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DEVELOPING A MANUAL FOR GETTING MEMBERS OF AKOKA BAPTIST
CHURCH, LAGOS, INVOLVED IN OUTREACH MINISTRIES

A PROJECT IN THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
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ABSTRACT

It was observed by the researcher that most members of Akoka Baptist Church, Lagos have lukewarm attitude towards the Church's corporate outreach ministries. The Great Commission presents the church with its mission to the world, which is to make disciples of all nations. In order to arrest this lethargic trend, there was a need to educate members on the importance of reaching out to the lost world on personal level and also on corporate level. This was done by designing a manual for testing members about outreach ministries of evangelism, missions, church planting and social ministry. Pre-test and post-test questionnaire were designed and administered on members. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect necessary information from respondents. The pre-test questionnaire tested the level of knowledge of respondents on outreach ministries as well as their commitment to same. After the teaching sessions, the post-test questionnaire was administered in order to determine the level of openness, responsiveness, and willingness to commit themselves to regular participation in the outreach ministries at both personal and corporate levels. The analyses of the pre-test and post-test questionnaire and the researcher's interaction with members during the teaching sessions revealed that members were willing to commit themselves to both personal outreach, especially personal evangelism as well as to corporate outreach ministries. Thus, it can be said that when members are committed to, for instance, personal evangelism, it will have positive impact on the church's evangelistic ministry and other outreach ministries of the church. In view of the results obtained from this research, the researcher recommended that pastors should regularly teach members on outreach ministries, at least twice in a year. This would be done with the aim of mobilizing them for the task of reaching out to the outside world in fulfilment of the Great Commission. It was also recommended that the church being located in the urban centre should place a high premium on evangelism through small groups because of busy and fast life of the city. It was further recommended that, every local Church must endeavour to balance evangelism with social ministries, which will involve researching to know the felt needs of its community and making all efforts at meeting those needs. The local church, it was recommended, should pray for non-Christian nations on one nation per month basis while individual members should also have non-Christian friends and relations on their prayer lists. Knowing fully well that outreach ministries are capital intensive, a mobilized local Church should devote 40 percent of its annual budget to outreach ministries, sharing it at 10 percent a piece. And in order to assimilate new members who will be committed at the entry point to reproducing themselves through evangelism, membership assimilation class should teach new members on outreach ministries, and their implication for personal and corporate stewardships.

Conclusion

From all the analyses and discussions about the project, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) There is a need to develop a manual for continual training of members of local churches on outreach ministries. People's lack of knowledge on how to do personal evangelism was revealed in the post-test results. It showed that people were willing to be engaged regularly in personal and corporate evangelism after the teaching sessions as most of them claimed to "now understand better" (see table 7). In the pre-test results, 46 percent of the respondents claimed that they have never had any previous training on evangelism on witnessing (see table 11), while the post-test results revealed that 70.7 percent of the respondents were willing to attend further training on witnessing or evangelism (see table 11). To further show the willingness of the church members to be trained in outreach ministries, 64 percent of the respondents claimed to be part of the entire teaching sessions of manual implementation (see table 20), while 81.3 percent of the respondents assessed the teaching of the manual as "very educative, challenging, and timely" (see table 23). (2) Individual Christians who are committed to personal and corporate evangelism at the local level will be committed to missions – evangelism in the foreign land. (3) A church which often engage in outreach ministries (usually under the leadership of a pastor motivator) opens the door of participation in outreach ministries to a large number of its membership. (4) One major benefit of effective outreach ministries is (church growth – physical and spiritual growths). (5) Outreach ministries that will be effective must balance the preaching of the gospel with social ministry as it is peculiar to the immediate community of the church. (6) A praying church will witness great

manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit in winning souls and taking more lands for the Lord.

Furthermore, it could be deduced from the findings in this project that people were slack in personal and corporate evangelism due to the busy and frenetic life of Lagos. These facts were revealed during responses of members to the teaching on personal witnessing, and also in the pre-test results (see table 7).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by the researcher based on the findings made in the course of carrying out this project:

1. Pastors should teach the whole church on outreach ministries at least twice in a year. First, the teaching should be done in the early part of the year as a sort of agenda setting for the year on personal and corporate levels. Second, it should be done in the middle of the year so as to remind members of the Great Commission of (the Lord) Jesus Christ. By so doing, all members will be mobilized to engage in one or more aspects of outreach ministries.
2. The local church in an urban city like Lagos should lay great emphasis on evangelism through small groups, at a time convenient for its busy members and the equally busy populace. Sunday evening is recommended for house fellowship meeting, which should hold at least twice in a month.
3. Every local church should be teaching on how to balance evangelism with social ministries as it is peculiar to the church's immediate community. To this effect,

every church must thoroughly research its immediate community in order to identify the physical or social needs of the community the church can meet. Once identified, the church should make every efforts to meet such needs.

4. As a mobilized church, a local church should pray for at least one unreached people group in a month, making a total of twelve unreached people group in a year. This should be done during regular Sunday services, mid-week service, and small group fellowship meetings. Similarly, all church members must be encouraged to have unsaved relations, friends and neighbours on their prayer lists for whose salvation they are praying for during personal quiet time and on family prayer altars.
5. Knowing fully well that outreach ministries are capital intensive, a local church should deploy 40 percent of its annual budget to outreach ministries thus: 10 percent for evangelism, 10 percent for cross-cultural missions, 10 percent for church planting, and another 10 percent for social ministry.
6. Since Akoka Baptist Church, Lagos has a membership class which is meant to assimilate new members into the fellowship of the church, it is, therefore, recommended that teaching on outreach ministries should be included in the studies. This will help the church to assimilate new members who will be committed to reproducing themselves through evangelism.