

EFFECTS OF CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT ON THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST  
CONVENTION CHURCHES: A CASE STUDY OF IREPODUN I  
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, LAGOS

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## ABSTRACT

Several authors have designated the contemporary Charismatic Movement as a worldwide phenomenon of the Holy Spirit, which is rooted in the experience of the day of Pentecost. Some of the features associated with the movement are baptism of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual gifts of the New Testament. The concept "Charismatic Movement" has remained contentious in the Nigerian Baptist Convention due to different understandings of what the movement is all about in local Baptist Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

The main thrust of this essay was to examine the effects of the Charismatic Movement on Nigerian Baptist convention Churches; to help develop a balanced, clear and illuminating knowledge of the movement. The previous work that was done on Charismatic Movements were reviewed. Here the origin and development of Charismatic movement, the doctrinal beliefs and practices as well as the growth and development of this movement in Nigeria and in the Nigeria Baptist Convention were examined.

The methodology used for the field survey in order to know the effects that Charismatic has on Baptist churches in Nigeria were analyzed and the results of the findings and evaluation of such effects were discussed which included: dynamic worship, manifestation of the Holy Spirit, renewed commitment to prayers, faithful stewardship, re-awaking interest in the work of the Holy Spirit, power evangelism, speaking in tongues as a sign of knowing a true worshipper in the church, and emphasis on sign and wonders among others.

Lastly, the summary of this essay drew the curtain on the discussion. It was concluded that, if churches in Nigeria would be effective in producing people prepared and maintained for the kingdom of God, then she shall be charismatic. Some recommendations were offered for the church, church Pastors and the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

## 5.2 Conclusion

It is adequate to conclude this essay with the words of Chika Ossai, thus; “for the church in Nigeria to be effective in producing a people prepared and maintained for the kingdom of God, they must be Charismatic. . . .” (131).

The term Charismatic in this context should be understood as openness to the leading and awareness of usefulness by the Holy Spirit (132) which is the central theme of the Charismatic Movement. While theological education must not be despised, it is absolutely useless when the Spirit who is the “Theological Vehicle” of divine revelation is not allowed to illumine the heart of the church. This implies that the church as a living symbol of divine effervescence must have spiritual depth in the society that has “plunged into despair and is overwhelmed by purposelessness and meaninglessness (Chia 11).

Openness to Holy Spirit will help us to arise and face challenges. This in turn will enable the ministry to be contextually relevant to the contemporary situations of the church. This fact should be faced as a denomination and let the pastors and the church face the solemn fact that the greatest lack of all in Christendom today is the absence of the indwelling of Holy Spirit power and blessings in our activities (Pink, 9). Therefore it must be given its rightful place.

## 5.3. Recommendations

The Baptist Convention should realize that the gospel consist not only of repentance and forgiveness of sins but also, how to receive and live in the power of the

Holy Spirit. This research has revealed that we cannot run from this reality, neither can it be objected. In view of this reality certain recommendations are made for the pastors, the church, charismatic movement and the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

#### 5.3.1. The Pastors

1. The pastors should be opened to the charismatic movement experience with humility of heart and praise God for the new power that God is infusing into the lives of his members through the out pouring of His Spirit in these days.
2. It is the responsibility of the pastors to see to it that church members are educated on the need to accommodate new religious practices that do not contradict the Bible.
3. The pastor at the same time should see the activities of the charismatic movement as an opportunity to improve his or her ministry and brace up for an effective and fulfilled ministry.

#### 5.3.2. The Church

1. The church should welcome the “charismatic movement” members into full church fellowship at the local church level.
2. Division over charismatic movement as whether it is “Baptistic” or “Unbaptistic” to speak in tongues should be avoided.
3. The church should operate on the basis that speaking in tongues is one of the gift of the Holy Spirit that may accompany baptism in the Holy Spirit. That some members are not speaking in tongues does not mean that they are second class citizen in God’s kingdom or they are not Christians.

4. Also, the confusion in church's fellowship should be avoided. There are many people in the church who need refreshing of the Spirit; they may never experience it, if the charismatic movement members are seen as troublemakers.

5. Members of the church should not repudiate or deny anything that the Spirit has already done, is doing at present, or desires to do in the future. The open minded Christian is opening the way for the Spirit to do more.

6. The church should know that the Holy Spirit does energizing work outside the lists of gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. Therefore to be closed to the Spirit because one does not like the way in which the Spirit is manifesting Himself to another member of the church is to lock oneself out of God's divine touch.

7. Lastly, a focused church member should be willing to learn and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and avoid unnecessary reaction to what "many prove to be the whim of the moment instead of legitimate leading of the Spirit (Robert, 54).

### 5.3.3. The Charismatic Movement

1. The charismatic movement should realize and admit that, accepting speaking in tongues as the only initial sign that must be manifested when one is baptized with the Holy Spirit is an error. They want their actions to be biblical.

2. The truth is that one could be baptized with the Holy Spirit without the evidence of speaking in tongues immediately or ever. It is not stated anywhere in the New Testament that speaking in tongues must be initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Author: Baptist Conversion

3. All Christians are members of the Body of Christ but may not speak in tongues according to the teaching of the New Testament.

4. It should also be noted that, though baptism in the Holy Spirit is a valid biblical experience, the over emphasis of this experience as a second work of grace is wrong and it is not biblical.

5. In view of the fact that baptism in the Holy Spirit constitutes a pivotal segment of the believer's salvation, it could be more appropriate today to speak of evidence that one is a Christian rather than seeking a separate sign for the baptism.

6. Charismatic movement members should not take on the attitude of superiority over those who are not members of the movement. The attitude does not lend itself to wholesome sharing; the Spirit gives patience and meekness. Therefore, patience is necessary if the message of the Spirit's power is to be heard.

7. Furthermore, charismatic movement members should appreciate their historic church setting and see the need for continuous reforms in their worship, and make sure their actions are biblical. In the final analysis, the reaction of the charismatic movement to being filled with the Spirit should be handled with care.

#### 5.3.4. The Nigerian Baptist Convention

Baptist are people of the book, they want to know the reasons why things are done in a particular way. They want their actions to be biblical and ask questions to clear doubts and remove misunderstanding. Based on this assertion therefore;

1. The Nigerian Baptist Convention needs to provide guidelines for churches regularly in matters of faith and practices consistent with changing times.
2. The Nigerian Baptist Convention should be able to censor the beliefs and practices of the members under the light of biblical truths, with special reference to contemporary relevance.

3. As a result of charismatic movement phenomenon, which has come to stay in the local Baptist churches, it is high time that the Convention under took a campaign to educate and teach both pastors and members about the ministry of the Holy Spirit as well as the positive and negative sides of charismatic movement within the context of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

4. Baptist leaders should reject the belief that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are temporary gifts to the New Testament churches alone and respond positively to the move of the spirit in this generation. This will be a catalyst for church growth in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Aworinde was right when he said that the refusal of many churches to positively respond to the charismatic phenomenon accounts for the reason why many of the churches are not growing (134). Wagner also shares this concern when he says “most churches that plateaued, declining or at least growing very slowly lack the Charismatic touch.”(12). It is necessary for the Nigerian Baptist Convention to consider the above assertion and stop detesting the Charismatic phenomenon. With these revelations, one may be living out of touch with reality in 21st century by insisting throwing away the baby with the water-bath.