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THE GROWTH OF CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS
IN BENIN CITY: A CASE STUDY OF
THE CHURCH OF GOD MISSION
INTERNATIONAL, INC.

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
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In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
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ABSTRACT

Church historians, sociologists, as well as many religious analysts have identified with interest, the growth and spread of charismatic movements in this century as a world-wide phenomenon. It is also observed that diverse experiences had led to the conversion to churches, these charismatic movement which once originated as non-denominational fellowship groups.

Twenty-five years may not be a long time in the history of a religious movement, in the case of the charismatic movements whose phenomenal growth in this country has continued to attract attention within the academic, ecclesiastical and social spheres. Nevertheless, in twenty-five years, a religious movement or group can undergo a transformation, such as the charismatic movements as characterized by their mobility, and dynamic nature.

In Nigeria, the charismatic movements which emerged from the 1970s have been identified as an example to this fact. In this study, the evaluation of numerous renewal or pentecostal groups, churches and fellowships which emerged from 1970 will be seen and examined as "Charismatic Movement," in Nigeria.

The study gives the vivid historical origin of charismatic movements, identifies the causes of their emergence

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The study gives the vivid historical origin of charismatic movements, identifies the causes of their emergence

and their characteristics. This helps the readers to easily understand the reasons for the growth of the charismatic movements.

The Church of God Mission International has been chosen as case study of the growth of the charismatic movements in Benin City. The Church of God Mission is seen as the mother of charismatic churches in Benin City.

In this research, the historical review of different stages of Christianity in Nigeria forms the introductory part of the entire study. The origin and history, structure, doctrinal emphasis, administration and characteristics of the Church of God Mission is used as a basis to evaluate the charismatic movements.

Some sharp but important comparisons are made between the charismatics and other missionary and independent churches in Nigeria. The last chapter evaluates and summarizes the growth of the charismatic movements and their impact on Christianity in Benin City in particular and Nigeria in general.

The choice of Benin City is because the researcher considers it to be the Nigerian city with the highest number of charismatic groups and denominations.

establishment of these individual ministries-born-churches is for financial gain.⁴

4. The wrong concept of miracles and material blessings from the Lord. They preach that one is blessed by the Lord according to the level of his giving to the Lord through the church. This turns the idea of giving to God as a trade business where one invests for a double returns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing, the writer has drawn more insight from the phenomenon of the charismatic movements. Based on this, the following recommendations are offered.

1. The aggressive zeal of the charismatics should be emulated by the non-charismatic churches and Christians. This has influenced all areas of their spiritual life and experience, especially in giving and prayer. As they apply the gospel message without question, they grow in liberalism, brotherly love and evangelism.

2. The charismatics should desist from the extreme emotionalism and prosperity theology to avoid the tendencies of extortion and heresy.

3. Proliferation of churches is not synonymous to either church growth nor evangelism. So churches (especially the charismatics) should concentrate their efforts in preaching the gospel than propagating and proliferating individual church/ministry denominations.

⁴John F. MacArthur, Jr., Charismatic Chaos (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 265. See also Olalere Adegoke, "Church of Commerce and Industry Ltd.," Daily Sketch (Ibadan), 16 May (1995), p. 12.

4. Christians should see the need to create an impression to the unbelieving world that we have a common purpose and a simple message of Christ and Him crucified.

5. The charismatics should not always stress experience as the only basis for faith and tongues and emotionalism as signs of genuine conversion.

6. Proof-texting has remained the major diet of the charismatics. The writer therefore, recommends that they should seek for the true understanding of the true Word of God through sound theological training.

7. That scholars, evangelists, and church historians should conduct more researches on the reasons for the proliferation of churches of the neo-pentecostals and third-wave movements of this twentieth century.

8. Having reviewed the bitter way in which Idahosa and his former partners parted ways, one therefore, is constrained to conclude that:

a. Selfishness and quest for materialism is one of the foremost preoccupations and motifs of the contemporary charismatic groups.

b. The leadership desire of the individual owners of charismatic groups (like the CGM), creates a state of suspicion and insecurity among the leaders. Hence, they do everything that is humanly possible to remain the sole leadership.