

CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN MISSION AMONG BAPTISTS OF
SOUTHERN IJAW OF BAYELSA STATE

BY

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ABSTRACT

The researcher stated it clearly that it is a well-known fact that God loves the whole world, including the Southern Ijaw people of Bayelsa State. He sent his only son to save the entire world from its sin. The Southern Ijaw people must be reached for Christ. Therefore, this study was determined to evaluate the challenges of Christian Mission in Southern Ijaw in Bayelsa State. The study adopted a descriptive research design on 370 respondents that form the representative sample for the study. The sample was drawn through stratified sampling technique on ten different Churches that covered the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic and Pentecostals. The study raised four research questions to guide the study. A self-designed questionnaire and Interview guide were prepared for the study to obtain data. Obtained data were presented and analyzed with statistical tables, Bar-Chart, Pie-Chart and simple percentage. Results revealed that environmental, cultural literacy/communication, social, Christians and politics of the area served as challenges to Christian Mission in Southern Ijaw. Some methods such as Jesus Christ/Holy Spirit, missionaries living an exemplary life, use of effective prayer etc. were identified were adopted to reach out to the people in Southern Ijaw. Based on these findings, the study made some conclusions and recommended that the people that will carry the gospel to the Southern Ijaw people of Bayelsa State must be "born again". An exemplary life is required.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions were made.

1. Actually, there were environmental, cultural, social, Christian and political challenges that hinder Christian Mission in Southern Ijaw.
2. Some person risked their life for the Christian Mission work in Southern Ijaw, such person include, Rev. H. C. Igwe, Rev. Akoloh-Oguzula and Rev. Foloki.
3. Conventional methods of mission were adopted by the missionaries.
4. The mission work in Southern Ijaw witness a set-back due to the challenges identified which had overstayed to affect the work in this present day.
5. The first Christian Organization that entered Southern Ijaw was the Anglican Communion.
6. The Baptist Mission entered into Southern Ijaw precisely in 1961.

5.3 Recommendations

From the introduction, the researcher stated it clearly that God loves the whole world, including the Southern Ijaw people of Bayelsa State. He has sent his only son to save the entire world from its sin. The Southern Ijaw people must be reached for Christ. Based on the foregoing, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

The people that will carry the gospel to the Southern Ijaw people of Bayelsa State must be "born again". An exemplary life is required

- 1) A strong key to the mission work is prayer. The people should always be prayerful.

- 2) The people to carry the gospel to the Southern Ijaw people should be able to tolerate and appreciate the traditional culture and religious belief system of the people. They believe in the existence of God who is responsible for the creation of this universe.
- 3) The people carrying this gospel to them must not be tired of them, even if they resist.
- 4) The people going to Southern Ijaw to evangelize must learn about the socio-political set up, the elder has the final say about everything, even in terms of religion.
- 5) Health system. The people accepting to go to Southern Ijaw to evangelize should consider the health situation of the people. *The people should go along with drugs to attend to the people.* And if the Christian missions have enough finance should establish clinic or hospital for the people.
- 6) The Southern Ijaw people are agriculturally rich and are very good fisher men and women. The going top evangelize should consider the season for farming and fishing to run their programme well.