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**AN EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF PRAYER IN SOME SELECTED
INDIGENOUS CHURCHES**

A LONG ESSAY

**PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST
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BY

JOSEPH OLUKUNLE ADEROUNMU

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ABSTRACT

Prayer is one of the Christians' duties and responsibilities. For such important doctrinal injunction, the Bible never leaves anyone in doubt on its essence and how to go about it acceptably. The general observation of various approaches, practices, utterances and teachings on prayer among some indigenous churches that call for concern made me set on this study.

After careful identification of certain aspects of prayer that would need scrutiny under the biblical specifications, questions were framed that would help the research achieve its aims. The outcome of the research clearly justify the exercise as it brought out the fact that most of the indigenous churches have their strength in prayer which they all believe is the most important of all Christian responsibilities. It also has enhanced the faith of the adherents.

The study revealed also, particularly in comparisons with the Lord's teachings on prayer and His model prayer as taught to His disciples that there are a lot of disparities in the concept of prayer among most African Indigenous Churches. There are cultural aberrations, lack of proper attentions to certain biblical doctrines that should serve as the bedrock and guide to prayers. The whole exercise borders on the revelation of the need for pruning of the theology of prayers among the African Initiated churches by way of teaching for deeper understanding of the biblical concept of prayer.

If this is done, it definitely will be in line with the humility of the disciples that came to the Master and told Him "Lord, teach us to pray." It will jettison heresies and enhance Spirituality.

Conclusion

Obviously, the indigenous Churches have made and they are still making their necessary impacts especially in the areas of their persistent, emphasis on prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit through effectual fervent prayers to wrought wonders. The Foreign Mission established Churches definitely have had to learn a lot and are still making some adjustments in this direction.

However, it is significant to note that this development good as it may be, has been used to twist some biblical concepts of prayer towards African traditional and

occultic practices. As discovered through the research, some adherents have been made to believe that they have to approach God through their leaders. For these ones, the issue of the priesthood of all believers does not arise. In most of these denominations the study of the word of God which should form the bedrock of all spirituality of man has little or no place at all. The study revealed lack of the basic knowledge of the scriptures when it comes to praying. The scriptures say "my people perish for lack of knowledge."

Recommendations

The research as indicated above is a revelation of very complex and chaotic situation of chains of heresies which are easily traceable to the Pastors themselves. It is hereby recommended in the light of the discovery from this research that these indigenous Churches re-examine their teachings on prayer in the light of the scriptures in order to correct the myriads of heresies they might discover through honest and open-minded approach to the biblical concept of prayer. More emphasis should be made on the study of the word of God and proper training, retreats and lectures primarily for the leadership and of course for the congregation.

As a study of this nature is so limited by constraints of scope, it is highly recommended that further research be carried out on this subject. Such research should investigate the liturgies of the African indigenous Denominations and the relative proportion of time allocated for Bible study, Prayers, Preaching, Singing /Dancing and other items in worship.