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**THE IMPACT OF NEO-PENTECOSTALISM ON BAPTIST WORSHIP
PATTERNS IN ILORIN-EAST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

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ABSTRACT

This research work examined the impact of Neo-Pentecostalism on the worship styles of the Baptist churches in Ilorin-East Baptist Association. The Baptist denomination has its fundamental beliefs and practices which influence and design its worship patterns. But as a result of the upsurge of Neo-Pentecostalism and Charismatic movement, the worship patterns of the denomination have been greatly impacted. As a result, this study examined the root, doctrines, beliefs and practices of Neo-Pentecostalism, the historical antecedents and worship patterns of the Baptist denomination, also the various ways by which the impact of Neo-Pentecostalism can be handled are suggested.

This research work is a field study where the opinions of respondents on selected questions as regards Baptist worship were elicited through the use of questionnaires and interviews. It was discovered that Neo-Pentecostalism has influenced Baptist churches' worship styles in Ilorin-East Baptist Association. The findings and information gathered through the research instrument showed that the impact of neo-Pentecostalism is very high on Baptist way of praying, her musical aspects and Baptist pastors' styles of delivering sermon. Also, it was discovered that the impact of neo-Pentecostalism on the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit during the worship services of the Baptist churches in Ilorin-East Baptist Association is very low. It is concluded, therefore, that neo-Pentecostalism has greatly impacted Baptist worship forms. It is therefore expected of Baptist churches to realize this fact in order to utilize the good aspects of this movement and put a check to its excesses.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Neo-Pentecostalism is a paradigm shift in Christianity; similar movements have been experienced in church history over the centuries. Each movement emerges with its doctrines, teachings, and styles of worship and as well influences other denominations; influences that can be positive, negative or both. The same can be said of Neo-Pentecostalism. Its impact on Baptist denomination has been both positive and negative. Pentecostal upsurge has brought great revival to the Christian community in the 21st century. Many weak churches have been revived, while others have been alerted and made strong in the area of evangelism as a result of Pentecostalism's approach to the proclamation of the gospel.

In the same area of worship in the Baptist denomination, the impact of Pentecostalism has been felt. Worship services have been made much more lively and interesting in some churches as a result of the positive impact of Pentecostalism. One of the negative aspects of this movement is in the area of the denominational understanding and believes on the Holy Spirit, especially the baptism of the Holy Spirit with an evidence of speaking in tongues. Many have been led astray, some are confused on the matter, but a good number of Baptist members have a thorough knowledge on this subject. This has really helped in adhering and conforming to the denominational fundamental believes and distinctiveness, especially in the area of its worship pattern.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the result of the data gathered, the following recommendations will be very relevant. First, there is need for the Baptist members to study Neo – Pentecostalism from diverse perspectives ranging from Church History, Theology, and the Scriptures. This will help pastors to examine and understand the religious movement better in an attempt to guide against heretical teachings and doctrines that may influence the Church negatively.

Second, Pentecostalism has come to stay. It has influenced many denominations and there is virtually nothing that could be done to it. It is thereby expected from Baptist Churches to tolerate Pentecostalism to an extent that will not jeopardize the doctrines of the Baptist denomination and the practice of biblical principles.

Third, there are some very good practices in Pentecostalism. Their method of evangelism, lively and interesting worship styles, solid prayer lifestyle, extemporaneous and powerful preaching of Pentecostal pastors and the use of improved technology in the worship service among others. These should be looked into and possibly adopted by Baptist churches in order to make Baptist worship more dynamic and interesting so as to put a check to the exodus of Baptist members to Pentecostal churches.

Fourth, the Baptist pastors should try as much as possible to be good stewards of time. Unnecessary and repetitive emphases and items, which waste the precious time of the worshippers and make worship service boring afterwards, should be discouraged. The attention span of the church members should be taken into cognizance by the church pastor, so that the people will be interested to always be in

the place of worship. By so doing, the worshippers will be much more committed to the church activities and programmes.

Fifth, despite the fast growth of Pentecostalism and attraction to numerous Christians, it has its excesses. According to Ojo (2005), one of such excesses is hero worshipping of Pentecostal Pastors to the extent that some members have been abused and exploited by these pastors. Also, there are certain wrong teachings and doctrines that Pentecostalism expresses. These should be vehemently frowned at so as to uphold the integrity of the Baptist denomination in terms of preaching and practicing true biblical doctrines.

Finally, Baptist pastors should be careful in other not to throw away the rich fundamental beliefs and doctrines of the denomination in the attempt of tolerating Pentecostalism. Baptist churches should be guided by their fundamentals and practices. It will be very wrong for any local church to go against the beliefs and practices of the denomination. The Baptist fundamental beliefs, which make us to act the way we do should be constantly taught by Baptist Pastors to their congregation. This will make members understand our stand on some doctrines and by so doing, they will not be easily deceived by heretical teachings.