

**EVALUATION OF MODERN EVANGELIZATION
STRATEGIES IN CHRISTIANITY: 1990-2010**

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TITLE PAGE

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MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN RELIGION**

SUPERVISOR: REV. FR. DR. ACHUNIKE H. C.

APPROVAL PAGE

This research work has been approved by the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka as meeting the requirements for the award of Master of Arts Degree (M.A) in Religion.

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Udeolisa Urewuchi E. is a postgraduate student of the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. With Registration Number PG/MA/08/50239 and has satisfactorily completed all the requirements for the course and research work for the award of Master of Art (MA/Degree in Religion).

The work embodied in this project report is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any other diploma or degree of this or any other University.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the propagator of my value for education; my father
Ugwunna Cyril Okoroji

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I sincerely express my gratitude to my supervisor Rev. Fr. Dr. Achunike H.C. under whose constructive advice and encouragement saw to the successful execution of this project work.

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Udeolisa Urewuchi E.

ABSTRACT

Evangelization was the mark of bedrock for Christianity; as Jesus gave it as the great commission to his apostles. It has thrived to the modern era trying to survive the complexity of societal values. Hence various evangelization strategies to suit the demand of the modern era are in vogue. This research work presents how evangelization originated and came to be part of religious practices among the Igbo through the propagated effort of European missionaries who established Christianity in Igboland. With the trend of development; independence, Nigeria-Biafra civil war and the demands of the modern era of science and technological advancement, evangelization took a new turn. The modern gadgets such as the internet, television, discs, prints etc, have formed avenues for the evangelists, pastors and the lay people to preach the Gospel to the people. The Pentecostals led the blaze of this radical approach to evangelization and the Mainline Churches joined the trend. The methods used for this research work include making use of: primary and secondary sources; the library; interviews and observations; crusades and revival centres; internet materials; television and radio stations and; Priests and Evangelists were consulted. Data was critically analyzed and it was found out that converts were made into Christianity through this evangelization strategies. Some Churches organize crusade not for any financial benefit but solely for spiritual development of the people, while others have financial benefit attached to their crusade organisation. The hallmark of the evangelization of the recent time has been to address peoples' problems, while the people troop to the Churches and their organisations in search of solution to their problems. This situation has resulted into proliferation of Churches as a means of taking care of peoples' problems. Wealth and prosperity has become the acceptable attribute of God for modern Christians. Antagonism has continued between the Christian denominations, while prayers are turned into battle fields with the devil.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Christian evangelization has spread through the face of the earth. This is made possible by the aid of relevant strategies that appealed to the converts. The methods adopted vary from era to era. But all aim at evangelization of the people.

Evangelization is the effort made by the Christians to preach the words of God to others for the purpose of converting them to Christian faith or to inspire other Christians to uphold and maintain their faith. Strategy is the method adopted to ensure successful evangelization.

Evangelization in Christianity can be traced to the time of Jesus Christ when he sent out the disciples instructing them on what to do and how to do it. On his resurrection from death Mt 28:18-20, Mk16; 15, Jesus gave the disciples the great commission – to preach the gospel to all the ends of the world. So from inception, Christianity has been made to spread and survive through evangelization. Wikipedia (2010) noted that:

Through history, Christians have used many different approaches to spread Christianity via practice of evangelism. Christianity began with only a few different evangelical approaches, but over the years many different forms of evangelical approaches have been employed by various groups to spread the faith (n.p).

This evangelization is not be haphazard but follows a laid down pattern and bears a target. This is why it undertakes the preaching of the gospel by using relevant strategies.

Born in to the era when writing technology has come into existence, the early Christians embarked on the use of writing to enhance and spread the gospel; hence St. Paul's letters, St Peter's letters, St. John's letters, the apologists etc. Withstanding the face of persecution formed a very strong strategy in the era of persecution. To this Renwick (1977) stated that "in 180 AD, there appears on the page of history a strong vigorous church with its members suffering martyrdom fearlessly in the remote communities of Madura and Scilla. Tertullian Cyprian and Augustine, were all member of the church and left an indelible impression on the ages which came after them" (p.39). Those who valiantly lost their lives were declared martyrs; a title which inspired solid faithfulness to proclamation of membership to Christendom. Hence Tertullian declared that the blood of the martyr is the seed of Christianity (Ferguson, 1973:20).

The era of Christian revival saw another phase of evangelization. Radical evangelism which challenged the ritualistic worship of the Church, swept through Europe and America. Wikipedia (2011), stated that "many Christian revivals drew inspiration from the missionary work of the early Monks." This Christian revival era of 17th-18th centuries brought Christianity to the slaves and their work of evangelism challenged established authority in the Church. John

Wesley's preaching inspired a great revival in the Church of England which emphasized individual conversion and justification by faith that led them to be called evangelicals (Keen, 2011:np). The evangelization of this era incited rancor and division between the old traditionalists who insisted on ritual and doctrine and the new revivalists. This evangelistic style breathed new life into Christianity and people became passionately involved in their religion. The traditionalists were regarded as "Old Lights", while the revivalists ministers were known as "New Lights". As time went on, there was increasing desire to take the Gospel to where it has not been heard.

The arrival of Christianity to West African adopted many strategies to achieve its purpose its purpose of establishing Christianity in West Africa. Such strategies include schools, catechism, medical services, mission community, churches, welfare services, etc. These strategies met the demands of the time and yielded success especially in the era of 19th to 20th centuries. Though there seemed not to be a deep-rooted conversion, as many hankered over what they were to gain from the white man. They looked for such gains like freedom from oppression, welfare services, medical attention etc.

The response differed between individuals and communities as well. Achunike (2002) stated that "modes of reception however were varied from one community to another. One community could be enthusiastic in their reception of Christianity while others would be reluctant. But the important

fact is that the Igbo were Christianized” (p.5). The missionaries succeeded in planting Christianity in Igboland via the methods adopted.

As time went on, events of the time took shape to the realities of the moment and so did Christianity. The growing complexity of the society made new demands on the activities that surround man’s live. At independence, the indigenous nationalist who felt there was need for reformation from the suppression of the white man embarked on clarion call on all. The missionaries and colonialists were seen to be complimentary ally. Hence Omenka (2005) stated that:

a new beginning took form in the 19th century not only in the emancipation of slaves. A humanitarian gesture that was spearheaded by the evangelicals but also in the re-appraisal of the overall mission theories and methods to include the provision of a peaceful and stable environment on which the Christian message could grow. This in turn led to a mutually complimentary union between Christianity, commerce and colonialism (p.35-36).

The racism of the white men gave rise to the realization of the segregative and exploitative attitude of the white men. The desire for native church became apparent and mere preaching on revival of the cultural tenets encouraged people to join the independent churches among other spiritual reasons. The independent churches like the Aladura started operating in full force and their strategy of miracles and visions attracted many convents.

The Nigeria-Biafra war created a boom for the independent churches who claim to offer solution to the problems of the war-torn Igbo through miracles. Ojo (2010) enumerated the line of origin of the various churches in Nigeria, of

which the mainline churches were the earliest. The Aladura came up later while the Pentecostals and the charismatic movements are the most recent (p.3). These churches as they are found in Nigeria constitute the breeds of Christianity in Igboland.

The Nigeria-Biafra war just like any other war infested the nation and most especially Biafra with the usual ravaging characteristics of war torn area. The people were confronted with a lot of social, religious, psychological, political and economic problems which were yearning for attention or solution. Anything that seems to alleviate the hopeless situation was most warmly welcome. Should there be any side effect; it was not the consideration of the people in desperation.

