

UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN EPHESIANS 4:1-6 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR  
CHURCHES IN SAKI AYO-IGBALA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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## ABSTRACT

This research titled “Unity of the Spirit in Ephesians 4:1-6 and its Implications for churches in Saki Ayo – Igbala Baptist Association”, applied to the teaching of Paul on the effect of the Christian’s response to God’s calling which results to unity made possible by the Holy Spirit in the Ephesians Church to solve the problems of disunity in Saki Ayo- Igbala Baptist Association. Many of the churches of the association battle with cases of disunity from the so called believers in the body of Christ. Many of the church members do not understand what it takes to be united in the bond of peace and that portrays the churches in an adverse manner within the community. A historical – exegetical approach was adopted for the study and so textual, lexical and grammatical tools were employed to analyze the verses in the text. Bible commentaries, Greek grammar textbooks, Bible and theological dictionaries and sources from internet were used in this work. Interview was used to discover peoples’ understanding of unity of the Spirit and causes of disunity in the churches. This study examined the concept of unity of the Spirit, from biblical perspectives, its dimensions via the local church and ecumenism to determine the perspectives of the term and the relevance of Ephesians 4:1-6 as applied to churches in the association in view. The study revealed that unity of the Spirit is a long plan of God which He inaugurated from the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. The purpose is to bring together in Christ all mankind that are alienated from God in order to re-establish the initial cordial relationship between God and man and among men. In the Old Testament, it was displayed in the relationship of God and His Israel. This gained fulfillment in the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ and is enacted by the Spirit of God in every genuine believer in the church. In the present era, it was viewed by many as being distorted in the church but, will be fully realized at the appearance of Christ. It was observed that disunity is common in churches in Saki like in other places too. The trait of warfare that is inherent in the Sakites gave room for pride and arrogance among them. This attitude is a threat to peaceful co-existence in the churches of the community. Paul’s teaching on unity of the Spirit in Ephesians 4:1-6 implies balancing Christian confession with practical examples in humility, patience, forgiveness, love and peace. Doing this will aid the church members to keep the unity worthily. The finding from this study calls for the recommendation that churches in Saki – Ayo Igbala should truly be born again being the pre-requisite for the Spirit and do away with attitude that thwarts the keeping of the unity of the Spirit.

## 6.2 CONCLUSION

The pre-existing unity between the divine and human was disrupted and marred by the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Since then, began an effort from the divine point of view to bring to a close the hostility that resulted from the fall. The penalty attracted was paid for by the redemptive work of salvation performed in the man-God Jesus on the cross of Calvary, and unity was brought back in the community of God (church) which was established in the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:1-47. Therefore Christians were call into a new experience of unity with God by the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ. This was taught by Paul the apostle in his epistles to churches especially, in Ephesians chapter 4 and was made to be understood as a unity

not by human ideology but, such that was made possible by the Spirit of God in the believer.

Disunity is vivid in the churches of Christ today, likewise in Saki, Ayo- Igbala Baptist Association. It was made possible though canal manifestation in the household of God. The beauty of brotherhood in the church has been disvalued by on-lookers thereby posing threats on unity, growth and manifestation of the Spirit of God in the community of faith.

As a result of these, Christian calling needs to be given an utmost consideration among the churches by all the members. Doing this, Christianity will be what it is expected to be according to the Scripture instead of mere church going. It is then that, everyone in the Church will grow into Christ in whom the believers are united back to God by the effectual working of the Spirit of God having mastered the implications listed.

### 6.3 RECOMMEDATIONS.

This work has presented Unity of the Spirit in Ephesians 4:1-6 and its implication for churches in Saki Ayo-Igbala Baptist Association. The researcher has discovered that the understanding of unity of the Spirit is meager among the churches of the association. It is through that that quality Christian living is at stake and disunity manifests through various means to disrupt the beauty of the body life. The following suggestions are presented for the understanding and keeping of unity of the Spirit in the association.

The researcher recommended that, churches in the association should be teaching churches in which the Christian calling will be expounded to believers. The reason is that it will enable them to realize their status in relation to the calling they

receive out of the world into Christ. It will also help each believer to know what life in the church is in their relationship with brethren. Believers should make sure that, unity of the Spirit is evident both with God and with their fellow believers.

It is recommended that, the full meaning of unity of the Spirit should be made known in each of the churches of the Association. This should be done through Bible exposition and reading of the church covenant should be given a good attention. The constant reading of this in the church will encourage quality Christian living.

Another recommendation is on the periodic administration of the Lord Supper. Base on the evidence of malice keeping and all sorts of bitterness that exist in the churches inn Saki Ayo; Igbala Baptist Association, the researcher suggests that, the administration of the Holy communion should come up often. It should not be attached to Baptism alone as one of the common practices or the Easter period. Doing this will consistently is a way of helping the churches to be purged of unethical behaviours toward Christian faith.

It is also recommended that, ethical demands posed by the unity of the Spirit us given a great attention in the churches of Saki, Ayo – Igbala, for it is the way forward to believers. Especially, in this end time, when the signs of Christ' coming are almost fulfilled according to the Bible. Conscious effort should be made by every individual to comport themselves in line with the expectations placed on them. Christ example of humility and lowliness of heart is very much essential and it will enable members of the church to accept one another irrespective of their cultural background and status.

The encouragement for the spirit of oneness among people should be given priority in the church circle. Every believer should not be relating with one another

base on their family tie but, the basis of relationship should be Christ Jesus affirmed in the life of each person. Adeyanju remarked that, “corporate life is a part of Africa and it cannot be easily divulged of Africans”. Yet, Christ should be incorporated in the things done by members of the churches. The Paradise provided for Christians is not made for a set of people base on earthly family relationship or cultural background but, on the ground of Jesus in the believer, is the hope of Glory.

It is furthermore recommended that, people of the association should not see the churches of Christ as their property. They are only privileged to have it founded in their locality. So, for a church to be located in ones vicinity or terrain does not make the church ones property. It is the church of God for all true believers and racial discrimination should be eschewed in order to glue brethren together. No stake holder is known in the church except God through Jesus Christ by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.

More so, the fear of losing of members to neighbourhood church through adequate screening process before granting them the membership should be overlooked. If members are not thoroughly purged at the moment of their acceptance into the fold, the church stands the risk of experiencing a break in the flow of the Spirit base on the non biblical ideology that may be infiltrated through them.