

**APPRAISAL OF DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME
OF CHURCHES IN ORISUN AYO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,
IBADAN**

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Ad 31-a
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ABSTRACT

As important as evangelism and missions are to any denomination or Church in fulfillment of the Great Commission as commanded by Jesus Christ, so also is discipleship training. Discipling new church members is to teach them how to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is a way of training believers for Christian living.

However, it has been found that many Baptist Churches do not include discipleship training in their programmes either for new or old members. The effect of this on members is lack of spiritual nourishment/development and Christian lifestyle.

In order to examine why there is lack of interest in discipleship training, a case study of Baptist Churches in Orisun Ayo Baptist Association, Ibadan is conducted in this essay. This is with a view to identifying causes of neglect on discipleship training, evaluating them and suggesting ways for improvement particularly in local Baptist churches. Chapter One of the essay deals with Introduction, highlighting the background of the study, Statement of the problem, purpose of the study, delimitation and definition of operational terms. Chapter two treats the review of related literature emphasizing the concept of discipleship and Biblical and theological basis both in the Old and New Testaments. Chapter three presents the Methodology used for the study while chapter four is on data analysis and discussions. Chapter five gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations in relation to how to improve on discipleship training.

5.2 Conclusion

It could be concluded from the research that only three churches out of the seven churches studied are involved in discipleship. They are Molete Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, Odo-Ona Elewe and Ring Road Baptist Church. The remaining four churches: Ona Ara Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, Odo Ona Nla, Yejide Baptist Church and Beulah Baptist Church are yet to have properly organized and regular discipleship training programmes in their churches.

It is evident that churches with discipleship training have more workers and committed members in church activities, missions and evangelism. On the other hand, churches without discipleship suffer in all these areas in their churches.

Some pastors see discipleship as just one of the church programmes and not a necessity to develop their parishioners to spiritual discovery, nurturing and growth to maturity. Hence, they don't see it as an important spiritual assignment to handle with seriousness.

Neither the Association nor the Conference has any plan to establish or monitor discipleship training in the churches under them.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that pastors should take discipleship training as a very important spiritual assignment for members of their churches. This should start by first enrolling themselves in the training and then training teachers who will team up with them to train the church members.

2. As soon as a pastor assumes duty in a new church, deliberate efforts should be made to organize discipleship training for the church members (especially where it has not been done before) and new converts. If this is done, it would enhance mutual understanding between the pastor and the members to work together in the same team spirit as co-labourers in the Lord's vineyard.
3. There should be thoroughness in discipleship training by being selective in the teachers to train the participants that they are good teachers who live above reproach, and that the lessons and various steps in discipleship are well taught.
4. Efforts should be made to train the illiterate in discipleship. Adult literacy class should be made available for illiterate members so that they can also benefit in discipleship in their local language and also to be able to read the Bible on their own. It is discovered that the discipleship materials are mainly beneficial to those who understand the English language.
5. Baptist Associations should embrace discipleship training as a spiritual assignment in all the churches with them and make it compulsory for church development and growth. Therefore, a discipleship unit should be established in each Association to ensure that churches are involved in it. The unit should continually monitor whether discipleship goes on effectively in the churches. If necessary, they may be assisted with teachers and discipleship materials for thorough training of the disciples. By doing this from the Associational level, the pastors would be more alive to this spiritual development assignment for their members.
6. Each Conference of the Nigerian Baptist Convention should organize discipleship training for their pastors quarterly. The pastors should be trained

in all the discipleship materials like, Christ Indwelling in You, Follow the Master, Serve the Master., Master Life, Experiencing God, In God's Presence, The Mind of Christ, etc. Deliberate efforts should be made to prioritize these discipleship training materials suitably arranged from the time of being a new convert to the level of growing to maturity. In other words, Experiencing God should not be taught before Follow the Master or The Mind of Christ before Christ Indwelling in You, etc.

7. Furthermore, each Baptist Conference should have a means of assessing churches doing discipleship well and give awards to them in order to engage up coming churches to have regular and effective discipleship programme.
8. Presently, all the discipleship training materials are in English language. The effect of this is that only those who can read and write in English can benefit in the materials for training. There are still illiterates in many parts of Nigeria and in the Nigerian Baptist Convention churches. Therefore, the Convention should translate the discipleship training materials into the Nigerian languages. This can start with the three major Nigerian languages, i.e. Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo. Later, other Nigerian languages may follow. The translation should be done with local Nigerian illustrations for adequate and proper understanding.
9. Also, the Convention should make all discipleship training materials available through her Stewardship and Discipleship Department at all times for purchases from churches, Associations and Conference. Annual budget should be approved on this, and necessary arrangements should be made with the Publications Division and other organs of the Convention that are involved in making the materials available.

10. In addition, the Nigerian Baptist Convention should ensure that all discipleship units from Association and Conference levels meet annually at national level for a workshop to approve discipleship training with a view to reviewing the progress made and challenges encountered, and to update knowledge on effective discipleship training.

Finally, discipleship is Christ likeness. It is spiritual growth and it is the church. Everybody and all organs of the church should embrace it in order to edify the church of God.