The effect of Nigeria-Biafra war created avenue for many “fraudulent and counterfeit” solution to issues and experiences such as fake prayer houses, visionaries etc, in the society and in the church. Madiebo (1980) expressed the hopeless situation when he wrote mentioning the opinion of the different meetings of different leaders who advised that the war should be stopped. Their suggestion was born out of the consideration of the level of humiliating agony the people were passing through (p.369). The people were saddled with the problem of rehabilitation, and especially in urgency. They paid no attention to values and standards for such solutions. The orthodox churches seemed not to provide the desired answer to the immediate problem which they felt must be given urgent attention. Hence the Aladura, prayer houses and the Pentecostals

traded their unique capacity to draw down the power of the divine which is an affiliation of the nature of Africans, so it thrived well. Ojo (2010), identified that “in the 1970’s Pentecostals directed their teaching to the transformation of the individual. The most noticeable of these changes is in the emphasis on healing” (p.41). Many people who equally needed the rehabilitation took to opening of prayer houses, not for sincere religious service to the people, but as a way of alleviating their problems too, as people will contribute to the prayer houses. The true situation and the later consequential instances were hidden under the platform of attending to the immediate confusion and problem created by the war. The war-torn people were unaware of the rearing head of the dangers thereof.

Fundamentalists’ type of Christian evangelism arose from among the Pentecostals to tackle the rather seeming liberal teaching of the Orthodox churches. The Orthodox were seen by the Pentecostals as weak to the realities of the moment and fundamental to the inability of Christians to harness their capabilities. Therefore, they arose to stop the acclaimed derailing of the church and to protect the Christian faith and the biblical teachings. Hence they engaged in radical evangelism to keep to the teaching of the Bible without compromise. They can be referred to as fanatical or conservative Christians. These were found among the Pentecostals. According to Synan (1988):

the name fundamentalist connotes conservatism or rigid observance of religious doctrines. Evangelical fundamentalism arose as a reaction to the liberal

teachings of the 19th century higher critics and subsequent movement known as 'modernism'. Fundamentalists saw themselves as defenders of Orthodox Christianity against other evangelicals who were attempting to accommodate faith to the realities of modern world (p.325).

Their radicalism in evangelism is portrayed in the use of evil and good in solving what happens on earth. Hence the evil must be attacked as it is from the devil, making their evangelism appear warlike. The insistence on purity of faith and conduct portrays the Nigeria Pentecostals as fundamentalism Okorochoa (1987) stated that:

Pentecostals in a radical biblical literalism, combine the moral austerity of early Christian pietism with millennialism and exuberance of modern Pentecostals, but seek to anchor all these in a strict Biblicism which reminds us of the European pre-reformation humanist (p.274).

The situation of evangelization in recent time has grown out of the development from war effect. The mode and the strategy reflect and promote the prevalent issues of the society. Capitalizing on the economic, political, and social conditions of the people, it has been possible for the Christians of the moment to appeal to the conscience of the people through promises of miracles in order to address their problems. Hence the various tags of crusades and revivals such as miracle basket, prosperity and wealth crusades etc. Evangelization is seen and taken as a means to approach the people to bring them closer to God through Christ Jesus. Hence with the advancement in technology and social taste of the people, the evangelists and other brands of Christians engage various strategies not only to convert people to Christianity,

but to bring them over to their own church, as well as to ensure that they do not lose the faith engraved in the converts. These modern strategies include music, television, radio, the internet, telephone, open air crusades and revivals, preaching in the vehicles etc. It is deemed pertinent by the researcher to engage in an evaluation of these evangelization strategies used by the Christians in this modern era.

Statement of Problem

Evangelization as part and parcel of Christianity has yielded the spread of Christianity to the ends of the earth. The process in some cases is slow while in others sporadic. Murphy (2010) suggested that:

with long historical roots, church historians and scholars will agree that one of the reasons why Christianity grew fast and wide in Roman Empire was because of their charitable works. Emperor Justinian saw that the church was not only taking care of their own but also serving the needs of those outside their faith community. He recognizes that this was the reason so many were leaving paganism to join this new faith and demanded that his priests follow suit (n. p).

The missionaries who brought Christianity to Igboland converted some people through evangelization.

Evangelization took a new turn with the civil war event. In answer to the hopeless situation of the war-torn people, many prophets, healers, visionaries came into existence. Evangelization took a sporadic turn. As a seeming solution to the problem of the time, the people trooped to crusade grounds, prayer houses, healing homes etc. These strategies for spreading the word of

God, spearheaded by the Pentecostals bears with it some strength and weaknesses. As stated by the Vladimir, (2010), “no single strategy is perfect. There are strengths and weaknesses in each strategy and each should be looked at equally”.

With the advent of time, complexity of man and technological advancement, evangelization strategies have grown to various levels; all in an attempt to win souls for Christ. But in reality there is hardly anyone who does not claim to be a Christian among the Igbo. Yet evangelization still hits strong in the Igbo vicinity; stirring in various forms, using various strategies such as television, radio, the internet, crusade, music, prayer-meetings, preaching in the vehicles etc. There are peak periods for such evangelization strategies as crusade, revivals, television and radio; which conducted are during festive periods, like Easter and Christmas. Miracles are claimed to have taken place in many instances. People are encouraged to over their various churches. Repentance and reconciliation to God are preached and good live and things are promised to those who accept Christ. Though some people appear to have received the impact of the salvation message of the evangelization, yet there does not seem to be much impact created on the moral and religious lives of the people. Corruption and immoral behaviours such as bribery, cheating, dishonesty, kidnapping, robbery, materialism and many more, are ravaging the society. Yet on daily basis like the struggle for the survival of the fittest, the evangelists, the priest, and the lay people make use of the radio, television, the

prints, internet, music, street preaching and many other forms of evangelization strategies to address the people, hopefully to bring them to repentance and salvation. It does not seem enough to just watch and admire them but it is necessary to study these strategies, evaluate them and how they are being used, to determine the relevance and weakness, and provide necessary suggestions for its improvement. The problem of this study thus stated is therefore the evaluation of these modern evangelization strategies in Christianity to ascertain their status.

Aims of the Study

The Igbo are religious and their lives and activities have religious inclinations. Leonard quoted in Achunike (2002) saw the Igbo as truly and deeply religious people who eat, drink, dress religiously. He pointed out that their religion is their existence and their existence is their religion (p.5). Their background has affected them tremendously in their new found faith that they almost trade on it. Like wildfire the Christian faith is pursued with all vigour, taking over all spheres of existence of Igbo. As days go by, new strategies evolve, all in the name of evangelization of the gospel. The complexity of man does not permit one to ascertain by mere observation the true position of the acclaimed evangelization through these strategies. The study therefore aims at:

1. locating how evangelization came to be a phenomenon among the Igbo;
2. enumerating the modern evangelization strategies;

3. examining the use and relevance of these evangelization strategies in Igbo society;
4. presenting the outcome of the findings.
5. making the necessary recommendations from the findings.

Scope of the Study

The scope covers the content which is evaluation of the evangelization strategies in Christianity. The geographical location is Igboland. Achunike (2002) identified eight cultural areas of subdivision of Igboland of which the Igbo-central is subdivided into three to make up the cultural units to ten (p.2). The researcher wishes to concentrate on Igbo-central I which is made up of Owerri, Mbaitoli, Ikeduru, Mbano and parts of Mbaise. Owerri, especially Emekuku, which was one of the earliest towns to receive Christianity of the Mainline churches before it got to Mbano and Ikeduru. Though the war effects got to all parts of Igboland, the people of Mbano never left their homes as refugees but their land turned into refugee camp. Could these have effect on the use of modern strategies for evangelization? The development of the use of evangelization strategies will be traced in this area to the prevalent situation.

Significance of the Study

The study when concluded will expose the various methods used in evangelizing the common man.

The masses will realize and appreciate the need for proper evangelization for the development of Christian faith. The study will bring to the knowledge of the people, the intricacies involved in the modern evangelization strategies. It will expose the direction of Christianity in Igbo society. It will enable the just man to re-direct his steps. It can lead to a check on the incessant denominational prostitution. It will serve as a guide to those in authority to put a check to the activities of fraudulent pastors and prophets.

Limitations of Study

The study will be limited to a particular culture area so as to make the research through. By the time the research is concluded further limitations encountered will be enumerated.

