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HOMOGENEOUS CHURCHES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SOCIETY TODAY

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Abstract:

The homogeneous unit principle is a very significant strategy as far as mission work is concerned today. Various mission bodies all over the world see it as a viable strategy to reach isolated, hitherto unreached peoples with the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is quite challenging that some people groups have actively reached out to their kith and kin with the gospel after they have had the torch of the word lit in their camp. The churches founded through mission work amongst such people groups or others that have some things in common: either ethnic tie, mother tongue, culture, or class are homogeneous churches. This study is aimed at discussing their characteristics, mode of development and the biblical and theological viewpoints on their operation and growth.

Some examples of homogeneous churches in Nigeria and overseas have been discussed and the advantages and disadvantages of membership in homogeneous churches have been examined.

The Bible has clearly shown that the Church of Jesus Christ is a heterogeneous setup. She welcomes men and women of all forms of ethnic, language and colour backgrounds into a relationship of one body, joined together in one faith, by one Spirit, with one baptism and one hope of eternal life in our one Lord, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

While it is healthy for a Church to have its origin in an homogeneous setting, it is not healthy for her to go on to maturity as an homogeneous institution. She is expected to become heterogeneous with time or else, she could degenerate into a cult.

Some examples of churches that have grown to become cults after having their origin in a homogeneous setup are discussed and factors that have given rise to such unhealthy developments are examined.

The impact of homogeneous Churches on the society, examined in this study, is found to be positive in one respect and negative in the other. As far as their vantage position in winning members of their class or people group to Christ is concerned, they make a positive impact on the gospel scene. In fact, the homogeneous principle can be used to win a whole people group or clan to Christ once any of their members gets to know the Lord and he

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begins to attract others, in love, to Christ. However, in crises situations, and as far as their tendency to grow up to cults is concerned, they make negative impacts on society.

Barriers that have to be overcome to enable a church grow into an heterogeneous setup have been identified and palpable solutions proffered. Some recommendations have been made which, if adhered to, can enable healthy developments of Churches today whose growths have been stunted by their strict adherence to their own individual group affiliations.