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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AS CATALYST  
FOR EVANGELISM IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED  
CHURCHES IN THE CHOSEN GENERATION BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,  
LAGOS

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## ABSTRACT

The main focus of this research is to discuss the use of Information and Communication Technology for evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Technological advancement has turned the world into a global village. The immense possibilities brought about by knowledge explosion through technological inventions portend great challenge and possibilities for the church to reach out to the world with the message of God's love. If the church is going to continue to be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world, there is a need for paradigm change in the way the church does evangelism. Several works had been carried out on evangelism in the past; evangelism has been described as the church's main business. God's redemptive purpose for man can be seen as it emerges through the clouds and hover about the history of men and nations. In the words of Hobbs, "within the very shadows of the gates of Eden God pronounced His judgment upon man's sin. But His justice was tempered with mercy as He gave what is known as the "protevangalism". God declared that He will put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between the seed of the serpent and that of the woman (Genesis 3:15)." This research sought to consider the use of ICT in carrying out the mandate of the Great Commission. The research method adopted for this study is the descriptive research design. The view of four churches randomly selected from churches in the Chosen Generation Baptist Association, Lagos State was used. Twenty Five (25) respondents were selected from each church that comprises the research population. All 100 copies of the research questionnaire distributed to respondents were properly filled and returned. The data analyses in Chapter Four reveal that over 90% of respondents believed and agreed with the notion that ICT can be a viable tool for evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on the findings in this research, it is recommended that pastors and church members should explore the possibilities of using ICT in their evangelistic drives. To do this, churches will have to organize periodic trainings for volunteer church workers. Churches should also make adequate provision for the procurement, maintenance and effective utilization of ICT in their annual budget. Theological Institutions should also include ICT in their curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

Paul considered himself under obligation to preach the Gospel to every creature. He wrote, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the un-wise". "So," says he, "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also; for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. He said of the urgency of it, "Necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." As he went up to Jerusalem knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him there, he said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." The onus lies on us today; we cannot afford to disappoint God.

Gone are those days when the conventional method of evangelism like crusades, door-to-door visit, mission visits, etc are the order of the day, with the advent of ICT, new frontiers are being opened. Churches now are making use of radio, television and the print media to propagate the gospel. The results of this research effort has shown that the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to plug-in and explore more powerful and effective media brought about by technological explosion that has turned the world into a global village.

The church need to consider using ICT in her evangelistic drives. This is supported by the responses obtained from the respondents that most churches today have not been able to get into the main-stream of technological advancements to propagate the gospel. The findings also revealed that for a church to be more effective and reach out to people across tribes, languages, nationalities, etc such church should embrace ICT. This will be possible when the necessary facilities and manpower is

provided. Unfortunately, most of the churches that were used for this research which represented a good sample of churches in The Chosen Generation Baptist Association have not fared well in the use of ICT for evangelism. The findings have also shown that periodic training sessions should be organized for volunteer church workers on the use of ICT. Not only this, churches should realize that using ICT for evangelism is capital intensive, hence adequate preparation should be made for it in the annual budget.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings, this researcher is suggesting the following recommendations:

1. Pastors should lead their churches in embracing ICT in their evangelistic drives.
2. ICT devices should be properly used as viable tools in evangelism.
3. Numerous people who ordinarily would not come to church could be reached with the aid of ICT, hence churches should find a way of using ICT for outreach.
4. Pastors and volunteer church workers should be trained to have a working knowledge of ICT.
5. The church pastor should be in the fore-front of creating awareness on the importance of ICT and how it can be harnessed for evangelism and discourage members in thinking that ICT and especially the World Wide Web is evil.
6. ICT implementation is capital intensive; pastors should lead their churches in making enough provision for its procurement and utilization.