Methodology

The researcher consulted the library to utilize the literature; primary and secondary sources were used. Priests, some evangelists, and radio – television stations were consulted. Crusade, revival and prayer centres were visited and necessary critical observations and interviews were made. Internet materials were used. Data collected were analyzed, comparing them to ascertain the facts. The researcher applied as much objectivity and critical thinking as possible.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Related literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings:

The meaning of evangelism and evangelization strategies

The importance of evangelization to Christianity

The use of modern evangelization strategies

The Meaning of Evangelism and Evangelization Strategies

Christianity has spread to many parts of the world. This is made possible by the process of evangelization. People are converted into the Christian the faith from various cultural perspectives and beliefs through various efforts of Christians to get people into their belief of salvation through Christ Jesus. Nwabude (2008), defined evangelism as ‘the teaching mission of the Church by which she brings the Gospel message to non-believers and the non-baptized in the world, which Christ Jesus, the Lord and Saviour mandated her to do through the Apostles” (p.89). In the real sense of it, Nwabude’s definition is right. Evangelism is meant to bring in the non-believers to share in the salvation event of Christianity. But today it has grown to include in its services, the re-conversion of Christians from one denomination to any of the numerous Christian denominations. Nwabude’s definition though recent seems to loose grip of the modern reality in the trend of evangelization of the time.

A contemporary author, Achunike (2002), in discussing the Scripture Union (SU) evangelization trend, pointed out the bringing together of some Christians from different denominations. This created a new phase of evangelization. They coined the word 'Repent or You Perish', 'Are you Born Again?' and 'Are you Saved?' (p.58). Achunike pointed out that they were tagged 'Born-Again' Christians. This indicates a new system in evangelization which aims not only at converting non-Christians but also converting even Christians to a new form of Christianity. These modern preachers further claim that why they convert fellow Christians is because they are deepening the understanding of Christian faith which they believe is a more efficient way to worship God- 'The Born Again Christians'. Defining evangelism webmaster (2010) stated that "it is preaching, spreading the word, spreading the gospel, telling the gospel message. Evangelism can be seen as potentially threatening for other faith communities" (n.p). Evangelism, seen as a threat to other faiths, has spurred in them the desire to improve and stand the test of time. It gingers in other faiths as well the urge to out-smart other groups; the threatening group inclusive. It is therefore an agent of growth and development of the church from all its angles. This implies that evangelization though it is the duty of converting people to Christian faith, it has grown in bounds. The audionet (2011) defined evangelism as "zealous preaching and advocacy of the gospel" (n.p). This definition portrays evangelization as a duty carried out by the use of

words of the mouth. Heidelberg (2010) stated that “evangelism is a labour of love, but there are those who would exploit that love” (n.p).

Evangelization Strategies are the styles used by the Christians to spread the Gospel. Reid (2005) explained that “evangelistic methods refer to those approaches or techniques that present the timeless gospel to a given culture. Although the biblical principles and the essential message must be constant, methods must be changed to reach various cultures and eras in history” (n.p). It differs with the demand of time, cultural practices, the Evangelist and the occasion.

The Importance of Evangelization to Christianity

By the virtue of its meaning which involves spreading the gospel to people, its importance to Christianity cannot be over emphasized. According to Ojo (2010), “Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have been noted to be the fastest growing segment of Christian group since the 1980s” (p.10). The Pentecostals in the contemporary era are known for their serious evangelistic effort in spreading the gospel and converting people to Pentecostal Christianity. This has led to the growth of the church in that section. Ojo (2010) further stated that “the spatial expansion of Pentecostalism deserves some critical attention to appreciate some of the profound changes in the Nigerian society since the end of the civil war” (p.10). Evangelization which has led to the growth of the church, has consequently affected the society as

well. The tool with which Christianity got to the Igbo is evangelization; preaching the gospel to the people. Therefore, the survival, growth, stability, and other achievements of Christianity have been out of evangelistic efforts. Other religions seem not to have suffered the level of attack and humiliation as experienced by the Christians. Yet rather than dwindle; Christianity bubbles in strength and records various successes, survival, and developments amidst the ill-fated encounter. Christianity thrives and grows even in oppressed situations. This could be why Tertullian noted that the blood of the Martyr is the seed of the church. This is rightly attributed to solid foundation created in the converts by the evangelists of different calibers. Martyrdom and the promises of paradise to the faithful ones preached by the evangelists, ignited people in the persecution era of 1st -3rd centuries to keep to their faith even unto death.

Those who ran away from persecution though they held to their faith, engaged in preaching to those they met wherever they ran to. For instance, with the persecution going on in Graeco-Roman world, the Christians who went to Ethiopia were welcome by the Axumite king and he allowed them to build small gathering houses where they met. In this way Christianity started in Ethiopia though in an unorganized form (Bairu, 1973:28). Bairu (1973), further stated that, the nine eminent Monks fled the persecution in Egypt with the followers in 502 AD. They came to Ethiopia and with their eager missionary activity and piety in Ethiopia spread the Gospel among the Axum. Thompson (1973), stated that “it is on record that the alleged foundation of the Church in

Alexandria was laid by Mark, one of the apostles of Christ (p.5). In the process they made converts and Christian faith is planted. In this case the evangelists put into consideration the people's set of value in order to achieve formidable foundation for the converts. Eg the Axium in Ethiopia.

Obadare (2006) identified that the evangelization strategies of the Charismatics have led to their growth such that by the 1990s, Charismatic Movements achieved much social respectability as the political elites began to fraternize with Pentecostal churches (p.665). Christian evangelization has been able to pierce through the bars of the politicians in Nigeria. Though it has not made the politicians to be reckoned on as God-fearing, but it has made them to realize the place of Christianity for social acceptance. Christianity in Igboland has grown in ranks and file as a result of fierce evangelization embarked upon by the Christians of contemporary era. Traditional religion seems to be going out of existence. The churches are visible in various cities and villages in Igboland. The Christians evangelize every day in various places; the streets, in vehicles, schools, in churches, homes etc. This effort of theirs is never in vain. Many are converted and some are even re-converted to different denominations. Reformation of churches and improvement of church doctrines, liturgy, polity and various aspects took their root from evangelization. For instance, the evangelization strategies adopted by the Pentecostal Churches posed a challenge to the mainline churches that they had

to wake up to challenges of the time and be in line with the trend of events.

Achunike (2004), noted that:

Pentecostals are making waves and winning converts by the day is to state the obvious. The rank and file of the mainline churches are disturbed...The implosion of Pentecostalism as Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria (CCRN), provoked the publishing of Guidelines for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria. However, Pentecostalism has influenced not only the laity but also the priest (p5-6).

He further cited Rev. Fr Godwin Ikeobi and Rev. Monsignor Matthew Obiukwu who made effort to provide Catholics with an alternative in the form of prayer ministry. This is ascribed to the Pentecostals ‘wind of change’ which they (Pentecostals), use to campaign (evangelization) against the sanctity of the Catholic Church. Hence evangelization in Christianity does not only convert non-believers but also is used to correct, inform and reform Christian churches and their practices. Ezekwugo quoted in Achunike (2004), stated that ‘the Pentecostal groups are like surging flood that captures every thing along its course as it spreads like wild fire’ (42). Their evangelization style spurred the Mainline Churches to action of improving their lot to give the laity what it takes to attend to their spiritual and physical needs.

The sporadic growth of the Church in recent times owes its success to the fervent evangelization of modern Christians. The Church has been taken to the remotest parts of Igboland. Literates and illiterates alike share the benefits of listening to the word of God. Both the rich and poor share the same pew and the same identity as Christians. Evangelists are trained and offered

employment to serve in the vineyard of the Lord. Building of schools to train the evangelist becomes paramount. Hence many seminaries are built to serve this purpose. Crusades and revivals have ignited and helped to maintain in Christians the spirit of dedication to worship of God.

