

**AN EVALUATION OF A DECADE (1990 - 2000)
OF OPERATION REACH ALL : FOCUSING
ON HER WORK AMONG EZZA - IGBO
PEOPLE GROUP OF EBONYI STATE**

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ABSTRACT

Every Christian is commissioned to go and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the perishing world. And Jesus has promised to be with us till the end of the world. We have ~~no~~ excuse for ignoring this divine call.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the response of the Nigerian Baptist Convention family to this divine call through Operation Reach All. It also seeks to focus on ORA's work in the first adopted Unreached People Group, the Ezza-Igbo of Ebonyi State.

Chapter one has the foreword, scope and delimitation of study, and methodology to be used in the study. It also gives definitions of operative terms in the study.

Chapter three contains the achievements of ORA among the Ezza-Igbo People Group in the Abakaliki field. The historicity of the tribe was done, and the influences of the established Baptist Churches on the area were highlighted.

The evaluation of reports was done in chapter four focusing on a decade of ORA and her work in Ezzaland. Respondents' responses were used to ascertain the true state of things in ORA.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter, which has recommendations for the NBC and local Baptist Churches. Also for ORA and Ezzaland Baptist Churches. The chapter also takes care of the concluding remark.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will help to improve our evangelistic efforts in AD 2000 and Beyond.

(i) To the NBC and Churches

1. The NBC must be aggressive and serious in her drive to reach millions yet unreached. Churches must be positive and excited in accomplishing the task of the Great Commission.

2. Departmental involvement in ORA should be practical. It should not just be mere paper work.

3. Bigger Churches should be encouraged through the Acts 13 Programme" of ORA to adopt Churches. These are Churches in the Unreached People Groups and Pseudo Reached Groups.

4. Churches should endeavour to have Great Commission Christians.¹ They should be encouraged to go out.

5. Our Baptist Churches must be encouraged to sponsor short-term mission work such as special prayer for closed doors to be opened. Also

"Great Commission Christians is a new phrase being employed by the Lausanne Covenant on World Evangelisation (LCWE) statistics Task Force to refer to those believers who take seriously the Great Commission"¹

¹ Ralph D. Winter, "The Finishable Task" in Mission Frontiers, Vol. 11, No. 3, March 1989, p. 11

to sponsor volunteer workers to the mission fields. There should be more emphasis on mission than maintenance; this implies that evangelism be a major priority of the Churches.

6. NBC should relax its strings on polygamists coming to know Jesus Christ. They should be allowed to be baptised.

7. The convention should not relent in its effort in supporting ORA financially and morally. An increase in their finances will boost their work.

8. A year theme at the NBC Ministers Conference is dedicated to mission awareness, emphasizing ORA's goals and objectives.

9. The Sunday School and Church Training Programme materials should be translated into Igbo language. They should also be made available to Igbo speaking Baptist Churches.

10. NBC needs a Research and Statistics Department that will collect, collate and analyse data. The present system is a sham and disgrace to the Convention family.

(ii) To ORA and Ezzaland Baptist Churches

1. In reaching the Unreached and Pseudo Reached, ORA should follow a strategy wheel.² This wheel has at its center Prayer, with seven sections viz: Needs, Objectives, Culture, Transactions, Resources, Timing, Evaluation

² Gerald O. Swank, Frontier Peoples of Central Nigeria and a Strategy for Outreach. (California: William Carey Library, 1977), p. 67.

2. There should be enough preparations before going for Mission work. The delegates or volunteer workers must be well briefed on what to do before getting to the field.

3. ORA coordinators should have blueprints and know that Laissez-faire attitude cannot work.³

4. ORA should only call Pastors who are seriously mission-minded to the fields.

5. ORA should be autonomous, and should not be handicapped by bureaucratic bottlenecks. This writer was told not to go ahead in planting a Church in Ebiaji in 1999. This is because of a slam on Church planting.

6. ORA should focus more on closed areas of the Nation. And not engage in rat race with other denominations in propagating Church instead of Christ for all.

7. ORA's Church planting must be mission minded and not for attaining a goal void of the Great Commission. Churches planted should be provided with good pastoral leadership, and not just people who even don't have Bible of their own.

8. ORA should ensure that Churches be educated on Global Consultation on World Evangelisation Programmes. Baptist family needs to know more so as to be directly involved in the evangelisation of Nigeria.

9. ORA should re-strategise its goals and objectives beyond AD 2000. This requires foresight and proper planning. This will prompt a concern

³ Interview with Pastor S.T. Adetayo, March 2, 2000. On his experience in Abakaliki in 1996.

for the future of planted Churches in the Unreached People Group. Other programmes will be more meaningful to the convention family.

10. There is the need for an information-disseminating network. This will enable the Baptist family nationwide have knowledge of current issue on ORA. The present method of information dissemination has not been successful. ORA's National Office has a computer set and E-mail address, which should be well utilized.

11. ORA should forward a list of Churches that need be adopted. There should be a "Adopt – A – People" clearing House.⁴ This will enable interested Churches plan for and participate in mission outreach.

12. ORA should engage in social ministries in Ezzaland by having Primary Health Care Centres, schools etc.

13. Baptist Student fellowship (BSF) members in Enugu Baptist Association who are interested in mission may be used for the work in Ezzaland. Christian corpers who are Baptists may also be contacted in Enugu and Ebonyi States.

14. The Baptist Churches in Ezzaland needs more Biblical teachings. There should be more emphasis on Christology. The Ezzas believed there is a sort of magical power in the Baptist Church, being a member of the Church is a guarantee for improvement so they affirmed.

15. Cell Churches may be used in Ezzaland. Some of the communities where members reside are many kilometers away from the

⁴ Kristin Kvaalen, " 'Allied Forces' Converge in Adopt – A – People Clearing House" in Mission Frontiers, Vol. 11, No. 4 – 5, April – May 1989, p. 8

