

THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA

-NBTS-
L 41-c
M. DIV

THE CHALLENGES TOWARDS EVANGELISING
THE HAUSA SPEAKING MUSLIMS IN AGEGE
AREA OF LAGOS STATE

AN ESSAY PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF THE DEGREE

MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY

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DECEMBER 2003



i

05 - 1088

ABSTRACT

This research work focuses on the challenges towards evangelizing the Hausa speaking Muslims in Agege area of Lagos State. This area has a high population of Hausa speaking Muslims in Lagos State. A general introduction to the research work is given in an effort to justify the need for the project. It provides information on the background to the problem and highlights the objectives and the significance of the study. It contains a precise definition of key terms employed by the writer, the demarcation of the area of study and also gives a hint of how necessary information would be obtained by the writer.

The researcher emphasized the characteristics of the Hausa speaking Muslims in Agege in which the geographical location, occupation, political affiliation and issues concerning interfaith relation were examined. The third chapter focuses on the result of the field research showing the responses of the churches to the Hausa speaking Muslims' presence, methods used in witnessing to them and enumerating some of the impediments to evangelism in the area. This chapter also treats the prospects for evangelism in the community.

Various approaches that can be used for evangelism are the subject matter in the fourth chapter. These approaches are based on love, generosity, cultural understanding etc: The fifth chapter focuses on the importance of precautions in evangelism, laying emphasis on respect for one another, religious differences and conscience, bearing in mind that faith in Christ Jesus is voluntary not compulsory.

Finally, the conclusion and recommendation stresses the fact that Christians should wake up to meet the challenges towards evangelizing the Muslims, bearing in mind the mandate given by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel indiscriminately in every part of the World.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Attempt to reach God gave birth to many religious bodies and every religious body claims that its own religion is the true religion. Christianity and Islam are the predominant and most recognized religions in Nigeria. Adherents of Islamic faith are very pious and believe strongly in the Islamic creed:- They believe in Allah, his angels, his books and messengers, the day of judgement and fate (whether good or bad). They also believe in Allah's divinity; that he is the Lord, the Creator, the Sovereign, and the manager of all affairs. They believe in his oneness, that is, he has no associates in his divinity, he is not a triune God: no Father, no Son and no Holy Spirit but Allah. The doctrine of the Trinity gives an impossible equation to a Muslim. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be one but three Gods.

The practicing Muslims are very zealous but it is pathetic that their zeal points towards a wrong direction because religiosity defers from salvation which is through Christ alone. The Hausa speaking Muslim for instance are very conscious of their prayer times. They observe their prayer (Sujud) five times a day. They strictly obey Muhammad's instruction that wherever the hour of prayer overtakes them prayer must be performed. As they journey from one place to another they are seen by the roadsides praying at prayer times. One of the Islamic uniting factors is the use of Arabic language for their prayers. A Muslim brother once told the writer that since Quran was revealed to Muhammad in Arabic language it suggests that the language should be used for prayer in the Muslim World. Islam was born many hundred years after the birth of Christianity and its emergence primarily was not to be in opposition to Christianity. According to Johnson:

Right from the start, it is clear that he (Muhammad) believed and taught that he was a prophet preaching the same faith as the Jews and Christian ... however he followed more the oral traditions passed down by the Arabian Jews than the scripture- of which he probably never had a copy for himself anyway. ¹

As observed by Johnson, it is very clear that Muhammad was in rapport with some Arabian Jews from whom he gathered information about Jesus. One cannot rule out the likelihood of plagiarism from the Holy Bible by Muhammad in an adulterated manner to suit his purpose for the Quran. Though in the Quran Jesus is given a greater number of honourable titles than any other figure of the past, ² it is observed that Islam majors on minor as far as Jesus Christ is concerned because the major attributes of Jesus are discarded with in the Quran.

Later developments show that Islam is out to be in strong opposition to Christianity by preaching salvation through good works not through faith in Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ is the son of Mary not the son of God and that Jesus Christ was not crucified hence there is no need mentioning that he resurrected on third day. According to Islam, atonement is devoid of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ but connected to good works. Sura 7:8 of the Quran states: "The weighing on that day will be just. Those whose scales of good works are heavy will prosper, those whose scales are light will suffer loss." ³ The unanswered question for Islam however is: what happens to a Muslim whose scale of good and evil is balance? Islam has misled millions of Muslims as regards atonement. The Islamic` misconception of the incarnation of God in Christ Jesus has unfortunately become a subject of controversy among Muslims and other religious groups.

¹David L. Johnson, "Are God and Allah the same?" *Mission Frontiers* (January – February 2002), 12

²Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus In The Quran* (London: Faber and Faber 1965), 16

³R.W. Thomas, *Islam: Aspects and prospects, A critical Analysis* (Austria: Light of Life Villach 1988), 57

This is a great challenge to Christendom. According to Okunlola:

The so-call Christian nations of the world have become porous and Islam is spreading his tentacles forcibly and firmly on their lands. The wealth of Islamic nations is opening doors in nations where money has become their God. ⁴

It is very disturbing to observe the rate at which the Islamic World is pumping out money to Islamize Christian nations including countries like Canada, America, and Britain who brought Christianity to Africa but are now turning to be heathen countries. Nigeria is also strongly targeted by the Islamic World. In Lagos for instance, the Muslims have started keeping Sundays “holy” by engaging themselves especially their wards in Islamic activities involving a lot of money on Sundays. The writer asked a member of an Islamic sect (NASFAT) in Agege why they have chosen Sunday for their Islamic activities. His reply was that their wards are being converted to Christianity because some of them used to attend Churches on Sundays hence they decided to engage them on Sunday by creating Islamic activities in order to discourage them from going to worship in Churches.

There is no doubt that several factors combine to militate against the spread of Christianity in the Hausa speaking Muslim community in Agege. One of the factors is that many who profess to be Christians today are nominal believers who only answer the name Christians. According to Okunlola; there are many nominal Christians in the church of Christ. These are Christians who are related to Christ by name alone and are also counted as Christians in the world statistics but not counted as Christians in the heavenly statistics. One that has not been reached cannot reach others’ and one that has not been discipled cannot disciple others. ⁵

⁴Femi Okunlola, A Handbook of Biblical Strategies for Church Planting and Mission Revival (Abridged Edition) Armstrong Plus ... communications 2001), 10

⁵Ibid, 9

