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FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST THE SPREAD OF BAPTIST WORK IN
NEMBE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This is an investigation and analysis of the missionary activities in Nembe Local Government Area, especially Baptist missionary activities. The Baptist missionary activities suffered set back because of hostilities that exists among the people. Also, it suffered set back because of lukewarm attitude of the Church members towards the mission expansion. Therefore, it can be said with certainty that the factors militating against the spread of Baptist work in Nembe is both internal and external.

This formed the basis for this study to find out some reasons for inability of Baptist work to expand. These include Language problem. Lukewarm attitude of members towards evangelism, lack of new skills on trained and untrained leaders.

The result shows that pastors and members do not go out for evangelism. Poverty is staring the people on their faces. The fear of the militants and marginalization among others are the problems be deviling the area.

5.3. CONCLUSION

Conclusively every Baptist Church member is of great significance in mission work in Nembe Local Government Area. Consequent upon this investigation the following could be deduced: the care-free attitude of Baptist members about evangelism should be addressed at various levels in the church. There should be proper awareness and adequate knowledge on mission activities so that it will boost the morale of Baptist family. Every church member should be involved in the mission work in the area. The Church as well as members should plant other churches and grow them. It is be well understood that members are saved to serve Baptist Church members should understand that they have to make impact in the growth of churches in the area if they will fulfill the great commission as recorded in Mathew 28:19-20.

Baptist mission work in Nembe should be carried out within the atmosphere of love and patience. The Baptist Church members should plan to meet up with the challenges in these areas so as to enable Baptist work to grow and extend to all the nook and cranny of Nembe Local Government Area. The Baptist Church members should be aware of the fact that they are in Nembe-land to carry out certain functions to the glory and honour of God and that evangelism is one of them.

Every Baptist Church that has existed beyond seven or eight years should plant another church. Baptist church members should encourage one another in planting of churches within Nembe Local Government Area. This will tremendously help the Baptist missionary activities in expansion.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Having observed the Baptist Missionary activities in the Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State which can be referred to as barren, the researcher hereby makes the following recommendations to correct the poor performance of Baptist Missionary activities.

Baptist family is the closest people to the indigenous people especially Nembe (Bassambiri). The Baptist Church which is regarded as the community Church should take advantage of this position to penetrate into the hearts of the people and other communities. Presently the Church is operating a group of Schools that is from Nursery to S.S.S. But the Church can go a step further into areas such as Social Ministry, Ministry to the single again or single parents, etc. The Local Church is also encouraged to bring others to Christ. The Church has failed in this regard and has abandoned her mission work, which has brought low of Baptist Work.

Therefore, the Baptist family should consider these recommendations and put them into practice:

1. Prayer and fasting. These are for the tools for any existing Church to grow, a prayer less Church is a powerless Church.
2. Teaching is a key factor at any level of life. They should be taught on new methods of Outreach in Nembe Local Government Area which include

children ministry or operation catch them young. Also national youth corp. member can be involved in the propagation of the gospel.

3. The Church members should be encouraged to give for mission, and the Church should judiciously spend the money. Baptists who are natives but in Diaspora should also be involved. That is Baptist at home and Baptists in Diaspora should partner in propagating the gospel.
4. Commitment to Christ is a vital key in any growing Church; the Church members should be committed to the service of the Lord.
5. Learning the acceptable language: Language is a powerful, so to bridge the gap of communication the language of the indigenous people should be learnt.
6. Baptist family should understand the culture of the people they live with, and they should respect the people's culture as a means of evangelizing them.
7. Baptist family should understand that they are very important in God's hand and they will one day give account of their stewardship to God.

One of the findings of this research is the lackadaisical attitudes of some of the pioneer pastors and that the Church members show little or no interest on mission work. The pastors should therefore put the following recommendations into practice:

1. The pastor should know that he will definitely give account of his ministry.
2. The pastor should develop new skills based on the area and teach members on how to win people for Christ.
3. The pastor should be able to link both Old and New Testament missionary activities as basis for the contemporary Church.
4. The pastor should encourage the lay people to participate in the extension of Christ's Kingdom.
5. The pastor should discover the gifted ones and train them for the ministry.

6. The pastor should go for out-reach with the Church members.
7. The pastor should allow the members to have their own input on mission work without prejudice or bias mind.
8. The pastor should organize discipleship programme to enable the members develop their spiritual gifts.

Other findings in this research are:

1. Lack of roads. The government and the oil companies in the area should partner and provide good and motor able road for the people.
2. Energy (electricity) the federal government should provide light for the people.
3. Free Education. A federal Polytechnic and other technical institutions should be established in Nembe to train middle level manpower. Every student of oil producing community in Nembe should be given scholarship to study as this will attract many to school, thereby reducing the number of idle youths in the towns and villages within Nembe Local Government Area.
4. Amnesty should be well monitored. The political will to issue a blanket pardon to all armed youths will convey a sense of illegal security to the youths.

They require the confidence that they can disarm in safety. But at this time the government must demonstrate a single minded readiness to incorporate everybody and every opinion in its development intensions for the people. Militants' elements must be persuaded to understand that the objectives of this democratic forum would be better served by contributions from a demobilized representation.

After granting amnesty, demobilization should follow. At this stage, the demilitarization of militants would voluntarily be carried out by militants and within a government specified time frame. Again, in order to engage the minds of demobilized youth an attractive but pragmatic programme of training and development should be established to absorb those that have fully disengaged from military action.

The militants should be rehabilitated. This will involve both physical and psychological dimensions; rehabilitation efforts should be geared towards the re-orientation of former militants who have disengaged to live normal lives among members of the society. Thorough implementations of this phase in the whole peace programme would require the expertise of qualified social workers.

Weekly workshop should be organized with a view to disabusing their minds of the Old ways of thinking. There should be a systematic and deliberate introduction of new, useful and respectable ways of livelihood. These programmes which should be all-embracing must be designed to accommodate the participation of every unemployed youth, denounced militant or not. Towards the end of this rehabilitation programme, those educationally disadvantaged ought to be given the opportunity to rediscover formal education.