The Use of Modern Evangelization Strategies

Evangelization has been part of Christianity from inception. It has developed into various styles and levels. Okoro and Emakpor (2010) stated that, “in the contemporary times Christian religious broadcasting has almost become a norm for most successful Christian ministries in Nigeria. There is the growing use of modern technologies such as radio, television and the internet to facilitate the dissemination of the gospel” (p.68). Pope Benedict VI (2010:n.p), stated that, “the essence of the internet in fact is that it provides an almost unending flood of information, much of which passes in a moment” (n.p). In the recent time, the evangelization strategies include the radio, the television, internet, crusades, posters, fliers, vehicle preaching, news papers and magazines. These strategies are adopted in response to the realities of the modern time, for the purpose of winning souls for Christ. Christian evangelization of the contemporary era tries to address the issues of the moment. Hence Ojo (2010) stated that, ‘the captions of their publicity materials are attractive as the message they preach, and have been successful in providing responses to the pressing needs in the society and in the life of

churches in contemporary Nigeria” (p.16). Evangelization is used to address the issues of the moment. Ojo (2010) further enumerated the evangelistic topics as; Breakthrough, Good bye to Poverty, Your Story must Change, Power Must Change Hands, which are used successfully to address contemporary problems of insecurity, unemployment, financial hardship poor health and social services” (p.16).

According to Utaji and Achunike (2010), ‘the churches have megaphones, loud speakers... They seem to be in high competition with one another as each of the churches try to out do the other” (p.3). These strategies are used in such a way that it appears like each church is trying to scramble more converts than the others. Hence the testimonial speech of one converting from one church to a new one, often claimed to be a ‘living church’; usually after attending crusades or other evangelistic activities of the converting church. The radical use of these could be traced to the Pentecostals whose sporadic activities and spread was favoured by the war effect on the Igbo. Burgess (2008) stated that:

during the civil war, the revival message and its emphasis on evangelical personal conversion adapted successfully to new and challenging context of the disruption and social dislocation. Eventually the associated charismatic experience of the revivalist stimulated Pentecostal progeny (p.24).

In the bid to reap success, styles were adopted to make Pentecostalism appeal to the people.

The politicians use it to mark their status of social acceptability to the people. Obadare (2009) noted that ‘it became politically expedient for some

African leaders to proclaim their evangelical conversion and Pentecostal experience as political tools to garner grassroots support and seek legitimacy” (p.668). He cited Olusegun Obasanjo who consistently favoured Pentecostal environment and maintained cordial relationship with Enoch Adeboye of Redeemed Christian Church of God throughout his regime. Kris Okotie in his time of political campaign for the post of presidency tried to utilize his position as pastor to propagate his qualification for the post.

The various strategies adopted by the Christians are used in various ways for various purposes as enumerated above. According to Denison (2010), “sifting through the countless evangelism resources can be overwhelming and it would be very tempting to simply close one’s eyes and point a finger in order to narrow the choices” (n.p). It is imperative to look at the distinct use of some.

Television

Okoro and Emakpor (2010) noted that “the most widely used electronic media for disseminating information in Christianity is the television” (p.68). The Evangelists use the television daily to reach out to the people. What does Evangelism mean (2011), identified this type of evangelization as televangelism and defined it as evangelism at a distance by the use of television (n.p). This meaning is held by many and is the accurate connotation for evangelization through television. Wikipedia (2010) defined televangelism as “the use of television to communicate the Christian faith. The words are television and evangelism and was coined by Time magazine” (n.p). To

characterize the current religious and media situation in Nigeria, two visible phenomena will be very hard to omit. These are the proliferation of the churches belonging to the Pentecostal Christian denomination and the dominant presence of their religious leaders in both the print and the electronic media in the country. Conversion to these church has been on the increase.(Ihejirika, 2010;n.p). The use of television is not restricted to Pentecostals alone; other Christian denominations make use of the television to disseminate information to the public.

According to Harrel (2001), “many well-known televangelists began in the 1970s, developing their own media networks, news exposure and political influence. In the 21st century, the televised church services of Joel Osteen and Robert Schuller continued to attract large audiences” (p.331). This use of the television for evangelization is harnessed by the Christians to display as much as possible all their capabilities, including the performance of their miracle through vision and healing. Okoro and Emakpor (2010) therefore stated that:

one major goal of the preacher is to be understood and actually allow the audience/viewers to make commitments. It is the new message of hope packaged in visual display of miracles and testimonies that brought about an uproar against the reliability and the verifiability of the bogus on television by the flamboyant televangelist (p.68).

Okoro and Emakpor further noted that this accounts for why the National Broadcasting Commission had to place a ban on the transmission of religious

programmes with miracle display. Job (2008) identified televangelism as ‘the opportunity to talk to a secular audience and use that opportunity to build their kingdom and not God’s’ (n.p). This implies that evangelization through television can serve dubious purpose. People watch television more than they listen to other sources of information. So those who use television are prone to reach a greater majority of the population. Just as the fake prophets and healing homes arose out of the war effect, it is possible that fake evangelist may arise to usurp the opportunity of making large catch through the television. In his own view, Smith (2010) pointed out that “their products such as compact disc, DVD, are promoted to viewers who they claim to convert in numerous numbers” (n.p). This he said is subject to verification. The Christian evangelistic programmes displayed on the television screen can be directly from the television studio, or copied in compact disc or DVD. They can be gospel messages, homily, sermon or drama with Christian teachings. In this case the people can buy it and watch as many times as possible. Some use Christian television programmes for entertainment, as means of spiritual upliftment, as a prayer guide, to direct the upbringing of the children as well as to grow in knowledge and get enlightened

Some television programmes are internationally displayed. In the modern era one can be in Nigeria and through the aid of satellite dish watch programmes conducted in other parts of the world. This is as a result of globalization. The use of television is becoming so complex and all

encompassing that it seems to serve most of the services the Christian evangelist wishes to project. Wikipedia (2010) noted that “the increasing globalization has enabled some evangelist to reach wider audience through international broadcast network, including some that are specifically Christian in nature, such as ‘Trinity Broadcasting Network’ and ‘The God Channel’” (n.p).

Some of the evangelists make their congregation through the television. Some do not have a designated place of worship, and so reach out to people through the television. Wikipedia (2010) specified that “majority of their followers come from TV and radio audiences. Others do not have conventional congregation and as such, solely work through the television” (n.p). It is not only priests and pastors that preach on the television, some lay people such as in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria (CCRN), and Evangelical Fellowship of Anglican Communion (EFAC), engage in spreading the word through the television.

Radio Evangelism

One of the first ministers to use radio is S. Parkes Cadman, beginning in 1923, (wikipedia, 2010:n.p). According to O’Connor (1985), “On realizing that the radio is a powerful new tool for this task, they were among the first producers of radio programming. Radio programming was seen as a complementary activity to traditional missionaries, enabling vast numbers to

be reached at relatively low cost, but also enabling Christianity to be preached in countries where it was illegal and missionaries were banned” (n.p).

The radio evangelization gets to larger number of people at a time more than the missionaries can do. This makes radio evangelism more viable than some other means of evangelization. It is worthy of note that it is only those who tuned to the concerned station at the instance of the broadcast that will listen to the message. All the same, it reaches a wider population at a time. Christian radio evangelization till date has been both to convert people to Christianity and to provide teaching and support to believers. Wikipedia (2010) stated that: the great depression of 1930 in the US saw a resurgence of revival-tent preaching. Shortwave radio stations with the Christian format broadcast worldwide such as Quito, Ecuador, Family Radio Bible Broadcasting Network, Grong Grong, among others provided means of reaching the audience’. Born out of the revival resurgence, radio evangelism took its turn in getting the gospel to people’s doorstep (n.p).

With the trend of development and technological advancement, television evangelism took over the radio evangelism in some countries. But still in vogue in many countries. Harrel (2001:331) observed that by the 1970s television has taken over the place of radio as the primary medium of home entertainment, and also corresponded with a further rise in evangelical protestant Christianity, particularly through the international television and radio ministry of Billy Graham (p.331). Discussing the 20th century

evangelism, Reid (2005) stated that “more recent methods include the use of television and radio in evangelism, seeker services and special event evangelism” (n.p). This implies that among the many strategies of evangelization, radio is one of the most important and most rampantly used to get the gospel to the public. Its usefulness is mostly reckoned in the rural areas where there is incessant shortage of power supply, especially to those who cannot afford private supply of power through generators.

Internet Evangelism

Globalization has paved way for internet services. Christian messages are held in the internet and people who have access to internet services explore them. According to History of Evangelism (2010), “online evangelists are attempting to use new media to consolidate the faith and present an approachable, ecumenical face to seekers” (n.p). Stating further he noted that ‘web evangelists have been able to choose an approach that works to greatest effect on largest scale in the new medium.’ Stating that web evangelists have the greatest effect on largest scale is subject to verification as to its validity. It is a fact that internet evangelization is open to the entire world, but it is mainly the computer literate that can access the globe, through the internet.

