

THE IMPACT OF EVANGELISM ON CHURCH GROWTH IN NIGERIA IN
THIS CENTURY
A SURVEY OF SELECTED BAPTIST CHURCHES IN
OGBOMOSO BAPTIST CONFERENCE

N.B.T.S.
D 12-1
M. DIV.

SUNDAY AYEGBOYIN DEYI
MATRIC NO: UJ/05/NB/0053

An Essay in the Department of THEOLOGY
Faculty of Theological Studies,

Submitted to the Faculty of Theological Studies,
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso
In Affiliation with the University of Jos

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award the Degree of
MASTER OF DIVINITY of the
UNIVERSITY OF JOS

J.C. POOL LIBRARY
BAPTIST SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO NIGERIA

June 2008

08 — 0644

ABSTRACT

This research work deals greatly with the examination of the impact of evangelism on church growth in Nigeria in this century. Since there is enlightenment and encouragement on how the church can grow especially in this century. The researcher is very interested to find out whether evangelism can make great impact or not on church growth.

Evangelism is generally recognized and acceptable as an instrument in the hands of church for church growth if it is well organized and practiced frequently, especially monthly. Evangelism is however not foreign to the church in that the church has benefited immensely from its roles across the ages as seen in extensive use in which churches experiences increase in church membership, extension of church building, church planting, spiritual maturity, fulfilling of the great commission and exhibition of spiritual gifts.

The church is a living organism which subject to growth from the efforts of an individual church members and church pastors. The study revealed that the church is expected to grow conceptually, organically, spiritually and numerically. The fact is that church growth stands as outcome of well organized evangelism within and outside the church. Church growth was the aim of Jesus Christ with the mind of expanding the Kingdom of God on the earth. However, churches in Ogbomoso Baptist Conference experience such growth in this century.

5.2 CONCLUSION

From the critical examination through research work carried out in some Baptist Churches in Ogbomoso Baptist Conference, one would believe that evangelism has great impact on church growth in this 21st century.

The impact of Evangelism on church growth could be examined in the following areas: (1) Increase in church membership, (2) Fulfilling of the great commission, (3) Spiritual maturity among church members, (4) Exhibition of spiritual gifts in the church for edification of the body of Jesus Christ, (5) Extension of church building as a result of increase in church membership and (6) Church planting in the newly developed areas where their church members relocated to.

The research study revealed that evangelism is a life – cycled process which is rewardable on the earth and in the heavens if it is carried out whole heartedly (I Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 22:11,12). Church members should be enlightened to know that evangelism is a God-venture and it needs to be carried out with human passion. In the same vein, pastors should take evangelism as the major task of their pastoral ministries. Of course, if church evangelism would bring about great impact on

church growth, evangelism co-ordinators must cooperate with and responsible to church pastors. However, evangelism report must be written and given adequately, and evaluation on evangelism/church growth must be examined. Proper record on evangelism must be kept and reviewed regularly for improvement.

All churches should know and understand the characteristics of this 21st century. Both positive and negative characteristics must encourage and enhance effective evangelism. Information and communication Technology advancement needs to be used in the evangelism and for church growth. Church must know that the end – time is moving closer everyday, so it is sign for the church to arise for End-Time Harvest through evangelism.

Therefore, evangelism would be responsible as a factor for church growth, and every church is embedded with growth potentials. “The church as the body of Christ and household of faith is endowed with divine treasures. It is gifted with people who have all it takes to make the church fulfill its divine mandate” (Olawuyi, 43). The present condition of the church calls for aggressive and dynamic evangelism approaches, in building believers to be God’s ambassadors in this perverted world.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of the study to Baptist pastors, church Evangelism co-ordinators, local Baptist churches, and Ogbomoso Baptist Conference as a whole. These are the stakeholders within the Baptist denomination who can determine effectiveness and efficiency of evangelism as a factor for church growth in this 21st century.

1. There is the need for Baptist pastors to be evangelistic and mission minded. Pastors should always plan for evangelism every year. Evangelistic Outreach should be organized and carry out weekly instead

of monthly or quarterly in order to be more faithful and committed to the kingdom assignment.

2. Church pastors also must be involved and participate fully in evangelism in order to encourage church members to see it as great task of the church.
3. More evangelism and church growth materials should be produced and made available in the church. It is advisable that the materials are written in vernacular language so that the less – schooled people can also benefit from the materials.
4. Church members should be well enlightened about evangelism and church growth. There should be a good communication system that will enhance proper understanding of some of the concepts related to evangelism and church growth.
5. Churches and Conference should frequently organize seminars, Retreats, Conferences and Workshops on evangelism and church growth in order to facilitate interest, and empower church members to participate in them.
6. People should be encouraged to give willingly to support the programme rather than levying that may result in lack of commitment on the part of the members.
7. Mission and Evangelism emphasis weeks at least are in a quarter should be encouraged for evaluation, equipping of church members and also for contribution for the programme.
8. The evangelism units or departments in local churches, Associations, and Conference should be thoroughly provided with funds, materials, and enough personnel that will help in the area of evangelism and church growth.

9. Church policy and leadership style should be fashioned and structured to encourage church members to participate adequately in evangelism programmes.
10. Each church should set up Evangelism Team and visitation unit in order to enhance visitation and follow-up of the visitors and newly converted members.
12. Local churches should also organize Enquirers' class or converts' class for spiritual growth of the new converts. It should be organized on weekly basis in order to educate church members. Discipleship programme materials may be used.