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**OYO STATE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES AS A PRACTICAL
AVENUE FOR CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis relates the roles a Christian cooperative worker or a cooperator can play in the propagation of evangelism, when performing his/her official assignment.

It traced the history of cooperative in Nigeria and related it to past Christian cooperators of other lands. The principles of cooperation that can be used in evangelism were highlighted.

Furthermore, the similarities in cooperatives and evangelism like belief, education and training, missionaries activities, rendition of social services including health of members, open membership reward activities, influence on other people's lives and helping others in need were enumerated.

The roles of cooperators to bring relief to other people through self help by preventing exploitation of the masses through voluntary membership with democratic governance was mentioned.

The essay also examines the roles of Christian evangelists as related to the Great Commission in reaching the unreached, leading them to the Lord Jesus was revealed.

The result of cooperator as an Evangelist mindful of his double role as a cooperator and the ambassador of Christ leading him to show Christ in all his cooperative activities was examined.

Cooperative leaders, past and present who have demonstrated their Evangelistic Zeal were properly identified and listed.

The essay then draws the attention of the gospel ministers to what they could do to be of good assistance to the propagation of the gospel among the cooperative members.

The essay ended with the fact that cooperative can help to serve as a way for Christian evangelism and Christian evangelism can be used to help cooperatives.

CONCLUSION

The cooperative societies of Oyo State as well as other States and Nations have contributed in no small measures to the propagation of missions and evangelism in the State.

The resources at the disposal of Christian cooperators need to be well taped, harness and utilized to the advantages of spreading the Good News of Christ. This can be done if all the Clergy and the Laity see the potentials in the cooperative field and make good use of it by becoming members of cooperative organisations where their influence could be of great effect for evangelism.

The christians have the knowledge, the ability and the enablement to do it and it is now to act as those who have paved the cooperative way led by the example and with good inheritance for others to follow.

The Oyo State cooperative societies have been and are still able to be avenue for Christian evangelism over the years. If and when there are willing cooperators who are evangelistic minded, the door is widely opened.

RECOMMENDATION

With the field of harvest calling for more labours for the Lord, one would like to make the following recommendations for more evangelists among the Christian cooperative leaders.

- (1) The Christian Ministers in each local church should try as much as possible to identify with cooperative organisations in their environment to pave way for effective interaction with cooperators.
- (2) The Ministers of the gospel should try to join cooperative societies or if they are many in a town, city or association/Dioceses to form one so as to have free access to cooperative societies where their Christian influence might win more souls.
- (3) The Christian Ministers should honour the invitations of cooperative societies and attend their functions to preach Christ.
- (4) The Christian Preachers should encourage their members to form or join and take active part in cooperative societies.
- (5) Christian Ministers should try to be well informed about cooperative societies as many past Minister have taken active part in the formation and running of cooperative societies in Nigeria and overseas.
- (6) The comparative societies are for people's development and growth hence the Ministers of the gospel should sensitise people to form or be active members of the cooperative organisation.

- (7) As the cooperative is out to help the poor and the neglected members of the society at large, Christian Ministers should be interested in the formation and running of the cooperative societies so as to help in catering for the poor masses.
- (8) The Ministers of the gospel who are Christ representatives should identify as Christ did for those who were neglected by the people of His days such as Zacchaeus. Hence, they should embrace cooperative organisations which are all out to help to lift those who are willing to help themselves by way of cooperative.
- (9) The cooperative approach could be used by Christian Ministers to evangelise the unreached as well as to help many of their members to develop team spirit.
- (10) The Ministers of the gospel in a locality can form a cooperative society that will cater for their own lots as such society would address the financial issues of such Ministers without exposing them to their church members' ridicule on financial matters.