Careaga (2010) pointed out that “there have been four communication revolutions which have changed the way that evangelism is practiced: the print

revolution in the Middle Ages, and the radio, television, and digital revolutions in the 20th century” (n.p). This description according to Careaga (2010), “this provides an excellent point of reference when discussing evangelistic trends in mass communication” (n.p). Information is passed on or received through the e-mail. These modern gadgets for evangelization make for easy communication and contact with people irrespective of the distance. Evangelization goes on no matter where you are; even in one’s bedroom.

Reporting Pope John Paul II’S speech on the World Communication Day, 2002, Internet Evangelization (2002) stated that “the internet can offer magnificent opportunities for evangelization if used with competence and clear awareness of its strengths and weakness” (n.p). The website enumerated the pope’s message on the use of the internet for evangelization to include that:

- a) the new world of cyberspace is a summon to the great adventure of using its potentials to proclaim the gospel message;
- b) it provides information and stirs interest, thus making it possible for initial encounter with Christian message; especially among the young who increasingly turn to the world of cyber space as a window on the world;
- c) Christians should think of practical way to help those who make first contact with internet to move from vertical world of cyberspace to the real world of Christian community;
- d) provide the kind of follow up which evangelization requires at a subsequent stage in the internet.

- e) accessing the internet Christian message cannot replace the profound experience of God;
- f) it can provide a unique supplement and support in both preparing for encounter with Christ in community and sustaining the believer in the journey of faith which now begins.

Having mentioned that there is danger thereof in using the internet website, he wonders how the Christians can control the ills of the subsequent development thereof. Jerzy (2010) suggested that “we must make the internet a great evangelization tool worldwide” (n.p).

Crusade/Revival Evangelism

This is the gathering of Christians, usually in large number for the purpose of worshipping God, receiving miracles, conversion of unbelievers and spiritual upliftment. In Nigeria it is an avenue for pastoral display of divine power through declaration of miracles, vision, and Holy Spirit baptism manifested in the speaking in the uninterruptable tongue. McIntosh (1988:n.p) defined revival as, ‘the revitalization for a divine attack on society, the marshalling of forces fatal to the kingdom of darkness, the enlisting, training, and empowering of believers as a prelude to evangelization and also as that which reinvigorates God’s people with his truth and power.’ It is here displayed as a preparatory format for liberation from the attack of the evil

world and launching into new world filled with power of God in readiness for the divine duty of evangelization.

Crusade serves as a ground to bring people from different denominations together to refresh them in the word of God. Revival in Africa (2010) pointed out the revival organized at Liberation Stadium, Port-Harcourt, in Feb 21st-28th, 2008, by Evang. Ben Offiong as ‘certainly a day of revival/coming together of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, (PFN), and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). This crusade was tagged an outreach that has packaged prophetic Revival Crusade for Nigeria’s Revival Fire, Healing and Miracle Crusade. The host of the crusade, Offiong, categorically stated his purpose and expectations of the crusade as salvation, healing, deliverance, revival and answer to prayers; above all the impact of God upon the state and the entire nation. The last expectation, (God’s impact on the state and the nation) was out the desperate desire for a lasting solution to the incessant attack of the kidnappers and the militants. Crusades are used to address or seek solution to issues of the moment (n.p).

People are reached at in great number as crusade grounds are usually crowded with people who are anticipating miracle of various trends; from physical healing to spiritual liberation. The crusade is used to address the various problems prevalent in the society. These include; social problems like marriage, broken homes, family problems and economic problems. These lure the masses to seek for divine intervention especially by attending the crusades.

Elton (2010) stressed the importance of Christian family. He saw those who propagate policies that cause disunity in Christian homes as anti-family crusaders (n.p).

Printed Materials

Christian evangelization from inception has adapted to prevalent situation, trying to make out the best out of the situation.

mkmccarthy.homestead (2010) discussing the use of mass media stated that ‘it was not until the invention of the first form of mass media – print – that the Great Commission was brought to significant application to the Christian laity’ (n.p). This, the website agreed gave inspiration that new and sometimes divisive approaches to Christianity and evangelism found expression. By this it implies that printed materials created root for a new and more effective style of evangelism. Anderson (1983) associated the arrival of print media with the dissolution of monolithic secular community, and fragmentation and secularization of religious sentiment (n.p). The different denominations use the print materials to portray the magnanimity of their authentic practice and preservation of Christian tents, in addition to the spread of the gospel.

Earlier in the 1970s, tracts were the products of prints frequently used. Ojo (2010) noted that, tracts and personal evangelism of early years were replaced by regular newsletters and periodicals (p.15). Apart from using the print

materials such as the magazine and news letters to reach out to none-believers, they as well use it for unified interaction between members. Example of such print materials are; the Christian Mirror, Watchtower, Sunday Missals of the Catholic Church and many other prayer books.

Entertainment Evangelism

This aspect of the strategy is concerned with the use of drama, and music, often recorded in compact disc or DVD, or presented live. Wikipedia (2010) notes that ‘the Christian music industry has also played a significant role in modern evangelism’ (n.p). It stresses the areas addressed by the musicians and concert actors such as urging people to pray for their needs and salvation, and on people’s activities; thus relaying a message. Gozie Okeke gospel band and is also a musician, through his music sends across the message of absolute trust in God for He is mightier than any other thing that is worshipped. Patty Obasi’s music portrays God’s love for humanity. Fr Ejike Mbaka exhibits the magnanimity of God, the vanity of the world among many other messages of his music.

Summary of the Review

The inauguration of the Great Commission and the institution of Christian faith by Christ Jesus, formed the basis for whatever form of evangelization is

being carried out in the modern era. Christianity have been and developed through many situations across cultural practices; influencing the culture and vice versa. The relevance of evangelization to the growth of the church has yielded much influence. This is subject to various strategies used by the Christians to spread the gospel to various parts of the world, at different stages of development. In this modern era the above enumerated strategies form the basis for evangelical work in Christianity in the modern society.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO CHRISTIAN EVANGELIZATION IN IGBOLAND

Before the advent of European missionaries the Igbo had a way of worshipping God. They knew God but did not know Christ. Hence they had no knowledge or share in the proselytization in Christianity and practiced none of such duties. It was on arrival of the Christian missionaries that the effort made to convert people was initiated. The Igbo saw to their utter dismay a new way life presented to them. Those who imbibed the missionaries' ideology converted and shared in the white man's worldview.

The earliest missionaries to arrive were the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the evangelical arm of Anglican Church, through the Niger River at Onitsha on July 26th 1857 and began to evangelize on the 27th July 1857. They were led by Samuel Ajai Crowther, an ex-slave, who was ordained priest after due training. This was followed by the arrival of the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM), on December 5 1885. Before the arrival of the RCM, the CMS enjoyed the monopoly and unchallenged atmosphere from other missionaries. Though they engaged in evangelization duties, they did not seem to be in haste. At the same time they were challenged by shortage of staff. Onyeidu (2004) stated that "the extent of the Niger Mission was enormous and needed a large army of missionaries to occupy the land and evangelize the ignorant inhabitants. Since the

inception of the mission, Bishop Crowther himself continued to request for more men, but the response was poor”(p.4) All the same they were able to plant churches in Ossomala (1873), Asaba(1875),and Obosi (1882) (Nnabuike, 1983:35). Other stations noted by Onyeidu (2004), include Lokoja, Bonny, New Calabar, Aboh, Akwa and Owerri (p.3). Achunike (2002) pointed out that “though the protestant mission was established in several areas, the nature of their apostolate seem to be dull” (p.43). They often experienced occasional conflict with the indigenes and their traditional rulers, and the agents of the European Trading Company. Ekechi, (1972) reported that Crowther had very little admiration for the agents of the trading company and concluded that they were not friends of the missionaries but open enemies, because they hindered the work of evangelization (39). The avaricious tricks of the traders in their commercial dealings with the indigenes which created disillusionment in the minds of the indigenes may have inspired Crowther to make the above statement.

