

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CAUSES OF THE EXODUS
OF SOME BAPTIST MEMBERS TO
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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ABSTRACT

The impact of Pentecostalism on Baptist Churches in Iwo Baptist Association has adversely affected them Churches in some various ways. There is rapid decline of attendance of worshippers in various programmes. It has also reduced members' interest in giving and commitment to the growth and development of their churches this has made some pastors to be at loggerheads with their church members.

The burden of this thesis is to find out the causes of the exodus of some Baptist members into Pentecostal churches in Iwo Baptist Association. Apart from knowing the causes, the writer also investigated the effects of the exodus and necessary steps to take to curtail such occurrence among Baptist Churches in Iwo Baptist Association. To achieve the purpose of the thesis, the writer made use of empirical and descriptive methods. The primary sources included interview, questionnaire and participant observation. While the secondary sources included the use of books, Journals articles and relevant programme booklets and church worship bulletin.

The finding of the thesis is that rigid and conservative mode of worship, prayer life and method, faith-healing, non-involvement of Youths in worship services among many others are the causes of the exodus of Baptist members into Pentecostal churches. Some recommendations were made to the pastors, members and the association in general to help curtail the exodus of some members into Pentecostal churches. These include provision of quality, spirit-filled and well balanced messages, placing emphasis concern the local teaching are among others steps curb the Exodus.

5.2 CONCLUSION:

It had been observed that there is exodus of some Baptist members to Pentecostal churches. This has become an established fact. The aftermath of the Exodus is the reduction in church membership. The larger percentage of the Exodus from Baptist churches to Pentecostal churches are mainly Youth. These Youths were supposed to take the mantle of leadership in Baptist churches in the nearest future.

The Exodus of some members to Pentecostal churches has attendant problems. One of the problem is the dwindling in tithes and offering of the members in Baptist churches. As a result of this problem churches would not be able to embark on

developmental projects. Also inability of churches to pay their pastors salary promptly, unfaithfulness of churches to pay association, conference and convention dues. The manifestation of these incessant problems retard the growth and expansion of Baptist churches in Iwo Baptist Association.

The Baptist association face the problem of transfer of spiritual leadership it is clearly evident the in the number of exodus of members that are mainly Youths. The failure of Baptist leaders to curtail this problem has adversely affected the existences of Baptist churches in Iwo Baptist Association. Iwo Baptist Association after the awareness of the Exodus of youths needs to devise ways to arrest the ugly situation before it becomes too late.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is of paramount importance for Iwo Baptist Association to note the following recommendation to forestall Exodus of Baptist members to Pentecostal churches.

Provision of quality, spirit filled, well balanced and edifying message. The ministers of God must be versed in word of God; there is also need for them to purchase spiritual books that would lift them up in spirit. Also there must be real preparation on the part of ministers before delivering message to church members. The ministers must also be prayerful, prayer at times strengthen the delivery of message. In other word, ministers must always be led by the spirit of God.

Baptist ministers should emphasize biblical principles and practices. Baptist ministers and people are regarded as the people of the book. Therefore, ministers must preach undiluted message, that is; it must be Bible based. Non –biblical teaching must be avoided by Baptist ministers coupled with practices that are alien to Bible teaching. When this recommendation is applied there would be complete overhauling of

spiritual growth of members. Members would find solace in Baptist churches rather than Pentecostal churches.

Baptist leaders/ministers must be responsible, conscious and alive to the need of the hour. Ministers must not shy away from the Pentecostal practices of this hour. Some Pentecostal practices that are biblical must be allowed in churches to prevent members' Exodus to Pentecostal churches.

Love, concern, caring and visitation must be encouraged. Baptist members need to put in more efforts in sharing love which involve caring among one another. Also there is need for members to strengthen their mode of visitation to curb Exodus of members to Pentecostal churches.

No man is an island to himself, there is need to co-operate with other ministers to enhance spiritual growth. Baptist ministers must share fellowship with other ministers; the Bible says iron sharpens iron, through fellowship, the spiritual life of ministers. The Bible say "Two are better than one (Eccl. 4:9). Through fellowship, the spiritual lives of ministers are improved and they would be able to function effectively in their ministries.

It is very mandatory for the Nigerian Baptist Convention to incorporate some of these Pentecostal practices that are scriptural into our worship service. There is need for Nigerian Baptist Convention to support churches that incorporate some Pentecostal practices that are scriptural into their worship services. Clear cut decision must be made and state in our statement of faith and practices.

There is need to reduce activities in the church to uplift spiritual growth of members. There is need for proper education of members about the need to reduce their activities and to take one or two activities. This would help them to use the remaining time to develop themselves spiritually. The church would then be made up to

spirit filled Christians this would hinder further Exodus of members to Pentecostal churches.

There must be provision of adequate seminars, trainings and workshops for church leaders on how to handle controversial issue that is likely to cause division, argument or outright Exodus in our churches.

There must be high degree of tolerance among Baptist between those that embrace Pentecostal practices and conservative. Those who embrace Pentecostal practices and conservatives must live together in peace. Both adherents of Pentecostal practices and conservative must contribute their quota to the peaceful existence of the church.

Besides, to achieve the reduction of Exodus of youth to Pentecostal churches, our ministers/leaders must not shy away from the truth of the scripture by explaining grey areas to them, in order to enrich their knowledge. Whenever undiluted words of God are proclaimed by ministers, youth would see the need to stay within the Baptist Churches and use their gifts to edify the body of Christ.

There is need for spiritual research in which youth must be directly involved with a view to teaching them spiritual and intellectual aspect of faith. It is my contention that this singular effort will go a long way to hone spiritual and intellectual growth in the word of God. The Pentecostal churches have no magic wand with which they draw to their fold able youth, it is in our character that we have left a lot undone and the core of it all is spiritual and intellectual development.