

THE WHOLISTIC NATURE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY AS
FOUND IN THE FULFILMENT OF ISAIAH 61:1-3

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ABSTRACT

The twenty-first century church is striving towards the fulfilment of the Great Commission "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19). The zeal to make disciples and citizens for God's kingdom has so much overwhelmed today's churches that they fall within two camps. On one side are those who care for the soul at the expense of the body. On the other camp are those who specialize on satisfying the emotional and material needs of man at the negligence of the eternity of the soul. The urgent need to strike a balance between the two is the focus of this essay.

This essay is designed to highlight the wholistic nature of Christ's ministry in caring for the total man-body, spirit and soul. It focuses on how the church of Christ will be more relevant in the society bearing in mind that negligence of essential aspects of livelihood by the church will give Islam and occultic societies an avenue to have people, especially the young folks, into practice that will be detrimental to their souls, which Christianity is jealously seeking to secure into God's kingdom.

Finally, this essay presents Christ's ministry as a model worthy of emulation by contemporary Christians, using an evaluation of the Baptist denomination (Nigerian Baptist Convention) as an example.

2. Recommendation

While the writer commend the efforts of the Nigerian Baptist Convention in bringing Christianity (thus, Christ) close to the people through her well-organized programmes and institutions/department the writer would like to recommend that a wholistic message should be encouraged. That is to say, our messages in both evangelistic campaign and in the church should meet the total need of the people. Their spiritual, physical and material well-being should be considered in our theological formation and presentation.

3. Conclusion

A church or denomination that truly want to be Christ-centered in her ministry cannot focus evangelism services or events exclusively around the three worship times a week (Sunday morning and evening service and Wednesday prayer meeting). She may have to go into the community daily with Christlike attention.

Finally, we should remember what was written about Jesus "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him" (Acts 10:48). Contemporary Christian should follow suit.