On arrival, the RCM (French missionaries) led by Fr Joseph Lutz, were given a piece of land by Obi Anazonwu in union with the CMS missionary; Crowther (Nwosu: 1982:38), (Ekechi 1972:73 & 74). Nwosu (1982) noted that “the presence of RCM was viewed with mixed feelings at first and with open antagonism later on, especially when they began to gain ground” (p.39). The presence of the RCM stirred up apprehensive situation for the CMS and the European authorities in Igboland. These RCM missionaries being French had to

face interrogation by the British Trading Company and were made to sign a document to ensure that they will not pose a threat to the Trading Company.

Faced with already Anglican dominated area, and British merchants, Fr Lutz engaged in evangelization of the Igbo with the financial and material aid from his home country. He offered welfare services to the people, giving medicine to the sick, clothes and food to the poor. This worked magic as it lured the people; many of whom were already Anglicans to the Catholic church, to the utter dismay of CMS mission such that Archdeacon Johnson was reported by Ekechi (1972) to have written to Salisbury Square that:

you will excuse me for saying that I am rather uneasy in regards to the prospects of our work, when I think of the proceedings of these Roman Catholics. Our schools in Onitsha are half ruined, because the children are enticed away by promises of clothing and the certainty of being fed gratis (p.76).

There had been internal crisis and some of the CMS faithful had already been disillusioned. This was as a result of the overt racism, lack of prospect, meager salaries, arrogance and neglect of welfare of the adherents. According to Ekechi (1972), request for increase in salaries by CMS agents, for instance, were often described as absurd on the ground that the native agents were trying to live like Europeans, when according to their European overlords they should have been living “like a native” (p.80). They as well made caricature of the indigenes who Ekechi further noted that they (European missionaries) graced their dawn to dusk labour with saucy statement of laziness and presented Africans as acting like children. In this state the arrival of the RCM, though met

with initial resentment, Nwosu (1982) noted, provided the people with an alternative which they longed for (p.40). The evangelization effort of the RCM won teachers, catechists and other adherents from CMS to RCM. Ekechi (1972) identified that they saw the RCM missionaries as different kinds of white man: a kind who came for the welfare of the people (p.75).

The sporadic success made by RCM in making converts outweighed the imagination of the CMS that it provoked jealousy in them and consequent rivalry and scramble for members ensued. Achunike (2002) noted that the coming of the Catholic missionaries speeded up or rather initiated the spirit of competition (p.44). Cecil Brown quoted in Onyeidu (2004) wrote that “a new danger threatens the district in the arrival of the Roman Catholics who are opening in or near our occupied station” (pp.16-17). Bosah (n:d) pointed out that “the relationship between the two proselyte missions was invariably influenced by forces of religious rivalries that characterized the early dealings of the missions till the dawn of recent ecumenism” (p.72). Evangelization came to be characterized with rivalry, conflict and scramble for membership. Christians from differing denominations but of the same kinship discriminated against each other and often used derogatory slogans against each other. Achunike (2002) pointed out that “with the coming of the Catholic missionaries, the religious scene changed. The style with which these missionaries preached and executed the apostolate changed or radicalized the understanding of the Igbo about Christianity in general” (pp.44). This conversion through the

evangelization efforts of European missionaries succeeded on the basis of the strategies they adopted.

As with other areas in Africa, Roman Catholics and Anglicans each tended to establish areas of hegemony in southern Nigeria. After the World War 1, such churches as the church of the Brethren, Seventh Day Adventists and others worked in interstitial areas, trying not to compete. Although less well known African-American churches entered the missionary field in the 19th century and created contacts with Nigeria that lasted well into the colonial period. (Wikipedia 2010:n.p). Many other minor denominations such as Qua Iboe Church led by Bill, offered positions of responsibility to their members strategically that they stood firm to defend their cause. In the conference of 1949 to settle the problem of partition of eastern Nigeria by the various denominations of Christianity, Udo (1980) noted that, “the Qua Iboe mission, from the beginning, chose its African staff from members who they believed could be manipulated, and gave such people impressive positions as elders and pastors” (p.176). They were of poor background and could not afford to employ the services of highly educated men and women in the society. They could not achieve much due to very stringent policies, financial incapacitation and the economic exploitation. Udo noted as well that Bill had no trained and ordained ministers and the people also complained that the Qua Iboe mission rules were puritanical.

The other groups of missionaries were from the United Free Church of Scotland, the Primitive Methodist Mission, and the Lutheran Church. Their effort yielded not much when compared to the successes of the RCM and CMS. The Baptists missionaries in 1875 under the leadership of W J David arrived Abiokuta and revived the Baptist mission that had existed since 1850 under Thomas Bowen. Methodists and the Presbyterians came in within the same period. Their effort made converts to their faith.

The Missionary Strategies for Evangelization

Inspired by many factors which include industrial revolution, slave trade and its abolition, evangelization, the desire to explore the virgin land of Africa, the European of various groups and backgrounds trooped to Africa to secure territories and reap economic profit. The missionaries being one of the groups found out that the best approach to their work of evangelization is none other than to civilize the people the way they knew it. Ekechi (1972) wrote that:

the missionaries generally regarded themselves as preachers rather than teachers. But in the African situation where the populace was illiterate, it was realized that the teaching of the Bible might not be firmly established in the hearts and minds of the people, unless some means were devised to enable them read the Bible themselves (p.23).

Apart from the literary education, the missionaries carried out the work of evangelization with the aid of some strategies which were reasonable enough to

appeal to indigenes. These included the schools, medical services and hospitals, church, catechism, welfare services, home visits, and agriculture.

Literary Education: There was need to give literary education to the indigenes to enable them understand the teachings of the missionary and the bible. Ekechi quoted in Achunike (2002) stated that “missionaries established charitable institutions and schools more as instrument of rivalry and evangelical strategy than concern for good of the Igbo” (p.54). Their evangelical system though was to win converts, but to ensure that each of them outweighs the other in numerical strength. Okafor (2011) pointed out that “rivalry between the French Catholic priests and their protestant missionary counterparts was always very energetic and stimulated them to use education as an instrument of evangelization” (n.p). He further stated that at the beginning of their ministries among the Igbo, the Holy Ghost Fathers and the SMA had completely different attitude towards the education of the natives. Fr Zappa of Upper Niger was skeptical about the role of schools in evangelism for he noticed in most of the Igbo converts the desire to pursue education for reasons other than spiritual development and became vehemently opposed to building schools for them. Ayandele (1966), argued that, “the true purpose of education from Christian view point was to develop the moral and spiritual fibers of the converts” (p.288). Nevertheless the desire to overcome their competitors spurred their enthusiasm for the education of the Igbo. Education turned out a beneficial ground to members to Christianity. For according to Isichei (1973), the quality

or sincerity of the conversion was not their major concern. Provided they could supplant the other, what mattered most to them was the number of converts they amassed through building schools for the natives (p.155). According to Kalu (1978), the Catholics founded schools as a means of gathering youth for indoctrination and baptism (p.6). The success reaped by the RCM was attributed to their evangelistic method. The schools established by the missionaries are still in existence to date and rank among the best. Such schools include; St Charles College, Onitsha, Queen of the Rosary College, Onitsha, St Monica's College, Ogbunike, Christ the King College, Onitsha, Dennis Memorial Grammar School, Onitsha, Holy Ghost College, Owerri, Owerri Girls Secondary School, Emmanuel College Owerri, Aquinas Secondary School Osu-Mbano, Mercy High School, Umuezala-Owerre, St Dominic Secondary School, Ugiri Mbano, St. Augustine Grammar School, Nkwerre, St. Paul's College Awka, Ogidi Girls Secondary School etc. The union of five protestant churches known as Evangelical Union of Eastern Nigeria embarked upon joint ventures. Between 1936 and 1961, they had established the Women's Training College at Umuahia, Union Secondary School for Girls at Ibiaku, two secondary schools for boys at Enugu and Abakiliki and a theological college at Umuahia. This union came to be in order to stand against the Catholic mission and Lutheran mission. But this effort yielded not much as they were not strongly united enough to continue together. Udo (1980) therefore stated that, although the

missions cooperated in founding these institutions, some enmity still existed between the various missions which operated in Eastern Nigeria (p.177).

