

EVALUATION OF DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME OF CHURCHES
IN OYO WEST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

This study is on the Appraisal of Discipleship Training Programme in Oyo West Baptist Association of the Oyo Baptist Conference. The purpose was to find solution to the ignorance of the Church to the means prescribed by Jesus Christ in growing Church members from being a professing Christian into a disciple.

The instrument used was a self-designed questionnaire, administered on the selected sample of seventy people cut across Oyo West Baptist Association. In the course of the study, the researcher found out that discipleship is not a new concept but rather it is a means by which God trained his men right from the Old Testament period to the New Testament. The findings also revealed the necessary principles that should be followed before success can be achieved in Discipleship Training Programme. On the basis of findings, recommendations toward improving the Discipleship training Programme were made. These, include the fact that Discipleship training Programme is to be seen as a relationship and a lifestyle. Churches must learn to develop an integrated and comprehensive Discipleship ministry. Also those that pass through the Discipleship course should disciple others. This will make its continuation possible and impactful.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The research revealed that only one of the seven churches in the Association do not have regular and effective discipleship. This is Grace Baptist Church; other churches are trying their best.

It is evident that churches with discipleship training have more workers and committed members in church activities, missions and evangelism. On the other hand, churches without discipleship suffer in all these area in their churches.

Some Pastors see discipleship as one of the church programmes and are not a necessity to develop their parishioners to spiritual discovery nurturing and growth to maturity. Hence, they don't see it as an important spiritual assignment to handle with seriousness. Neither the Association nor the Conference has any plan to establish or monitor discipleship training in the churches under them.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to achieve a dynamic and pragmatic discipleship programme that is efficient and effective, the following recommendations will be of help according to the study.

1. Discipleship Training Programme should be seen to be more than a course. It is suppose to be seen as a relationship and a life style. Churches must learn to develop an integrated and comprehensive discipleship ministry by:
 - i. Discipline through ministering to small group (choir, ushering, decoration teams etc.)
 - ii. Small group (societies, house fellows etc).

- iii. Discipline through equipping small group (Sunday school, Biblestudy, disciple lifestyle etc)
 - iv. Discipline through leadership group (church council, Deacon Fellowship, Head of departments etc)
 - v. Discipleship through structured discipleship materials (follow the master, InGod's presence, Mind of Christ etc)
2. Pastors or church leader should ensure that disciples are encouraged to study the scripture daily.
 3. There is need to work towards development of spiritual discipline and habits such as prayer, quiet time, giving etc.
 4. Effort should be made to train the illiterate in discipleship, Adult literacy class should be made available for illiterate members so that they can also benefit in discipleship in their Local language and also to be able to read the bible on their own. It is discovered that the discipleship materials are mainly beneficial to those who understand the English language.
 5. Baptist Association should embrace discipleship training as a spiritual assignment in all the churches with them and make it compulsory for church development and growth. Therefore a discipleship unit should be established in each Association to ensure that churches are involved in it. The unit should continually monitor whether discipleship goes on effectively in the churches. If necessary, they may be assisted with teachers and discipleship materials for thorough training of the disciples. By doing this from the Association level, the pastors would be more alive to the spiritual development assignment for their members.

6. Each conference of the Nigerian Baptist convention should organize discipleship training for their pastors quarterly. The pastors should be trained in all the discipleship materials like Christ indwelling in you, follow the master, serve the master, master life etc.
7. Furthermore, each Baptist conference should have a mean of assessing churches doing discipleship well and give awards to them in order to engage upcoming churches to have regular and effective discipleship programme.
8. Presently, all the discipleship training materials are in English language. The effect of this is that only those who can read and write in English can benefit in the materials for training. There are still illiterates in many parts of Nigeria and in the Nigerian Baptist convention churches. Therefore, the convention should translate the discipleship training materials into the Nigerian languages. This can start with the three major Nigerian languages i.e. Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Later, other Nigerian languages may follow. The translation should be done with Local Nigerian illustrations for adequate and proper understanding.
9. Also, the convention should make all discipleship training materials available through her stewardship and Discipleship Department at all times for purchases from Churches, Association and Conference. Annual budget should be approved on this, and necessary arrangements should be made with the publications division and other organs of the convention that are involved in making the material available.
10. Finally, since discipleship relationship is a life time experience and not a course system where someone will graduate and be certified, every disciple should be made to realize that it is a life time relationship.