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**SERMON RETENTION IN  
BAPTIST CHURCHES OF OYO STATE:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

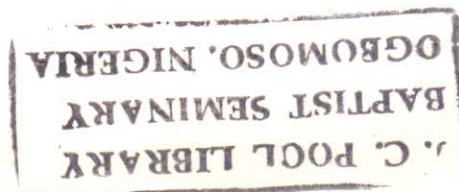
**A THESIS PRESENTED TO  
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NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF THEOLOGY  
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**BY**

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## *ABSTRACT*

The study was conducted to find the relationships that do exist between sermon retention and Christian commitment, interest and doctrinal belief among Baptist Christians of Oyo State of Nigeria.

Four Hundred and Fifty-Seven respondents from six randomly selected Baptist Churches in Oyo State participated in the study. The data on the study was collected with the use of a Sermon Retention Questionnaire designed by the researcher. The hypotheses were subjected empirically to the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) at a significant level of 0.05. All of the three null hypotheses were accepted. The analysis of the result indicated that:

1. There was no significant linear relationship between sermon retention and Christian commitment ( $r=.05$ ,  $p=n.s.$ )
2. There was no significant linear relationship between sermon retention and interest ( $r=.03$ ,  $p=n.s.$ )
3. There was no significant linear relationship between sermon retention and doctrinal belief ( $r=.08$ ,  $p=n.s.$ )

On the basis of these revelations, some implications for the practise of Christian education were drawn. First, Christian educators should not interpret members' attendances to Church programmes as absorbing the Word of God in their lives. Members should both attend church programmes and as well absorb the Word and message in their hearts. Secondly, educators should endeavour to relate Bible lessons to real life experiences in order to maintain interest. Thirdly, pastors and educators should endeavour to teach in such a way as to nurture members' belief in order to help them to be consistent and stable in their way of thinking and reasoning in the Christian faith.

In view of the findings and implications, it was recommended that Pastors and other personnel of the teaching profession should encourage church members to revisit Bible Study lessons and Sermons with their family members after a worship time. Such will strengthen memory of the Bible lesson or message from the pulpit.

## *SUMMARY OF FINDINGS*

The analysis of the data of the study indicated the following:

1. There is no significant linear relationship between sermon retention and commitment, interest and doctrinal belief. In other words, the relationship that the study did show was empirically insignificant to reject the null hypothesis.

2. The results of other findings related to the hypotheses indicated. That is, some of the expected relationships found empirical support, but others did not. First, it was found that the local churches that participated positively correlated with interest in sermon and doctrinal belief. This shows that the local congregations were not only interested in the message, but the message was also congruent to their doctrinal belief. Thus the message was positively received. Secondly, those who completed their questionnaire on the same day the message was heard scored high than those who did not. This indicates that with regard to sermon retention, those who completed the questionnaire the same had better retention.
  
3. In spite of the fact that the test did not show any significant linear relationship between sermon retention and Christian commitment, interest and doctrinal belief, the analysis did show nonlinear relationships between sermon retention and commitment, interest and doctrinal belief. This means some amount of relationship does exist, but is too weak to be accepted as significant at the .05 level of significance. Figure 1 shows an interaction model that summarises the apparent relationships that are significant, weak and spurious between the variables in the study. These findings form the basis of the discussion, conclusion, and implications made on the study. The details of this information is the subject of the next chapter.

## Summary

The goal of this study was to empirically investigate and determine the distinctive relationships that do exist between sermon retention and Christian commitment, interest in sermon and doctrinal belief. It was to find out how these factors can enhance retention of Christian knowledge.

The study therefore shows that the relationships that do exist between sermon memory and Christian commitment, interest and doctrinal belief are not too distinct to enhance retention of Christian knowledge. This means that Christian educators cannot lean on these factors as the most important factors to build Christian knowledge. In view of this, it is important to give some recommendations so as to guide the practise of Christian education in the churches and the Baptist Convention as a whole. This forms the discussion of the next section in this chapter.

## Recommendations

The findings of the study and their implications encourage the researcher to make the following recommendations:

1. It has been reported that many ministers lament that their congregation members are seemingly unaffected by their messages and teachings. Consequently, preaching and teaching methods should be intensified in the Seminaries and Bible Colleges. These institutions among other things should continue to teach ministers to plan their messages such that the messages will meet the needs of their congregation members. This will help members to build a strong Christian life in commitment, doctrine, retention, relationship, just to name a few.
2. Churches should endeavour to present the gospel message of salvation to their prospective members at a young age and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of conversion. Young people are very open to the gospel. This will enable the church to grow in its ministry of discipleship. This will also strengthen the convert's commitment to the church and in the study of the Bible. This inference receives support from the fact that this present study shows that young converts are committed in their Christian life. If they receive an effective and comprehensive discipliship training, it will strengthen their Christian life.
3. Churches should organize seminars for parents to train them in revisiting Bible Study lessons and sermons with their family members after a worship time. This present study did show that those who completed the questionnaire on the same day the message was heard had better retention than those who completed the form on subsequent days to the hearing of the message. Thus, revisitation will help low the learner to grasp and reenforce that which was not understood during the worship period. Consequently, memory of the Bible lesson or message will be strengthened.
4. Parents should endeavour to send their children to school to receive good education. This study shows that education helped most of the participants to retain the message heard. This means, parents should encourage their children to take note during Bible study and preaching so as to help them to reflect on the notes taken.

