

**AN EVALUATION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMME
OF THE SALEM GOSPEL MISSION INTERNATIONAL**

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**A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Education In
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
Ogbomosho, Nigeria**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of
Master of Theology in Religious Education**

By

Timothy Kennedy Otefisan

June, 2003

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the Sunday School programme in Salem Gospel Mission International. The study also appraised involvement of the churches in Oyo District in Sunday School, Weekday Bible Study, Church Training and Vacation Bible School. The purpose of this study is in making the churches in Salem Gospel Mission International fulfill the task of ministering to adults through Oyo District which is already a pace-setter.

The research was carried out in thirteen churches in Oyo District. The researcher gives the analysis of the report of his survey shown by tables, and in percentages. It was discovered during the research that only the Sunday Schools that meet on Sundays and had weekly Bible study are maintained. The Church Training and Vacation Bible School showed downward trends. The Sunday School as the main core of nurturing believers has an increase in membership annually according to ten years enrolment compiled.

The findings from the research revealed that the adults were well informed about the objectives and goals of the Sunday School. About 80% of the churches in Oyo District have organized and graded Sunday School Departments with an enrolment of seventy-eight (78) church workers in 2000. There is enough space for classes. But it is disheartening that the District has no Minister of Education or Coordinator. Sunday School Rally was not properly organized.

The following are the recommendations for further improvement. First, there should be recruitment of church workers and teachers in every local church. Secondly, every church minister should pay more attention to Vacation Bible School. Third, the local churches should reactivate the

activities of the Church Training and Sunday School Rally. Fourth, every local church should introduce visitation team into the activities of the Sunday School. Fifth, every local church should revisit with enthusiasm the problem of Sunday School workers' monthly meeting. Sixth, the District should engage a Minister of Education who will plan for other educational activities. Seventh, the District should work in cooperation with the Convention of Salem Gospel Mission International to plan for annual workers' conference and workshop in order to update and upgrade the church workers.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the study reveal that adult Sunday School in Oyo District is very effective considering its objectives and goals, Curriculum, Administration and organization. With regards to personnel – recruitment, training and enlistment, there is also a huge improvement annually. The research also reveals the spiritual growth of the members. Membership enrolment in the Sunday School is on the increase every year. This shows that the Sunday School serves as an arm of evangelism for the Church. However, irregularities were discovered in the Church Training, Vacation Bible School and Workers' training and enlistment.

Vacation Bible School that is properly conducted to win new members, discovers new teachers, develops and makes the members efficient.⁴ The values of Vacation Bible School like an outreach to the community, increase in time and development of potential leaders would be endangered. A variety of learning experiences that occur in Vacation Bible School like Bible stories, Mission talk, and recreational activities which improve membership interaction, and fellowship would be discouraged. This of course, would definitely affect the spiritual and dynamic growth of the adults.

³Interview with Julius Olusegun Adebayo, Salem Gospel Mission International, Felele. Ibadan, 7 December 2002.

⁴Homer L. Grice, The Daily Vacation Bible School Guide (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1926), p. 50.

Similarly, Church Training helps in training church members, develops them, leads in evangelism, and helps in creating awareness of on-going events in the environment.⁵ The absence of more purposeful Vacation Bible School and Church Training in some churches in the District will hinder the leading of the adults to live more dedicated lives. This will also impede the contribution of adults in their stewardship of time, talents, and will totally to Christ. The non-involvement of some churches in Church Training and Vacation Bible School will definitely tamper with the objectives of the Church in bringing people to Christ for salvation. It will also hamper the Church in nurturing the adults, building them up for sanctification, and leading them into maturity (Ephesians 4:15).

The Church's concern over the failure and inability of some members to attend the Sunday School should be followed by visits to their homes. The reason may be illness, opposition in the family, discouragement because of the loss of employment, or any one of a number of reasons. It is important to reach people for the Sunday School and the Church as it is important to hold them. In Matthew 25:36, the Lord Jesus promises a special blessing upon certain ones because they had visited Him in His need – "I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." The Church who will minister effectively to the needs of its community will profit immeasurably by spending time in the homes of the members. Visitation also opens up magnificent opportunities of witness to the

⁵Ayandokun, p. 39.

saving Gospel of Christ.⁶ Lack of visitation team will hinder a warm and positive witness for Christ as visitation is one avenue for Sunday School outreach.⁷

The key to an educational programme is the worker. The quality of the programme in any Sunday School will be determined largely by the quality of the workers. Sunday School workers occupy places of responsibility and leadership in the Church. They determine the quality and standard of teaching. It is correct to say that it requires intelligent, consecrated, energetic workers to build a great Sunday School. It is of importance that Sunday School workers know the Bible, how to teach and the general working knowledge of Sunday School administration.

These workers do not just naturally know their work and how to do it unless they are properly trained and enlisted. However, irregularities in enlistment, training and development of workers will jeopardize the vision and desire for the betterment of the Sunday School and increase of its spiritual ministry. The inability to train personnel would serve as a barrier in discovering teachers with the ability to become teachers of teachers and those who would be developed and committed for God's mighty work.⁸

In this regard, irregularities in workers' training can set up one or more obstacles in the way of the adults' growth in understanding of the word and

⁶Homer A. Kent, The Pastor and His Work (Chicago: Moody press, 1963), pp. 250-259.

⁷Ernest Hollaway and James Fitch, comp., Working With Adults in Sunday School (Nashville: Convention Press, 1974), pp. 85-87.

⁸Arthur Flake, Building a Standard Sunday School (Nashville: Convention Press, 1922), pp. 124-128.

