

AN EXEGESIS OF ACTS 1: 6-8 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
CONTEMPORARY MISSION WORK IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

NBTS
M. DIV
1b1 4-e

A LONG ESSAY PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF MISSIOLOGY
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY.

BY

IBIENEYE, IKAKIBA LAURETTA

JUNE 2006

06 - 1010

ABSTRACT

This work is the exegesis of Acts 1: 6 – 8, drawing out its implications for contemporary mission work for Africans in the light of the apparent vices and problems coupled with the façade of religious activities in Africa. The first chapter outlined how the work was carried out, and defined the key terms namely contemporary, exegesis, and missions.

Biblical and historical foundations of missions in Africa are the focus of chapter two. Particularly, biblical basis of mission in the Old Testament, where God began searching for man in the Garden of Eden, up to the redemption of the Israelites from the land of the Egyptians. The Intertestamental period where God sustained His work through the Maccabees, and New Testament, which records the ultimate price God paid for the salvation of man; the Holy Spirit and Missions, missions in the history of the church and contemporary mission endeavour in Africa were also discussed.

The third chapter focused on the exegesis of the chosen text, after discussions on the background of the text, authorship, date, purpose, audience and literary context. Contextual applications were drawn from the exegesis which can be applied to contemporary life situations.

Implications of the exegesis of Acts 1: 6 – 8 for mission work in Africa is the fourth chapter. These discussions were on the ecclesiological, ministerial, apologetic missiological and socio-political perspectives, showing how the text affects these areas.

The final chapter was the conclusion, that the Holy Spirit and the power He gives is the only enablement for any successful mission endeavour. The use of man in this work represents both the masculine and the feminine gender.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Thus far, the power of the Holy Spirit and its impact in mission endeavour has been examined. It is apparent from this work that signs and wonders did not cease with the close of the first century. It continues today, especially in mission endeavour.

African believers are commanded to go make disciples wherever they go. Making disciples is beyond sharing simple information. It is imparting the powerful presence of Christ himself to others. This makes the power of the Holy Spirit to be a prerequisite in mission in Africa.

The several references of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts are sufficient indications that the development of growth and drastic change in the life of the Church and man is under His control.¹ Likewise, all forms of barriers and misconceptions can be broken by His power. He refocused the misconception of Peter,² concerning the inclusion of Gentiles in the mission scheme of the apostles. African misconceptions, in the church today can be corrected. The Continent needs Christ first before material prosperity and not the other way round. It is therefore imperative for the believers in Africa to seek the power of the Holy Spirit who refocuses visions.

¹ Donald Guthrie. *New Testament Introduction* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 352.

² Acts 10:9-48.

The Church today too often functions as a clerical machinery,³ producing a complacent, individualized and often-impotent form of Christianity that gives little evidence of the sweeping power of Christ's reign in this continent. Most of the missions done today are drifting away from the scriptures, not minding that spiritual lives are being toiled with. How many have been spiritually butchered by unbiblical evangelism?

Africans cannot afford to be reckless now! It is not a time to be preoccupied with false success, or to replace humble dependence on God with "triumphalism." It is time to seek the discerning Spirit of God to decipher the manipulative schemes of the devil in the twenty first century. It is a time to see "the lost world" through the eyes of the Spirit of God, instead of "ours." It is a time to share God's priorities and be responsible stewards of the obligation to take the gospel to the cities and hidden parts of Africa. The power of the Holy Spirit that enables believers to impact the powerful presence of Christ is still available.

One cannot tell how long it will take Africa to be truly evangelized. Nominalism is increasing by the day. True believers ignorantly approach God like a "native doctor," and the Bible is aided with the talisman. A complicated problem one might say.

Africans understands the power of signs and wonders. The relevance and importance of these signs and wonders has pushed so many to search for them in wrong places, smashing the foundation of holiness attached to this power. The

³ James F. Engel and William A. Dryness. *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 27.

reason for these negatives is that the African man has not received Christianity as his own religion that answers his religious questions. Why? The gospel is presented in a vague manner as if it were not real and powerful. Is it possible that deep down even those presenting the gospel does not believe the message? The African man has not understood God to be interested in every detail of his life. He believes there are some things that God cannot handle. He is too far. His power is limited in some areas because he does not act as fast as “Sango” or “Amadioha.”

This study submits that the power of the Holy Spirit has been given to help man in every way. The believer that is full of the Holy Spirit stands to gain. Most especially, every zealous evangelist can go into new lands, or a place fully ripe for harvest or both and bring in the sheaves for the Lord. The power of the Holy Spirit will help contemporary African believers to act in boldness in witnessing, breaking strongholds of the enemy in towns/cities or institution. He authenticates the gospel message.

Mission endeavours where one meets critical needs – sickness, religious barrier, socio-political problems- that defy human solutions can be met in the power of the Holy Spirit. These signs and wonders are real! If we really desire to have Christ-like passion for those in need and see Christ’s Kingdom advance and His name Glorified,⁴ we must truly seek the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Adrian Rogers, *Believe in Miracles But Trust in Jesus* (Wheaton: Crossway Books/Good News Publishers, 1997) 117-178. 188.

The focus of the biblical mission was that of seed time. Now is the harvest time! Therefore, we must take advantage of the season. Mission in Africa must return to the model of Jesus and the apostles. The true motivation for mission flows from the heart of a people who have been transformed by the Holy Spirit.

God does endow His people with power. Power is needed to break through with the gospel message to transform lives for better. Indeed, God has never ceased to work signs and wonders in His church. He still uses open and willing people to display His miraculous power to back up His salvation message. If Africa will be transformed by the gospel, it will be by the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of African evangelists.

This work highly recommends that outside the theological education provided in theological and Bible colleges, a school for personal development in waiting for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit should be started. What is worth doing is what doing well. Perspiration in preparation is inspiration in presentation.⁵