

DISCIPLESHIP: A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE MISSIONS IN SELECTED  
CHURCHES OF BETHEL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OGBOMOSO

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## ABSTRACT

Discipleship is a spiritual and physical reproduction of the model of Jesus Christ Jesus, the model discipler came to the world invested and reproduced his life in the lives of twelve disciples who were faithful, available and teachable. After Jesus had completed his task of equipping these disciples, he gave them the great commission that they should, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations" Matt 28:19. This is a divine mandate that must be carried out by the disciples as a sign of loyalty and obedience to their master. The result of the first disciples obedience to their master Jesus gave birth to the present generation of believers, in Christ Jesus who had the right perceptions to the mandate given to them. Hence the making of disciples has become the mission of the church. The purpose of this research is to examine the meaning and contributions of discipleship to the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. It will also be a critical analysis of different approaches used in the early and contemporary churches with a view to correcting abnormalities in discipleship of the Nigerian Baptist convention for better output. The researcher seeks to discuss some strategies in Christian missions using discipleship as a tool for effective missions. This study will be of great benefits to the churches in Ogbomoso Bethel Baptist Association. It will serve as an evaluation of the role of discipleship in Christian missions. It will also be of benefits to leaders and lay-workers in churches. It will remind church leaders and workers the indispensable nature of discipleship as a programme and lifestyle, if effective mission will be achieved in and outside the churches. Similarly the study will be of great benefits to mission students in The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso as a resource material to learn from in preparation for their practical ministry. The primary research method for this study was the use of questionnaire from which informations were gathered. In addition to this was the use of library materials such as books dictionaries articles in academic Journal e.t.c. The questionnaire were randomly distributed among the selected churches of Bethel Baptist Association Ogbomoso. Basically two types of questionnaire were constructed. One for the church pastors and the second for the lay leaders church members. From the population sampled in Ogbomoso Bethel Baptist Association high percentages of respondents strongly agreed and agreed to all research questions while negligible percentages were neutral. The perception (vision) of someone should affect his or her missions. This implies that if church members have a right perception toward discipleship, it should influence their driving force for mission activities. Therefore effective discipleship should be based on proper planning, persistent prayer and purposeful publicity under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. For any individual to be enroll in discipleship, the genuiness of his or her salvation should be ascertained. There are lot of people passing through this programme without being born- again. They end up tarnishing their names and that of the church of Jesus Christ like Judas Iscariot (John 13:10). Further more, for a discipleship programme to be affective the personality or the facitator's lifestyle is very important Paul instructed Timothy to imitate him, so also it is required of a disciple to live according to what the discipler is teaching and practicing.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The great benefits of discipleship in the life of a growing Christian is best experienced much more than describing it. Discipleship makes Christians to be brighter, more clever and stronger and more righteous. Discipleship can mould them into people with a supernatural tenderness and limitless, clarity for others as well as turning the metallic hardness of their nature into gentle love. Effective discipleship is Jesus Christ living His life in a man as he radiates God's love to others by sharing the love of Christ.

Discipleship is God's method of raising men. He may choose to raise a disciple directly by Himself or use human vessels (more, matured disciples) as His delegated authority to make disciples for Him. Joshua and Timothy were examples of such disciples raised by men chosen by God. They humbled and denied themselves of their personal ambitions and families in order to become servants of God so that God's purposes for their lives might be fulfilled. Fulfillment can only be found in the lives of disciples of Jesus who are busy in the task of the Great Commission.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

An effective discipleship should be based on proper planning, persistent prayer and purposeful publicity under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for any individual to be



enroll in discipleship, the genuineness of his or her salvation should be ascertained. There are lot of people passing through this programme without being born-again. They end-up tarnishing their names and that of the church of Jesus Christ like Judas Iscariot (John 13:10).

Furthermore, for a discipleship programme to be effective the personality or the facilitator's lifestyle is very important. Paul instructed Timothy to imitate him, so also it is required of a disciple to live according to what his discipler/facilitator is teaching. To teach an ideal Christian way of living, the disciple will be able to learn better when he sees the discipler/facilitator living out what he teaches. But if the life of the discipler/facilitator is contrary to his teachings, no matter how eloquent he is, there cannot be effective discipleship.

Discipleship is only effective in the context of the environment. For instance, a pastor can also disciple other persons in church when those to be disciple know how he relates at home with his family and others in the vicinity. Similarly a teacher can only be an effective discipler if his life is exemplary to his students and colleague at workplace.

Finally a facilitator needs to pray fervently before enrolling converts into his class, so to enroll the right kind of people. The discipler should demonstrate evangelism to his disciples in the process of passing through the course. The age difference of the members of a group should not be too wide. This will encourage their common interests in discussions.