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CHRISTIAN PREACHING:

A TOOL FOR DYNAMIC CHURCH GROWTH.

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CONCLUSION

The Church has the mandate to grow. The growth may be seen quantitatively as well as qualitatively. First, it must grow numerically. The church grows by increase in number as people are born or won into the church.

The church grows qualitatively. This aspect has to do with training and nurturing of new converts. The new converts are regarded as “babes in Christ” whose training and nurture should be given attention. (1 Cor.3: 1-2)

Preaching is God’s chosen way to save those who believe. Just as Kendall would say: “Preaching is God’s chosen way to save those who believe. He further said that, “Preaching is God’s word reaching man through human personality.”¹ It brings a real sense of God and of His word to the hearers. This implies that the nature of preaching is not to entertain or to entice people with wisdom of man but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. (1 Cor. 2: 4-5).

Davidson has rightly said that, “All genuine Christian preaching and teaching has its roots in Jesus’ commission (Mt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48) and is the central element of its content (Rom. 1:1-5; 1Cor. 15:1-6, 11; 2Cor. 4:5; I Tim. 2:5-7”.

Ministry in the Word (Preaching) is an action through man, from God toward men.”² In the words of Kendall, it is “God’s word reaching man through human personality.”³ It is only for those who are being specifically called into the ministry of proclamation. It is only a few among the many who are what Scripture calls ministers of the Word or public servants of Christ. The call to preach is the highest calling in the world and the highest honor that God can bestow on any man. No man can take

¹R. T. Kendall, Worshipping God (Ibadan: Scripture Union (Nig.) Press and Books Ltd, 1992), p.46.

²John Eyinnaya “The Church As A Clan: An Ecclesiology for The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria” BETFA No. 1, 2002, p.38.

³Kendall.

this honor upon himself, he must be called by God (Hebrew 5:4).

Furthermore, Christian preaching ministry like any other gifts as we could see from the Scripture Ephesians Chapter 4; is for the perfection of the saints and for the edifying of the Body of Christ – the Church. Whatever gifts of ministry God bestows on anyone is it teaching, preaching, or shepherding is to be a service to the Church of God – the saints. The service is not for a number of years but till we all attain unto the stature of a full man in Christ.

That is to say our ministry of preaching which should include winning of soul into the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, perfecting of the saints – the believers, equipping the saint for the work of the ministry, and edification of the body of Christ – the Church, will and should continue “Till we all come in to the Unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the status of the fullness of Christ”. (Eph 4:13). This shows the extent and how long our ministry (preaching) will last.

Our preaching ministry should continue until all men come to the saving knowledge of Christ and until they grow and mature to the stature of Christ. One would conclude here that it would last us till eternity that is until Christ returns to take us home. One fundamental fact here is that preaching should bring man, the saints, to perfection. But perfection is not a year’s job. It is doubtful if it is even attainable here on earth. So, it is a thing we are to contend and strive for here on earth Apostle Paul would say:

Not as though I had already attained, either was already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things, which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14).

Christian preaching therefore leads to spiritual birth, spiritual maturity, doctrinal understanding, and faithfulness in Christian living and biblical knowledge as well as

commitment to the service of our Lord.⁴ Acts 2:14-47, 4:31-37.

Every called servants of God is a gift to the body of Christ and he has to benefit the whole Church of God in his local assembly, Country and in the entire world. He is to continue ministering till Christ comes. He is to see the Church as God's flock and not man's. He is to see himself as God's gift to mankind especially the Church. Christ left us no privilege greater than to proclaim the gospel to every creature and grow him or her unto the stature of Christ. This is what the early Christians did day and night. They understood their calling. They did as Christ did. We can not afford to do less.

The person of the preacher is a vital element in effective preaching. He is expected to be a person of:

- (1) Faith (2) Passion (3) authority and (4) grace

Actually Church Growth is not cheap. Church growth is usually not automatic. It takes doing - action. The major purpose of this thesis is to help the Church growth preacher/pastor and leader, understand how they can use preaching as a tool or factor to enhance growth into its maximum in the church.

This Thesis shall be concluded in the word of Warren "A Great Commitment to the Great commandment and the Great commission will grow a Great Church"⁵

⁴Matthew Olusegun Oludare B. Th Essay, Bible Study: A Tool for Church Membership Development." Ogbomoso: N.B.T.S. June 1998, p. 40.

⁵Rick Warren -The Purpose Driven Church (Nigeria: Evangel Publication, 1995), p. 102.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Recommendations will be helpful to every minister of the gospel especially Christian Preachers and Church Growth Pastors or Leaders.

1. Christian preacher must want the church to grow and be ready to pay the price. He must be ready to sacrifice whatever it will take him to preach for the growth of the Church.
2. A church growth preacher should accept his preaching responsibility as well as his relational ones. He must preach well, relate well and live well.
3. A church growth pastor / preacher must know how to involve his people and impart his vision to them
4. Small churches that want to grow must ask themselves several probing questions such question will include: why are we small? Do we really want to grow? What must we do in order to grow? In order to succeed in doing so.⁶
5. A Church growth preacher must be a role model to both the members and non-memberships of his church.
6. A church growth pastor should be a man of vision.
7. Both the pastor and the church should look outward to identify an appropriate target group. They are to be cognizant of their spiritual needs and be ready to respond to them⁷
8. Church growth pastor should build relationship, keep persons in the foreground, let God work within them, and overcome fear and false witness

⁶John M. Koessler. "The Dynamics of small church Ministry". The Master's Seminary Journal Vol. 3 N0 2, fall 1992, pp. 185-187

⁷ Koessler. p. 189.

within himself.⁸

9. Christian preacher should contextualize the gospel among people of other religion⁹. He is to utilize whatever persuasive weapon at his disposal in order to effectively engage his congregation or targeted audience and won them for Christ.
10. Christian preacher should not “syncretism his message or to compromise its theological integrity.”¹⁰
11. Christian preacher should give a public invitation for salvation, rededication, baptism and church membership after his preaching at every service.
12. Christian preacher should always preach for growth
13. Christian or church growth preacher should follow the following five summarized suggestions of Wagner, as part of the Researcher’s recommendations.
 - a. Match your preaching to your philosophy of ministry
 - b. Use the power of the pulpit to motivate people for growth
 - c. Be positive –The gospel is good news, so make your sermons communicate good news.
 - d. Avoid controversial topics.
 - e. Preach to personal needs.¹¹

⁸.A.H. Mathias Zahniser. “ Christian Witness in a Market place of cultured Alternatives”. Missiology: An international Reviews, Vol. xxx N0 2, April 2002, p. 147.

⁹.Dean Flemming. “ Contextualizing the Gospel in Athens: Paul’s Areopagus Address as a paradigm for missionary communication” Missiology p.207

¹⁰.Flemming

¹¹.C. Peter Wagner. Leading your Church to Growth (USA: Regal Books, 1988.), pp. 215-217.

