

CHARISMATIC INFLUENCE ON THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST  
CONVENTION CHURCHES: A CASE STUDY OF IBADAN  
EAST ASSOCIATION

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## ABSTRACT

Several authors have designated the contemporary charismatic movement as a worldwide phenomenon of the Holy Spirit, which is rooted in the experience of the day of Pentecost, some of the features associated with the movement are baptism in the Holy Spirit with the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, and also the recognition of other gifts of the New Testament. The concept "Charismaticism" has remained contentious in the Nigerian Baptist Convention due to different understanding of what the movement is all about and because of its influence on the local Baptist Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

The term charismatic in this context is taken to be openness to the leading and the usefulness by the Holy Spirit which is the central theme of the charismatic movement. The main thrust of this essay is to examine the influence of the Charismatic movement on the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches, to help develop a balanced, clear, and illuminating knowledge of the movement.

Chapter one of this essay contains the introduction, including what motivates the study, its purpose, limitation, structure of the research study, and definition of key or operational terms. In chapter two, the previous works done on Charismatic and Pentecostal movements were

## 5.2 Recommendations

Looking through the trend of events, the penetration of the charismatic phenomenon into the Nigerian Baptist Convention churches can be said to be the return of appetite to a sick person. This is one of the signs of recovery, even though there is still the need for constant nourishment for a full recovery. There is need for improvement in our response to the charismatic movement.

The Convention should come to the realization that the gospel consists not only of repentance and forgiveness of sins but also, how to receive and live in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is clear then that we can not run away from its reality, neither can it be objected. In view of this reality, certain recommendations need to be made for the pastors, the church, charismatic members in the churches, as well as the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

### 5.2.1 For the Pastors

The pastors should be opened to the charismatic experience with humility of heart and praise God for the new power that God is infusing into the lives of his members through this outpouring of His Spirit in these days. It is the responsibility of the pastors to see to it that church members are educated on the need to accommodate new religious practices that do not contradict the Bible, and at the same time see the activities of the charismatic movement as a opportunity to his or her ministry and brace up for an effective and fulfilling ministry.

### 5.2.2 For the Churches

The church should welcome the “charismatic” members into full Christian fellowship at the local church level. Division over such matters as whether it is “Baptistic” or “Unbaptistic” to speak in tongues should be avoided. The church should rather operate on the basis that speaking in tongues is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that may accompany baptism in the Holy Spirit. That some members are not speaking in tongues does not mean that they are second class citizens in God’s kingdom or they are not Christians.

Also, the destruction of an entire church’s fellowship “for the sake of the Spirit” is a contradiction within itself. There are many people in the church who need refreshing of the Spirit. They may never experience it, if the charismatics are seen as troublemakers. In line with this also is the fact that members of the church should not close their minds to the subject of the Holy Spirit. Christians should not to repudiate or deny anything that the Spirit has already done, is doing at present, or desires to do in the future. The open minded Christian is opening the way for the Spirit to do more.

The members of the church should also know that the Holy Spirit also does energizing work outside the lists of gifts listed in I Corinthians 12. Therefore to be closed to the Spirit because one does not like the way in which the Spirit is manifesting Himself to another member of the church is to lock oneself out of God’s divine touch. Therefore a responsible church member should be willing to learn and receive the Baptism of the

Holy Spirit and avoid unnecessary reaction to what “many prove to be the whim of the moment instead of a legitimate leading of the Spirit” (Robert 54)

### 5.2.3 For the Charismatic Members

Those who are part of the new charismatic movement must realize and admit that, regarding tongues speaking as the only initial sign that must be manifested when one is baptized with the Holy Spirit is an error. The truth is that one could be baptized with the Holy Spirit without the evidence of speaking in tongues immediately or ever. It is not stated anywhere in the New Testament that speaking in tongue must be initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. All Christians are members of the Body of Christ but not all are to speak in tongues according to the teachings of the New Testament.

They should also note that, even though Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a valid biblical experience, the over emphasis of this experience as a second work of grace is wrong and it is not bible based. In view of the fact that baptism in the Holy Spirit constitutes a pivotal segment of the believer's salvation, it could be more appropriate today to speak of evidence that one is a Christian rather than seeking a separate sign for the baptism.

Coupled with this is the fact that, charismatic members should not take on the attitude of superiority over those who do not participate in the movement. The attitude does not lend itself to wholesome sharing; the

Spirit gives patience and meekness. Therefore, patience will be necessary if the message of the Spirit's power is to be heard.

Furthermore, charismatic members should appreciate their historic church setting. There have been centuries of traditions in such matters as forms of public worship. While these forms are in need of reform they are not likely to be dropped immediately. Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit, patience, should be exercised. And in the final analysis, the reaction of the charismatics to being filled with the Spirit should be to move slowly, sharing new experiences with those who will listen. This is not a very glamorous route, but will ensure the fellowship of a church being preserved.

#### 5.2.4 For The Nigerian Baptist Convention

Mind bogging is the seven – word trademark most famous with the Baptist: “we never did it that way before” (Shurden 11). Why have we been doing it this way and how can we improve are rarely asked questions? This is in line with the assertion of Emiola Nihinlola, that the rejection of charismaticism sometimes “appear to be merely sentimental, an attempt to defend and perpetrate the traditional Baptist mode of worship” (24). Hinging this indignant approach on the lack of timely comprehensive information on issues like charismatism, he regrets that “it is unfortunate that many who condemn and reject Pentecostal mode of worship have not presented the biblical basis of their position” (29).

Based on the above assertions therefore, the Nigerian Baptist Convention needs to provide guidelines for churches regularly in matters of faith and practice consistent with changing times. The Nigerian Baptist Convention should be able to censor the beliefs and practices of the members under the light of biblical truths, with special reference to contemporary relevance.

Also, since the charismatic phenomenon has come to stay in the local Baptist churches, it is high time that the Convention undertook a campaign to educate and teach both pastors and members about the ministry of the Holy Spirit as well as the positive and negative sides of charismaticism within the context of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.