The earliest missionaries used school education for the purpose of propagation of the gospel. The arrival of Bishop Shanaham in Igboland improved the use of school for reasons more than conversion of the people. Education took a new turn as Shanaham instituted education for the improvement of the individuals for their future lives. Writing on Shanaham's education policy Nwosu (1982) commented:

for him (Shanaham), unlike some other missionaries, education was not limited to evangelization alone. He gave it wider meaning by increasing its content and scope to include other subjects apart from the Bible. This endeared his school to the people and made him enjoy great patronage from and partnership with colonial administrators. This started the history of education controlled by the government and mission for provision of personnel to serve in both the mission and government establishments (p.44).

Ibe (2007) quoted Shanaham's statement thus; "build schools first, when they are educated they will build their church, when they build their church, they will build their nation" (p.21). His ideology appealed to the people, who adopted his person, ideas, and projects. Ibe (2007) noted as well that "his influence spread like wild fire..., village to village school buildings were rising" (p.9). In his own contribution, Bosah (nd) stated that:

the new philosophy of evangelization worked successfully as a miracle. Schools were opened in quick succession in many towns and villages and there was competition among the indigenous people in the building of new churches and schools entirely at their own expenses. The formal opening of such

churches and schools or the reception of new parish priest was often heralded with great fanfare and booming of canon (p.74).

The extra ordinary impact of Shanaham triggered off a new dimension of Christianity and evangelization. Nwosu (1982) identified and stated that Shanaham's education standard "was not education merely to train the people to read the Bible in vernacular, they also needed to acquire knowledge to improve themselves spiritually and materially" (p.42). Shanaham seemed to realize the materialistic and religious nature of the people and launched his evangelistic aspirations on these two features. Hence the people were developed to acquire some aspirations while their religious faith as Christians is transformed. The prestige and economic benefit attached to this education endeared many to school and through the mission schools they were converted.

Medical Attention: The CMS missionaries at the initial time did not seem to realize the need for medical attention for evangelization of the people. But later they picked up medical evangelization. The arrival of the French Catholic missionaries who saw the need to attend to the welfare of the indigenes brought the use of medical services into the field of evangelization in Igboland. Ekechi (1972) pointed out that "one great difficulty appeared to be how to win local favour for Roman Catholicism. Here Fr Lutz adopted the practical expedient of approaching the inhabitants via the provision of medicines and other material needs" (p.74). Bishop Crowther saw this RCM style as alluring temporal advantage held out by their competitors to the people to induce adherence.

Ekechi (1972) pointed out that the medical care of the Catholic missionaries have enticed the people to them, even those who were already Anglicans (p.15). But as time went on, the Anglicans, had no alternative than to adopt the RCM style of medical care and welfare services or they stand the chance of losing it all to the RCM. Hence Ekechi (1972) further stated that;

the missionary of CMS by accepting medical rivalry as an instrument of evangelization, were fundamentally reversing their position on the use of temporal means to secure spiritual ends. In other words, this was a clear change of policy in respect to the views espoused by Bishop Crowther. To justify the change of attitude towards what was considered a materialistic approach to Christianity, the missionaries now hailed the work of mercy as something worthy of Christian pursuit. This the CMS pointed out was actually the work of the Master Jesus, and asked 'are we to neglect the poor suffering ulcerated bodies of the neglected ones in Africa and only look for their souls? (p. 77).

The missionaries saw the benefits in the use of medical services and embraced it. Ozigbo (1988) acknowledged the use of medical services by the catholic missionaries in the areas of lower Niger with which they reaped success in making converts (p.64). They even built hospitals and their hospitals stands to be among the best in the recent times. These hospitals include the mission hospital at Emekuku in Owerri, Joint hospital, Mbano, Mater Miserecodia, Afikpo etc. The various missions that came to Igboland established medical homes mainly as a means of winning converts and out-smarting the other missions. Achunike (2002) enumerated some of the hospitals established by the missions thus:

Iyi-Enu Hospital at Ogidi (1907), and Oji River Leper Settlement (1936) by the CMS. The Presbyterian had a hospital at Uburu (1915), and a Leper Settlement at Itu in 1928. Methodist had a hospital at Amachara in 1929 and a Leper Colony at Uzoakoli in 1930. The Catholic Church established the Holy Rosary Maternity Hospital Onitsha in 1935, Mount Carmel Hospital Emekuku, in 1935. St Joseph's Hospital Adazi in 1939, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Ihiala, St Charles Borromeo Hospital, Onitsha.(p.48)

The Presbyterian according to Njoku (2008) established Obubra Leper colony as offshoot of Itu Leper Colony. The RCM established Obudu Leper colony and Mile 4 Leper settlement in Abakiliki (p.164). The medical services rendered by the missionaries, be it in the hospitals, maternities, leper colonies, in the Churches or the peoples' various homes, had a definite purpose; to capture members to the preaching faith usually in the spirit of competition and rivalry. Medical services became so important in the field of evangelization that missionary doctors were sent along with other missionaries. Hence Price (1968) commented that "missionary doctors were readily received and apparently understood" (p.104).

Mission Stations: To avoid serious interference or conflict with the natives and to ensure that the already gotten members, whether bought from slavery or not, are groomed to their taste and maintained, they made use of mission stations. Inside the mission stations, the necessary things are taught to the adherents and they lived as a community. Fr Lutz was able to buy some slaves and lived with them in the mission station at Onitsha. Together they built a hospital in the mission station. According to Price (1968) "mission stations were founded in response to many converging needs". The CMS established mission

stations with 'homes' for girls and women. At Idumje the mission station was planted in 1902 and five years later, 1907, a 'home' was opened, at Emii in Owerri 1902 and Obosi in 1908 (p.104). In these 'homes' according Leith-Ross (1965), they were prepared for baptism, taught to read and write, and trained in elements of house craft (p.189). Most of the girls Onyeidu (2002) noted were attracted to missionary institutions because of the prospect of future Christian marriage. Hence the stories of some of the girls who went to the missionaries to escape non-Christian marriages, was a recurrent problem in the mission stations. Given this attraction the inmates at Emii continued to increase (p.71). Onyeidu (2004) further noted that the mission stations contributed immensely to evangelization in Igboland (p.69).

Direct Preaching: The missionaries engaged in teaching the people face to face on the target of their mission for salvation of souls. Achunike (2002) described this method of evangelization as primary and central to all the denominations. He further explained that it is face-to-face teaching of Christian doctrines or instruction or catechism to small groups of neophytes (p.46). This system is practiced to date. It gave rise to many leaders of various groups in the church and even catechists. Teaching the target person is the basic tool of this strategy.

Industry: The natives were taught some crafts like sewing, carpentry, mason, weaving etc. These were taught usually in the mission stations or in the schools that belong to the different denominations. Many converts were reaped through

this process. According to Koren (1958), “missionaries started as soon as they got settled to encourage the natives to learn different types of trade and crafts, including tailoring, masonry, carpentry, shoe-making, sewing and knitting. They also taught the Igbo people new ways of farming and gardening” (p.174). Keen (2011), noted Henry Venn’s support for economic development as a means of spreading the Gospel. Therefore industrial institutions were developed at Abeokuta and later at Onitsha and Lokoja, which provided apprenticeship scheme for the fast developing cotton trade instigated by Manchester merchants(n.p).

