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DRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN FOUR-SELECTED PARABLES OF  
JESUS: AN APPROACH TO DRAMA EVANGELISM.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

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## ABSTRACT

Drama deserves a more important place in Christian service than it is usually given, especially in evangelism. All arts, especially drama, should be utilized in the service of God who created and gave them. There is no valid reason why Christian should not employ drama in their worship, except that the art of drama has been associated for so long, with sin and temptation and immorality. People have given drama to Satan and he is using it as a powerful influence in dragging away humanity from God.

This essay offers suggestions and biblical material for the improvement of the effectiveness of Christian drama, and stimulates greater interest in its presentation in the context of evangelism. One of the wealth of materials in the Bible that await transformation into drama or dramatic form is Jesus' parables. This study examines the dramatic elements in four selected parables of Jesus, and gives an approach to their dramatic presentation in the context of evangelism.

ministry astray, if not properly rooted in Jesus Christ, the owner of the work of ministry.

- iv. **Moral Decadence Among Drama Ministers:** If there is moral laxity among the members of a drama ministry, such a ministry that is toiling with sins will definitely die a sudden death. A minister of the Gospel should be blameless and above reproach.
- v. **Pride:** This is a worst enemy to any God ordained minister of the Gospel. It is true that pride goes before a fall. A drama minister is a public figure, by the virtue of his/her call; therefore, pride should be seen as a deadly poison. The above enumerated points and some other factors are capable of putting an end to Christian's drama ministry with immediate effect. The church of God should be at alert.

## 5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the previous experiences over the centuries with the implementation of Christian's drama ministry in some churches, it has been discovered that there is nothing basically wrong or sinful about using drama for the purpose of evangelism. But drama was seized by Satan, and was prostituted to his use, the effects of this can be seen on our television sets every day. Christians became disgusted, and allowed the devil to have full claim upon drama. Rightfully, the church should have a total control on drama to proclaim the gospel truth. There is no valid reason why

Christians should not employ drama in their worship, except that the art of drama has been associated for so long, with sin and temptation and immorality. People have given drama to Satan and he is using it as a powerful influence in dragging humanity away from God. Many Christians seem to be in favour of letting him have full title to the power of drama, but this essay is of the opinion that the power of drama shall continue to be used for the glory of God, and in the service of Christ for the propagation of his salvation message. Apostles of Christ have always been quick to make use of every possible instruments and present-day Christians have drama as an exceedingly powerful instrument, which they should be eager to use. For drama is a viable medium for evangelism. In the light of the above stated points, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- i. **The church of Christ should be ready to utilize drama:** There are many places in church programmes, especially, in Baptist Churches, where the use of drama will prove a real aid in most of the departments of the church. For instance, Bible stories can be dramatized to help the children of the Sunday Schools to recover the experience of the old Bible characters. Eastman and Wilson observe that, "The chief use of the simple, dramatized Bible story is to help the pupils recover the experience of the Bible characters and to understand better the struggles they went through. It is a very effective way of presenting these classic stories of our religion and



of emphasizing their teachings.”<sup>3</sup> Also, drama can be used in Fellowship, Camps, Vacation Bible Schools and so on.

- ii. **Drama should be encouraged in Worship:** Drama may help to provide mood and atmosphere which are usually thought of as necessary to a worship experience. “In worship there is the need for the worshipper to express himself. If he does not participate in the experience of worship he receives no benefit from it. Drama gives an opportunity for such expression through the creativeness which it affords. Drama gives an outlet for the spiritual yearnings of an individual.”<sup>4</sup>
- iii. **Each local church should establish Drama Unit:** It will be of an immense benefit for each church to have her own drama unit under the ministry of the church. This will definitely be a good strategy for evangelism.
- iv. **The Church should finance her drama Ministry:** It is the duty of the church to finance every unit of the church’s ministry. This will motivate those whom God has called to use their skills in such ministry to serve God and his church.
- v. **Drama Ministers should live what they preach:** A hymn says: “Let others see Jesus in you...” (BH348). “Life witnessing has now

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<sup>3</sup> Fred Eastman and Louis Wilson, Drama in the Church ( New York: Samuel French, 1942),

<sup>4</sup> Floy Merwyn Barnard, Drama in the Churches, 18.

become one of the most effective ways of evangelism."<sup>5</sup> A drama minister's life preaches more than the drama he/she acts. That is why a drama minister must be born again. He/she must be called into the ministry by God, and must believe in the effectiveness of drama in winning souls. A drama minister's life must be a testimony to what he/she preaches through drama. Joachim Jeremiah observes that, "Jesus did not only proclaim the message of the parables, but that he lived it and embodied it in his own persons."<sup>6</sup> Jesus did not only utter the message of the Kingdom of God, he lived the message.

- vi. **Seminaries should establish Church Drama/Communication Department:** There is a dire need for the establishment of full fledged Church Drama/Communication Department in the Seminaries under The Nigerian Baptist Convention, where drama ministers could also be formally trained as their counter part in Church Music Department. But before this vision will come to pass, the seminaries can include or re-introduce drama into the curriculum whereby each trained pastor will have knowledge of what drama as a weapon can do to assist his/her ministry.

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<sup>5</sup>F. T. Lateju, lecture on Islam RCT 553, Ogbomoso: Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, 20 October 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1963), 229.

