

**RURAL EVANGELISM – A WAY OUT OF  
MUSLIM INFLUENCE IN EDELAND**

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## ABSTRACT

Ede, like other Muslim dominated communities is highly subjected to Muslim influence. Nigeria, though claimed to be a secular country, where citizens are free to practice any religion, it should be noted that this is only true in theory, but in reality is not with the case of a predominantly Muslim community like Ede.

There are several reasons for Muslim influence in Edeland. These includes the fact that Islam at its initial stage was a religion of the kind, thus recommending itself to the people. Majority of people in Ede also embraced Islam because life in Islam admits polygamy which Christianity opposes. Muslims in Ede see politics as means to administer justice and provide security and protection for all citizens, regardless of colour, creed or race, hence they ensure that Muslims are voted into the key political post in the town. Another major reason for Muslim influence in Edeland is the revival of Islam which has led to the discrimination against non-Muslim minorities.

Muslim influence has been a challenge and of great concern to Christians in Ede. All influences are put into operation by Muslims to ensure that their youths are prevented from hearing the gospel and get converted. Programmes are fixed for Sunday morning, many Muslim organizations are being established and night vigils are organized, all to

prevent Muslims from going to Christian fellowships where they can listen to the gospel and be liberated from religious bondage.

Rural evangelism has been discovered as a means to reduce Muslim influence in Edeland as there is less opposition to the gospel in the villages, and Edeland is blessed with so many villages. If these villages could be visited with gospel, the number of converts will increase and thus reduces the Muslim influence in Edeland. This has been put into practice by Evangelism depart of various churches and the Christian student bodies in Ede and has yielded tremendous result. Hence the main purpose of this work is therefore to sensitize churches in Edeland to adopt rural evangelism as a means to church growth and thus increase Christian influence in Edeland.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### 1. Conclusion

The domineering influence of Muslims in Edeland is becoming a thing of the past. Despite all efforts by the Muslims to suppress the spread of the gospel, the church is marching on and more and more Muslims are being converted and receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. This is the fulfillment of the Word of God in Zechariah 4:6b, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord of hosts" C. E. Autrey in Basic Evangelism is in agreement with the Word of God as he says that "God is not a power on a distant throne ruling the universe. He is present with us in the person of the Holy Spirit and this becomes the Christian's deepest assurance in evangelism."<sup>9</sup> This situation is not peculiar to Ede but cuts across the whole world. Scott Moreau in Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions has this to say, "Those dedicated to Muslim outreach face many challenges in the contemporary world. Yet more Muslims have probably turned to Christ in the past three decades than in any similar period throughout history."<sup>10</sup>

Christians in Ede cannot afford to neglect the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, since this is the only way to reduce Muslim influence and increase their influence in Edeland. The only way out of Muslim domineering influence in Edeland is evangelism and especially in the rural areas where the people are more attentive and less aggressive to those sharing the gospel.

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<sup>9</sup>Autrey, 150.

<sup>10</sup>A. Scott Moreau, Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 167.

Every indigenous family has village bearing the compound name, thus, every family in Ede can be reached with the gospel through village evangelism and hence village evangelism is a way out of Muslim influence in Edeland.

## **2. Recommendations**

Having examined Muslim influence as it affects the spread of the gospel in Edeland, the non-responsive resistance and antagonism of Muslims to the gospel in Edeland, and that evangelism is the way out, the writer hereby recommends the following for all Christians in Ede irrespective of their denominations for securing Edeland for Christ.

### **1. A New Spiritual Awakening**

If Christians must move forward in Edeland, then there must be a spiritual awakening among them. There are many ungenerated members in our churches who constitute a great hindrance to evangelism among Muslims. They present to Muslims a wrong picture of what Christianity is all about. Hence, revival has to start from the churches to pray that God ignites His fire of revival in our midst so that we will be able to mobilize our people for the work of the ministry.

### **2. A Total Break with Tradition and Culture**

Christians must be careful not to mingle Christianity with tradition and culture. This will hinder evangelism among the people. Tradition and culture bind Christians from seeing things objectively, and it binds us to wrong interpretation. Any tradition or culture that becomes unchangeable, untouchable and considered sacred will surely become a road-block to church growth.

### **3. A New Lifestyle**

Christians in Muslim communities like Ede must be an epitome of love and good work. A sinful and ungodly life constitutes an obstacle in Muslim evangelism. Living the Christian life is an effective way of witnessing to Muslims.

### **4. A Readiness to Pay the Price**

The church and Christians in Ede must be ready to face persecution and pay the price of suffering as they witness to be Muslims. The church must be ready to preach the gospel in season and out of season as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. E. Luther Copeland says, "In suffering we must rejoice counting ourselves worthy of suffering for our Lord and Saviour."<sup>11</sup>

### **5. A Common Goal and Purpose**

If Edeland is to be won for Christ, individualism, self-centredness and unhealthy rivalry and competitions among Christian denominations must stop. The churches in Edeland should work as a team in possessing the land for Christ.

### **6. A Well Mobilized and Equipped Laity**

Evangelism is not the primary work of the pastors and evangelists, but the work of all believers. For effective evangelism in Edeland all believers must be involved, hence the members must be well disciplined and thus well equipped for the work of the ministry. In line with this, David L. Dawson said, "The greatest need of the hour is probably the raising of an army, well

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<sup>11</sup>E. Luther Copeland, "Church Growth in Acts," *Missiology*, 4, No. 1, January 1976, 25.

