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DEVELOPING A MANUAL TO IMPROVE POOR EVANGELISM IN
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, BENIN CITY

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ROBERT OLUWAFEMI OYEMOMILARA

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ABSTRACT

The church has been said to have given little or no attention to evangelism as poor attendance characterized the outreach programme of Grace Baptist Church, Benin City, while attention has been given to a new church Auditorium. However, the researcher who is also the pastor of the church has decided to find out if developing a manual to improve poor evangelism in Grace Baptist Church, Benin will bring about a revival and a major change in the outreach programme of the church. The researcher's intention was to find out if training and encouraging members of the church to embark on evangelism through series of teaching will increase their level of participation in evangelism. Pre-test and post-test questionnaires were administered. The pre-test questionnaire has the aim of evaluating the level of knowledge the members of the church had on evangelism. The researcher went ahead to teach seven training sessions to expose members to what evangelistic church is expected to do. The lessons consisted of: how to present the good news, becoming an evangelistic church, overcoming fear in evangelism, seven principles of personal evangelism, role models in the development of evangelism, the qualities and instruments of a soul winner as well as earthly blessings and heavenly rewards of a soul winner. The congregation has about one hundred and fifty worshippers therefore, the researcher made use of one hundred members to respond to the pre-test and post-test questionnaire. After the teaching of the seven training manuals, the post-test questionnaires were also distributed and the results of the findings showed that evangelism will influence the growth of the church and that they need more training so as to be effective in it. They agreed that pastors should be ready to train their members through series of teachings on evangelism. Effective training will help to improve poor evangelism in the church and also help to overcome poor response to outreach programmes. It will also help people to know how to preach. This study has shown that lack of training contributed to poor evangelism in the church. That the Pastor emphasized prayer and church building at expense of evangelism. Also, that there was a small amount of money being allocated to evangelism in the church budget. Members of the church should be encouraged to donate generously to evangelism. Therefore, the study has the following recommendations: that training on evangelism should be a continuous exercise in every local church and good allocation should always be provided for evangelism in the budget. The evangelism committee of the church should be given job description as this will enable the team to have a focus and function effectively. Evaluation of the evangelistic activities of the church should be carried out at least twice in a year.

Conclusion

The Bible is clear on the primary task of a local church. Every church is expected to have a strong passion for evangelism. New Church Auditorium is good but such should not put evangelism to the background. The early church did not disappoint the Lord and the contemporary churches must not be complacent. No church is successful when souls are not being added to the kingdom. It is therefore vital for evangelism to be put in a proper place in every local church as the command given in Matthew 28:19-20 must be carefully embraced with passion to reach the lost. Therefore, the pastor should give evangelism more attention and the evangelism committee should be empowered through training, job descriptions and adequate budget for evangelism. The gospel must be preached so that more souls will be added to the kingdom. To fail in this area is to be a failure before Jesus, our Saviour. Evangelism is central to the spiritual and numerical

growth of the church. It should be given a proper attention so that the great commission will thrive in this contemporary days.

Recommendations

Pastors are to make effort in teaching series on evangelism. this will help to educate members of the church and as there is power in emphasis; the interest in evangelism will be developed. Pastors should not emphasize prayer at the expense of evangelism. soul winning is important to God and should be given more attention.

The church should run away from the concept that only few people are gifted in evangelism. Matthew 28:19-20 is clear on this that everyone should reach out to the lost. Therefore, there should be more emphasis on this so that some people will not be hiding under this umbrella that they are not gifted in evangelism.

Moreover, the evangelism committee of the local churches should be given job description and proper training should be given to them from time to time. Training should be well organized by local churches. Adequate budget should be given to evangelism every year. In fact, as launching or fund raising is being organized for church building project; more of such should be organized for evangelism.

Evangelism should be carried out in a creative way. Dinner evangelism may be explored as discussed in one of the teachings and churches may as well organize breakfast fellowship so as to use the avenue to proclaim the gospel. We must break from the monotonous way of reaching to the lost. Many people followed Jesus Christ because he also fed them with food.

Members of churches should be encouraged to donate generously to evangelism. Some can team up so as to sponsor mass media evangelism. Though, it is expensive but if other denominations are doing it, we can as well do better.

The church pastors should purchase gospel tracts from the book store of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. This will enhance the outreach programmes of the church. Members should be encouraged to give out tracts from time to time. This will help those who are not literate to also participate in outreach.

Evaluation should also be part of the activities of the church. This should be done on a quarterly basis as it will help in preparing better and improve where necessary. The performance of the evangelism committee of the church should be evaluated and their challenges should be well responded to. It is hereby recommended that the six stage process evaluation sheet as designed by Mark Mittelberg should be used in all local churches. This will help individual to assess level of commitment to evangelism and how to improve and carry out evangelism in a better way. (see Appendix D first lesson).