

UTILIZING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AS A TOOL FOR CHURCH GROWTH IN IWO EAST
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

The title of this research work is, "Utilizing the Sunday School as a Tool for Church Growth in Iwo East Baptist Association." It was observed that some churches and pastors in Iwo East Baptist Association were yet to recognize the Sunday School as a tool for church growth and therefore, had not made use of it to effectively achieve church growth. This work was done as a field research with the use of a questionnaire, based on the Likert four-point scale system, as the instrument, and it was administered in eleven churches in Iwo East Baptist Association. The data collected were analyzed and discussed using simple percentile method. The research findings showed that, though, some essentials that make for church growth through the Sunday School such as leadership interest in this educational arm of the church were present, several other factors like evangelistic prowess were not in place in the Sunday School of some churches in the association. Pastors and church leaders including the members were therefore enjoined to maintain and improve on the areas of their strength. The recommendations provided in this work are that: the Sunday School should be made evangelistic; adequate spaces should be provided for a conducive teaching and learning experience; teacher training should be given priority; creative methods of evangelizing pre-Christians should be looked into and employed; new converts should be helped to settle into the church system; practical discipleship have to be utilized in spiritual development; and adequate funding should be provided for the Sunday school. It is hoped that this work would bring out more enthusiasm and/or draw out inspiration from the members and church leaders to enable them like the Sunday School and devote time for it, having seen the need to use this essential church organization as a powerful tool for church growth.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, it was evident that the Sunday School was a viable church growth tool. A church that sees and uses its Sunday School as a church growth tool would reap the benefits. Improvements, adaptations and changes are needed to be made where necessary to make this happen. Most of the submissions about using the Sunday School for church growth needed to be followed up by corresponding action.

It is therefore, necessary to walk the talk by making the Sunday School unleash its potentials for church growth in Iwo East Baptist Association.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings in this project, the following recommendations are made to churches in the association under consideration:

1. The Sunday School should be made evangelistic
2. Adequate space should be provided for the classes. Buying or renting a building nearby the church may be required. The church could also make use of homes or the space outside the church building as well as building a new building altogether for this purpose. The same space could be used twice by having two Sunday School sessions, one before the preaching service and one after in order to make effective use of present space.⁸¹
3. The teachers should be adequately trained to increase their effectiveness. There should be provision of a library for the Sunday School workers where materials that could be used to study effectively would be readily available. Training should be organized for them in the church at intervals and they should be sponsored to attend Sunday School trainings with close monitoring to ensure that all that had been learnt was put into practice.
4. The Sunday School should embrace creativity in evangelizing pre-Christians. The church should not wait for the prospects to come. It was the duty of the church to go and bring them in and in doing that every avenue to that must be utilized.
5. Leadership development should be given priority.

⁸¹ A.V. Washburn. *Outreach for the Unreached*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1960. 79

6. Converts should not be left to sort themselves out when they come to church. It was the duty of the Sunday School superintendent to fix them up in classes and make provisions for how they would be helped to develop within such homogenous groups as far as the Sunday School was concerned.
7. Discipleship should be made practical through personal contacts for real qualitative growth among members.
8. The church leadership especially pastors should ensure that the Sunday School department is given maximum support through financing and every other area where it needs assistance for it to function effectively.