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EVALUATION OF EFFECTS OF PENTECOSTALISM
ON CHURCHES IN IWO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

This study was specifically designed to evaluate the effects of Pentecostalism on Baptist churches in Iwo Baptist Association. Ten variables were used for the study. The research designed adopted for this study was descriptive survey. This was with a view to enabling the researcher obtain relevant information from and about the respondents and the effects of such variables on the two categories of the respondents, that is the pastors and church members. This would facilitate the evaluation of the effects of such variables on the respondents.

The researcher used simple purposive counseling technique in selecting one hundred church members and twenty pastors for this study. The instruments used are the pastor and church members' questionnaire prepared by the researcher under the supervision of his supervisor and a Doctor of Ministry of student.

Simple percentage analysis was used in analyzing the data.

The findings of the study suggest that:

- a. The youths are the major target of Pentecostal influence.
- b. The current trends of forceful prayer patterns coupled with observation or practice of night vigil among the Iwo Baptist Association churches is a product of Pentecostal influence. The results also showed that sobbing or weeping at prayer meetings, a

practice common with the Pentecostals, has shown an influence on Baptist churches in Iwo Association.

- c. Pastors and church members agree on the fact that Pentecostal mode of dressing has had a great influence on Iwo Baptist Association. This is evident in jerry coil hairdo of women, painting of lips and wearing of long ear-rings which are now observable in the Baptist churches.
- d. The western dress mode of Pentecostal choir has also started to rear its head in the Iwo Baptist Association.

In the light of these findings, it is recommended that rather than drawing a battle line against members with 'Pentecostal' attitude, pastors should rationalize any strange doctrine that perverts the Word of God. The Pentecostals and the mainline churches should learn how to accommodate each other without necessarily perverting the Word of God.

B. Conclusion

The following conclusions have been drawn from the study: That night vigil had been a pentecostal practice which had successfully crept into Iwo Baptist Association churches. It has exerted a major influence on them. Generally speaking, the practice of night vigil was foreign to Baptist churches in the past but was introduced into Baptist churches through inter-church fellowships and individual occasional fellowships with some pentecostal churches. The influence is significant. The conclusion was drawn that although weeping and sobbing may be apparent in pentecostalism, they were not significantly evident in Baptist prayer patterns during night vigil. With respect to speaking in tongues as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, pentecostalism has exerted a significant influence on Iwo Baptist Association churches. This may be due to various joint or combined fellowship meetings at Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) level where members of mainline churches will pray together preach together, sing together with pentecostal churches. This is in conformity with the contention of Holcomb Daniel in his book Charismatic Christianity.³⁶

It was also concluded that pastors' and members' pentecostal influence with respect to prophecy on Iwo Baptist Association was significantly evident more among pastors than their members. Prophetic utterances as a product of pentecostalism have been better observed

³⁶Daniel Holcomb, Charismatic Christianity (Nashville: Convention Press, 1983), 16-19.

among Baptist pastors during revival prayers or special prayer programmes. This is an evidence that most of the Iwo Baptist Association pastors must have been in the past engaged in fellowship with some pentecostal pastors.

Current trends in churches have shown that most Baptist churches particularly would not take it lying low with pastors who tend to be 'too cold' at prayer or too lazy in teaching the Word of God. Such pastors are tagged orthodox pastors instead of fire brand pastors. This must have been responsible for pentecostal influence on most pastors in Iwo Baptist Association.

From the results of the questionnaire items on whether pentecostalism has influenced the type of hairdo worn by church members, particularly female members of Iwo Baptist Association, the hypothesized percentage responses of pastors and members were significantly higher than their neutral percentage score.

Hence the attitudes of both pastors and members were found to be favourable (i.e. Yes), confirming that pentecostalism, no doubt, has influenced the members' mode of dressing. Most members that have earlier been found to be covering their heads during worship now wear jerry coils, perming and hair - all kinds of hairdo. Members within the age range of 25 and 35 have now become more stylish and unusually fashionable in their hair formation. Some elite adults of between 45 and 55 years are also found to feature within the category. Results also showed

that a higher percentage of female members in this stylish hairdo category were either undergraduate students in some higher institutions who have been exposed to different arrays of pentecostal teachings or apprentices in some fashion schools.

With respect to evangelism and mission response of pastors and members of Iwo Baptist Association showed a significantly lower percentage response. The responses showed that pentecostalism has not in any way exerted any influence on Iwo Baptist Association. Evangelism and mission have always formed an integral part of the spiritual life pattern of Iwo Baptist Association. Their responses to questionnaire items on evangelism and mission showed that pentecostalism had not had any influence on whatever form on Iwo Baptist Association except that the Association is capable of positively influencing pentecostal churches in this regard.

In conclusion, both pastors and members in Iwo Baptist Association saw the need for aggressive Bible based, life changing teachings in checking exodus of our youths to other churches. They however, also saw the need to imbibe some viable Bible-based pentecostal characteristics which can heighten the spiritual horizon of Iwo Baptist Association as long as the doctrines are not "Nicolaitine or Baalic." Pentecostal doctrines that are biblical should be emulated and brought to the church to enhance our worship service since there are some characteristic doctrines of Baptist that the pentecostals also emulate. The writer concludes that our

