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THE PLACE OF "THE ANOINTING"
IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The term "anointing" is an important concept in the Bible. It is the secret behind every successful Christian ministry. This essay therefore examines how contemporary Christians can apply it to meet the challenges of our times.

Chapter one gives the thrust of the thesis. The writer here defines anointing as the outpouring of God's Spirit, both within and upon an individual which brings about proficiency and effectiveness in any God-given task or Christian ministry and Christian life with undeniable extraordinary success and manifestation of God's power (Luke 4:18, 19; John 1:12; Acts 1:8; 2:1ff; I John 2:20, 27).

Chapter two dwells on the biblical perspective of the concept. It examines the source, symbol, types, the nature, evidences and reception of anointing, and finally the purpose of anointing in achieving God-given task.

Chapter three analyzes the questionnaires administered to Christian ministers. It was found out that the ministers have different understandings of the term 'anointing'. Many of them see anointing as indispensable for effective Christian ministry.

In chapter four, the writer shows the application of anointing in Christian ministries and observes that anointing is inevitable in evangelism, pastoral ministry, church growth, healing, pastoral care and counselling as well as deliverance ministry.

The last chapter gives the summary of findings. It concludes that the gospel message is presently facing stiff challenges and opposition which can be overcome by tapping from the inexhaustible resources of God's anointing.

transferred, while everyone of them believe that anointing can permeate every area of Christian ministry positively.

Chapter four dwells on the practical application of "the anointing" in Christian ministry. It shows without any iota of doubt that the anointing is imperative in evangelism, pastoral ministry, church growth, healing, pastoral care and counselling as well as deliverance ministry.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The subject matter of anointing is important in the context of its overall plan of the church. There is no doubt that it has a biblical basis and emphasis. It was an important feature in the life of Israel. Kings, prophets and priests who were regarded as Yahweh's representatives, all were anointed for their tasks. In the New Testament, Jesus our Lord, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 61:1) also confessed that he was anointed for his mission (Luke 4:18). His disciples who heard him, and walked with him, testified that it was the anointing through the Holy Spirit that enabled Jesus to do good and to heal the oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38).

The early disciples themselves obeyed Jesus Christ's injunction not to depend upon self, but to wait for the power (anointing) the Holy Spirit provided for the task he has committed on to them (Acts 1:5, 8). The twentieth century church of Christ, fast approaching the twenty-first century with its peculiar problems, cannot overlook these precedents if she is to fulfill her mission.

In spite of the importance of "the anointing" in Christian ministry, one can conclude that many Christians neither have a common nor correct understanding or perspective of this concept. This becomes alarming when one considers the fact the respondents cover clergymen and highly placed Christian workers. If they can show such understanding, then what can one say about the laity. Some of the views expressed on this subject is not biblical. For example, it is not biblical to say that anointing is synonymous with holiness for these are two distinct concepts.

There is also a dangerous trend in some quarters on "the anointing". Even though it is evident in the Old Testament that through anointing oil the Spirit was mediated to kings, it would be wrong now to assert like Oyedepo that the anointing oil releases the person and power of the Holy Spirit. Even in the Old Testament, anointing oil was of special preparation and was supposed to be used by the priests alone (Exodus 30:22-23). It was used to dedicate things and persons unto the Lord. It was not at all times that it mediated the Spirit. In the case of King Saul even though he was anointed, it was not until he met some group of prophets that he had the Spirit (I Samuel 10:1, 6). For David, it was immediate (I Samuel 16:13). In the New Testament, Jesus only commanded the sick to be anointed and this was repeated by James (Mark 6:13; James 5:14). To agree with such a view is to equate Christianity with magic or pure animism. To say also that anointing oil is efficacious to every difficult situation and substitute it for prayer as

others, would want people to believe is unbiblical. In the New Testament "anointing oil" is only recommended for the sick. The anointing received from the Lord.

As important as anointing is to effective Christian ministry, it is not an end in itself. This does not negate the biblical view shared earlier that anointing can be increased, decreased or lost. Since it can be affected through prayer, Bible study, holy living etc., it would be right to say that "the anointing" is situational, a means to an end, a necessary not a sufficient condition for Christian service and living.

The relationship between spiritual gifts and the anointing should be stressed. Spiritual gifts determine the specific Christian calling into the ministry, while the anointing empowers, energizes and enables the believer to be proficient in this task. In the past, the emphasis has been placed upon spiritual gifts alone. Jesus, for example, had the call of being the Saviour of the world, but He was anointed for his earthly ministry. In the same vein, emphasis should also be given to "the anointing" in the contemporary ministries or tasks. In this connection the sources of anointing has been identified. It is something that should be sought daily by every Christian if he or she is to succeed (Ephesians 5:18).

Anointing is necessary in every Christian service. When it is given it is expected to be used for the desired ends. God will never tolerate things He gives to be used for building empires for ourselves. Unfortunately, many

