

THE ROLE OF CHURCHES IN PREVENTING
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: A CASE STUDY OF
OGBOMOSO BAPTIST CONFERENCE

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ABSTRACT

The issue of environmental degradation has been a source of concern to some people for some decades, precisely from 1972 in Stockholm. It was however discovered that churches are doing little or nothing to educate her members to take care of the (their) environment as they care for church surroundings.

It is in this regard that the research was undertaken to sensitise Baptist churches in Ogbomoso Conference of the need to protect our God-given environment from being degraded, knowing fully well that humans are just holding it in trust for God. The work looks at the Biblical perspective of the environment, man as managers of the environmental degradation and its effects as well as man as solution to environmental degradation are looked into.

It was discovered that there exists a difference in the attitude of the church and secular society, that degradation is often conspicuous in areas where the poor live than the affluents, where there are illiterate and non-literate people, in urban than rural areas.

It is recommended that churches should continue to educate her members through preaching, teaching, workshops or seminars on the imperativeness of sustaining our environment so as to make it beneficial to humans, and to reduce the rate at which people lose heir lives and property as a result of degradation.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings, the following conclusions are drawn. It was established that churches' attitude towards environment and

society. Most churches are not giving teachings or sermons on the subject.

It is concluded that poverty adds to level of degradation than affluence does. It was noted that the poor may not often have the power to challenge the rich if such degrades the environment. Thus, poverty is a bane to healthier environment.

It was equally seen that rate of environmental degradation is higher in urban areas than rural areas, and that the rural populace are often obedient to environmental laws than urban dwellers.

Moreover, it is established that an environment that is dominated by literate people is less prone to environmental degradation than a society that is pack-full with the illiterate folks.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the various findings, the following are hereby recommended:

1. The church should create awareness in her members through preaching, teaching and practical demonstration of the fact that not taking good care of the environment is a grievous sin against God, just like the sin of idolatry, murder, adultery or robbery (Num. 35:34-35, Deut. 23:12-14, Rev. 11:18, Zeph. 3:1). This is because the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. By implication, anything that any man uses to degrade God's environment entrusted to man tantamounts to dishonouring God. Apart from this, people should be made to understand the saying of Jesus that "these things I commanded you,

love one another" (John 15:17). This should not be limited to humans to humans, it must be inclusive (including environment). It can as well read, "love the environment."

2. It is recommended that churches should set the pace of improving the state of our environment. This is necessary so as to encourage believers and unbelievers alike.

3. Environmental education should be given priority. Every sector of the society must be involved, since we are all stakeholders. The teaching can be done anywhere; schools, churches and mosques, clubs as well as in social and political gatherings.

4. Awareness of what constitutes environmental problems should be promoted by churches and other bodies. This would help individuals and social groups to be sensitive to the total environment and its allied problems. Examples could be cited of pollutants such as carbon dioxide/monoxide from heavy or concentrated smoke which can cause cancer or impairment of vision.

5. The drilling of bore-holes, deep well among others should be discouraged. Pipe borne water should be the option. Some churches that even engage in it are selling the water that flows from such, rather than using it as a means to propagating the gospel. It is safer and economical to go for pipe borne water than drilling bore-holes and the likes especially where possible.

6. Churches should comply with rules and regulations governing standards on noise, air, land, and other forms of pollution in the