

CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA AND ITS
IMPACT ON IRETI OGO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,
LAGOS

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ABSTRACT

In recent times there has been a strong demand among the Nigerian Baptist adult members as to why youths within the fold flee or prefer to join the Charismatic Churches. The trend is strongly becoming a concern to those who believe that exodus of our Baptist youths should no longer be tolerated. Solution to this question of exodus of our Christian youths to the "New Generation Churches" known as 'Charismatic Churches' cannot be discovered without taking pains to study the history of Christianity in Nigeria, most especially the Charismatic Movement and its impact on the Mainline Churches.

This researcher observed that there is need to attend to this inherent problem of our youths fleeing to Charismatic Churches. Not only that, there is need to re-examine the beliefs of the Charismatic Churches, particularly, those practices that are in consonance with the Baptist beliefs. The questionnaire method was employed. The questionnaire centred on finding out peoples' awareness of youth exodus to the Charismatic Churches, the causes, and the resultant effects on Ireti Ogo Baptist Association.

In carrying out this research work, it was discovered that youth exodus began as early as when the charismatic movement came into Nigeria and that many members are eager to have programmes that are charismatic-oriented and more particularly that give more attention to the music ministry of the mainline churches as a major factor that drives the youths out. The research specifically revealed that there is need for all local Baptist churches to pay more attention to the demands of the

youths in the mode of worship diversity and varieties must be allowed in the mode of worship.

The Convention should encourage the churches under her umbrella with the aim of embracing worship in charismatic way, without compromising the Baptist beliefs and heritage. This will douse the tension between the youths and adults. It will have a long way in reducing, if not total eradication of mass movement of youths to those new generation churches.

5.2 Conclusion

This study revealed conspicuously the youth exodus among the Baptist churches all over Nigeria, Ireti Ogo Baptist Association inclusive. The research work revealed that youths are more at home and having a great deal of sense of belonging in the charismatic churches than the Baptist churches because of those discovered reasons enunciated above, which has led to great decline in the growth of the Baptist churches. The issue is no longer ordinary. It has started affecting the lives and homes of many members of the Baptist churches. This awareness should encourage the Nigerian Baptist Convention to take a serious look at some of her mode of worship, beliefs and practices that need overhauling and allow dynamism into her liturgy. The Nigerian Baptist Convention churches need to improve on the musical equipments

and create more avenues for the total participation of youths in worship and church leadership. The pastors should be more open to these youths, not only during the yearly youth week. The time spent in worship service also need not be too long including more of praise worship than singing many hymns.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings the following will serve as some of the recommendations for the Nigerian Baptist churches especially to Ireti Ogo Baptist Association in Lagos.

Charismatic Movement is a global phenomenon, and has been used at least to draw numerous youths that would have been lost to the kingdom of darkness. It has greatly influenced the Nigerian Baptist Convention both positively and negatively. It has become a reality to reckon with.

First, the Nigerian Baptist Convention as a body must come together to harmonize her practices and beliefs with that of the charismatic movements in such a way that the youths yearnings will be satisfied. This is needed to allow dynamism into the mode of worship. Second, the charismatic churches should no longer be perceived as a challenge but as an opportunity for spiritual renewal. Such spiritual renewal is what most youths crave and yearn for. Baptist churches must see past beyond, and consider most of those factors that the charismatic use to attract the youths as part of what they themselves (the Baptists) can use to improve their mode of worship and mission enterprise. It is evidently observed in the chosen area, that in spite of the flaws in the charismatic liturgy; they have become a major stream of Christianity in most of the neighborhoods in Nigeria as well as the chosen area of

study. The Baptist needs to work more in the areas of social interventions on woman and youth in the city.

Third, as much as it must be encouraged that the Baptist maintain her heritage, there is need to empower the Baptist youth for total involvement in the worship and more emphatically the programmes be made more lively. The youth crave more for longer time in praise worship than using most of the time to sing hymns. The youths embrace dancing in the worship service with uncontrolled eyes-shut, emotionally frenzied dance. There are still very many of the Baptist churches where dancing to worship God is not permitted, choreographed dance is discouraged. It is a great contention among the youths.

Fourth, both the adults and the youths need to strike balance in mode of worship. From the research findings, the pastors alone cannot curb the youth exodus; the researcher is calling on the Nigerian Baptist Convention to reappraise some of her beliefs and doctrines. The Baptist church should not devoid herself from the charismatic gifts. Adult members should be more educated that charismatic is a valid dimension of the church's life and ministry. Where this is not in place, the church is separated from the New Testament, particularly the apostolic experiences. The Convention should therefore seek and articulate a model of the church that will attract the youths rather than losing them to the charismatic churches.

Furthermore, the Baptist Churches should encourage more use of the mass media to inform the public about the mission works. Many pastors should be made to appear regularly on television and radio stations. Church programmes and spiritual activities need to be given adequate publicity in the mass media.

The Baptist churches should endeavour to teach more of the Bible and about the doctrines of the Baptist, while also encouraging the youths to be more available in ministry. The church should encourage the students to be more interested in the ministry of the church and more emphatically to be more exposed to pastoral care.