionary/evangelist must engage in constant war-fair prayer to bring down strong holds and release the souls of the people from the captivity of the enemy. He/she must be one who has made fasting and prayer a lifestyle just as our Saviour Jesus Christ did.
4. Such a one must be well versed in the written Word, especially the Gospel message that Christ died, He was buried and on the third day He resurrected from the dead, has ascended to heaven and will be coming back again to judge both the living and the dead.
5. It will be wise for such a one to first of all take a survey work of the Bamunka Land and also do a spiritual mapping of the whole community in order to have a good knowledge of the land and to properly strategize.
6. The missionary or evangelist intending to work in Bamunka must be one with a good knowledge in anthropology, able to contextualize the Gospel to suit the context. Such a one must ignore issues of culture and religious practices and focus exclusively on preaching the Gospel.
7. The missionary/evangelist should learn and have a good mastery of the socio-political set up of Bamunka and how to relate with, elders, and family heads who most of the time make decisions that affect the whole community.
8. The missionary/evangelist should engage in training native converts as lay leaders in the preaching of the Gospel. They are well positioned to reach out to their people, as the people will be more open to them. Also they will have access into certain circles that a non-native missionary/evangelist may not have.
9. Since the Bamunka people's main occupation and source of livelihood is farming, the missionary/evangelist should look for ways to enhance their

productivity. The missionary/evangelist should show interest in their farming activity, pray for good yields and even visit them in their farms if possible. This interest in their primary source of livelihood may deepen and solidify friendship between him and the people and create room for the preaching of the Gospel.

10. There should be an effective follow up program with those who have been won to Christ. Discipleship programs should be organized for them immediately to spur growth and build them up in their walk with Christ. It is only through follow up and discipleship that the people can be completely separated from their old ways.
11. The missionary/evangelist must ignore the people's habit of alcohol consumption and focus exclusively on the preaching of the Word. This practice and others will only be brought through follow up and discipleship.
12. The missionary/evangelism should make up his mind to be patient and tolerate the excesses of the Bamunka people, if he wishes to make meaningful impact.
13. The missionary/evangelism should preach Christ and not denomination, as this will give him access to a larger audience.
14. A missionary/evangelist or a church must be able to break paradigms as far as the time for programs is concerned. They must be flexible enough to adjust their programs to periods that are convenient and favourable to the local people.
15. Social missions will be very effective in Bamunka because the people have many needs. They include; health challenges, educational needs, need for sensitization on areas like new and more productive methods of farming, ministry to orphans, widows and the aged.

16. Lastly one to one evangelism will be most preferable, as it is less costly and more effective.

