

PROVERBS IN JEWISH AND YORUBA CULTURES: THEIR RELEVANCE TO

EVANGELISM

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## ABSTRACT

This work is on the study of proverbs in Jewish and Yoruba culture and their relevance to evangelism. It was discovered that proverbs are very expedient in sermonizing. The objective is to discuss the history and socio-cultural background of the Jewish and Yoruba, to describe the structure, contents and functions Jewish and Yoruba proverbs and their usefulness for evangelism.

The research methods used to carry out this study were descriptive and thematic comparism approach. The primary and secondary sources were used to collect information and data. The primary source involved interview with believers in Yoruba culture, the youths and aged, and some Old Testament scholars. The participant observation was also a major source of primary source. The secondary source was the use of some books, journal articles and internet materials.

The findings revealed that the structure of both Jews and Yoruba proverbs were simple, complex, compound and interrogative based on sentence types. The content of the proverbs cover objects and notions such as plant, animal, human assumptions, and natural objects but human based proverbs are predominant because it spans through family, youth, virtue, sin, moderation, passion, work, learning, knowledge, man and wife, parents and children benevolence. More so, Jewish and Yoruba proverbs were used to perform different functions depending on the context in which the proverbs were used. The functions are to rebuke, instruct, and warn. Others are used for advice, commendation, encouragement, reconciliatory, comment, request, and discipline. It was also discovered that both Jewish and Yoruba proverbs are contextually used. Further more, the place of convergences of Jewish and Yoruba proverbs are very evident compared to their places of divergences. Their similarities occur in their religious belief, sociological life such as warning, slothfulness and evil deeds. Their philosophical belief such as interpersonal relationship, vengeance, unity, and appreciation. While their dissimilarities occur in their roots, origin, teaching, and people. Finally, it was noted that proverbs are very relevant to evangelism in the sense that they constitute a powerful tool for evangelism when inculcated in sermons.

The work recommended that the study of proverbs should be encouraged in Theological institutions, lecturers in the Theological institutions should also make use of proverbs in their teachings, ministers and Christians are encouraged to use proverbs that are relevant to their members and even unbelievers when ministering to them and more books on proverbs from different languages should be published by scholars of proverbs. Ministers/Christians should also make use of proverbs in their teaching and counseling processes. More so churches should also make use of proverbs in their music ministry, Christian Parents should also expose their wards to the richness in proverbs and proverbs should also be encouraged and used in the children ministry. Parents should make it as necessity to communicate with their wards in Yoruba Language so that a better understanding of the language will encourage understanding of proverbs so that the cultural heritage will not be lost. Ministers/Christians should always study their congregation so as to know the type of proverbs to use in sermons in other to reach their congregation especially the youths.

rebuke, instruct, and warn. Others are for advice, commendation, encouragement, reconciliatory comment, request, and discipline. Fourth, it was also revealed that both Jewish and Yoruba proverbs are contextually applied. Fifth, it was also found that their similarities occur in their religious belief, sociological life such as warning, slothfulness and evil deeds, their philosophical belief such as interpersonal relationship, vengeance, unity, and appreciation while their dissimilarities occur in their roots, origin, teaching, and people.

Finally, the work recommended that the study of proverbs should be encouraged in Theological institutions, lecturers in the Theological institutions should also make use of proverbs in their teaching, ministers and Christians are encouraged to use proverbs that are relevant to their members and even unbelievers when ministering to them and more books on proverbs from different languages should be published by scholars on proverbs. Ministers/Christians should also make use of proverbs in their teaching and counseling processes. More so, church should also make use of proverbs in their music ministry. Christian Parents should also expose their wards to the richness in proverbs and proverbs should also be encouraged and used in the children ministry.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

The general picture that emerges from the findings is that proverbs enhance the understanding of language, create picture and imagination in the mind of those who listened. Proverbs are very rich in communication and can easily be used to send messages in a concise and readily assimilative way. Moreso, it has been discovered that the Jews and Yoruba value proverbs very highly in that none of these people will communicate without the use of proverbs. It also revealed that proverbs have positively increased the repository of the individual that uses proverbs frequently.

Ministers of the gospel who fully make use of proverbs to enrich their sermons promote evangelism as they communicate the gospel to their members or unbelievers in concise and simple ways that can easily appeal to them and accept the gospel and turn to Christ for salvation.

Furthermore, proverb is one of the effective tools for sermon delivery.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made.

1. The study of proverbs should be encouraged in Theological institutions.
2. Lecturers in the Theological institutions should also make use of proverbs in their teaching.
3. Ministers and Christians are encouraged to use proverbs that are relevant to their members and even unbelievers when ministering to them.
4. More proverbial sayings from different languages should be collated and published.
5. Ministers/Christians should also make use of proverbs in their teaching and counseling processes.
6. The church should also make use of proverbs in their music ministry.
7. Christian Parents should also expose their wards to the richness in proverbs.
8. Proverbs should also be encouraged and used in the children ministry.

9. Parents should make it necessary to communicate with their wards in Yoruba Language so that a better understanding of the language will encourage understanding of proverbs so that the cultural heritage will not be lost.
10. Ministers/Christians should always study their congregation so as to know the type of proverbs to use in sermons in order to reach their congregation especially the youth.