Language Development: Means of verbal communication, a serious instrument for evangelization was taken care of by the missionaries when they devised to study and develop it. According to Okafor (2010), Fr Zappa of SMA, the first prefect of the Upper Niger encouraged the Catholic priests to learn the Igbo language so that they could preach to Africans in the language they can understand. For this reason he wrote an Igbo-French dictionary (n.p). This method proved to be the basic strategy to all other strategies. The SMA and Holy Ghost Fathers had linguists among them who studied the Igbo language and produced books and dictionaries to help not only the natives, but most importantly for subsequent missionaries from Europe. It as well helped in translating the bible into Igbo language for grass-root evangelization, and consequent conversion. The Anglicans saw it as a necessity to use the language of the people to communicate with them. As Onyeidu (2004) stated that “the

agents of the CMS never relented in their assiduous attention to the study and translation of Igbo language. The ingenuity of the agents produced a unified Igbo language known as ‘Union Igbo’ (p.90). At Egbu-Owerri, the first Annual Conference was convened with the object of unifying the Igbo translations in November 1906 by the CMS. Price (1968) observed that “in order to translate the bible, it was necessary to learn the language of the Igbo more deeply than was needed for giving orders to workers and servants, and to understand the request and complaints of people on the station”(p.48).

Berselaar 1997 remarked that:

The missionaries created a written language based on one or more vernacular(s) into which they translated the Bible. Its creation led to the use of the language for education in mission schools, and later in government schools. The Bible dialect later consequently became the accepted standard language of the ethnic group and acquires the function of one of its prime identity markers. Since the early 1840s, the missionaries have been studying the language of Igbo ethnic group in south-East Nigeria, but their impact upon the language has been less straight forward than in at least some other parts of Africa. When Anglican, Methodist, Scottish missionaries introduced Bible translation in Igbo in 1913; they hailed it as giving to this people, a common vehicle of expression and language of literature (n.p).

Berselaar (1997) concluded that some African ethnic groups owe the existence of their vernacular language in written form to the missionaries (n.p)

Development of Indigenous Church

As time went on, the church developed into various categories. Independent churches began to emerge. They brought into existence a more radical approach to evangelization. On attainment of independence Achunike

(2002) pointed out that Indigenous Independent Churches won recognition (p.54). The nationalists asserted that the Europeans with their religion raped both the customs and the religion of the people. The mainline churches were seen as arms of colonial administrators in running down Nigerian sovereignty. According to Nigerian Influence of the Christian Mission (2010) ‘‘Christianity began in Igboland in the 19th century and has continued to spread through the 21st century. The major spread of the Christian church in Nigeria is credited to the independent churches of the Nigerian people’’ (n.p). The attainment of independence created the desired freedom for the independent churches to operate. Their action to evangelization was and has been furious and has given rise to sporadic outgrowth of the church. This success is credited to their evangelization style which bears on the peoples’ way of life and therefore appeals to them.

The war situation of the Biafran era which left the people desolate and hopeless created a scene that any promise of source of salvaging the situation, was bought over. Hence the promises of hope from the Independent churches worked the miracle. Prominent in this era was the Aladura churches, characterized by vision, healing and miracles. According to wikipedia (2010),

the Aladura, like several other breakaway churches, stress healing and fulfillment of life goals for oneself, and one’s family. African belief that sorcery and witchcraft are malevolent forces against which protection is required is accepted; rituals are warm and emotional, stressing personal involvement and acceptance of spirit possession. Theology is biblical but some sects add costumed procession and some accept polygyny (n.p).

People trooped to the Independent churches with the hope of receiving miracles to their hopeless war-torn situation. This made way for fake prophets and healing homes to come into the scene as it turned out to look like a lucrative business.

The later development and acceptability of the Pentecostal churches seem to override the existence of the Aladura churches. The Pentecostals like the Aladura are characterized by vision, healing and miracles. Their polity conforms to the Igbo believes and practices on the existence of malignant or evil spirits. Therefore they have ways of warding them off or actually destroying their powers with ultimate power in the blood of Jesus. With testimonial confessions of people who claim to have received the miracle, and the caring attention to members, especially the new converts, what can be more appealing to a disaster-struck person than care and solution his/her problems. Their success and the rate at which people trooped in there became a source of worry to the mainline churches. A new level of rivalry ensued and scramble for converts took a new turn as the Pentecostals were apt and seem to be more dedicated to formulation of new styles to make the church more appealing and more lively.

In this contemporary era, Christianity has developed far ahead of what was established by the European missionaries. Prayer has developed from solemn to commands, claims and shouting, as a fierce way of scaring away the evil spirits and agents, and claiming of God's blessing. The belief in no compromise with

the devil spurs them to radical approach to prayer and evangelization. Hence the claim to be children and heirs to God who must possess their possession (usually wealth as children of wealthy God), and put the devil to shame. In order not to lose out, the mainline churches have adopted the Pentecostal style in many ways, but still maintaining the doctrine of the church received from the missionaries. Pentecostalism has given rise to 'The Catholic Charismatic Renewal', 'Catholic Biblical Instructors Union', Prayer Groups and Ministries in the Catholic Church. While in the Anglican Church the 'Evangelical Fellowship of Anglican Communion', Prayer Groups and Ministries serve the purpose.

This recent situation in the churches and the developments of technology and communication in the modern society has made a tremendous contribution to the style, success and ills of evangelization in the modern era.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MODERN EVANGELIZATION STRATEGIES

The church in the modern times has taken a style to match the demand of the time. The modern era is fast developing in technology and communication and the church, as the organization made up of people who are alive to the situation, will not be left behind. The church in Igboland is growing very fast such that it is seen now as proliferating. This proliferation is associated with the Pentecostal churches. Hence Achunike (2004) equated their upsurge with the building of filling stations as two viable businesses in Nigeria (p.6). The rate, at which the churches spring up, leaves one to wonder at the trend and speculation of what the outcome may be. This development is a product of evangelization trend and has as well in turn affected the evangelization strategies being used as the numerous churches' strive to survive, grow and out-number each other, through all available means.

Like in a battle field as the Pentecostals claim it should be, the Christians set out on the work of evangelization, adopting strategies that will ensure success. These strategies include television, the most rampantly used, crusades, radio, music, video films/drama, posters, internet sources, preaching in vehicles and open-air preaching. At various points and situations these strategies are employed to foster the word of God.

Television: This applies to preaching to the people through the television network. It seems to be more appealing to the people as the various pastors and evangelists appear on the screen on daily basis. They use this medium to preach the word of God as well as publicize their church for more converts in the name of saving their souls. Their power to perform miracles is displayed to the public through the screen of the television (TV). In some cases people are advised by the preacher to place their hands on the screen of the TV to receive healing or miracle. Some people claim they actually received miracle by so doing. Uwakwem Egemonye from Ogbor, Mbano once claimed that he received healing through TV screen when Ernest Angly, an Evangelist of the 70s was preaching. That was his reason for converting to Christianity. Madam Lolunna Nwehie of Umuozu, Mbano accepted to be a Christian and was baptized after watching on TV screen, the confessional testimonies of people who claim to have received favour from God. Television serves as the most accessible means of reaching out to the people, especially those who have access to power supply and can afford TV in their homes.

Radio: the evangelist through this media addresses the public; sending across the information for the salvation of souls. This medium gets to all irrespective of religious affiliation. People listen to the broadcast from where they are. The Jehovah Witnesses according to Onwenu (2011) do not use the radio. They prefer to discuss with the target person face to face (n.p). Nnadi (2011) said that

the Pentecostals use the radio to evangelize (n.p). Though radio is still being used, it has given way to television.

Crusades: This can be seen as the gatherings of people to listen to the word of God and to ask for favour from God. Usually announcements are made for the crusades prior to its actual date. Fliers are distributed, and posters are pasted at strategic points for people to read. Town criers with the modern mega phone go out announcing the crusade either in a vehicle or on foot. Television forms the easiest means of announcing to the public about the forthcoming crusade. Crusade can last for as much as 7 days, some can be for 2 days. All depend on the package of the crusade. Often Pastors and Evangelists are invited from other places to speak to the audience. In this modern time these crusades are televised, recorded on audio and video discs and tapes and sold out to people. Ejiofor (2011) explained that the Watchman Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement hold crusades for the purpose of glorifying God's name and for evangelization. During the crusade, the Watchman Charismatics, he said, pray for upliftment and prosperity of people but their main area of concern is the salvation of souls. No offering is offered during the Watchman's crusade. So there is no financial gain attached to their crusades, it is purely for evangelization (n.p).

Music: This is evangelization through entertainment. It is often recorded on compact disc as audio or video and sold out to people. There are live band players of gospel music. They are there to play at crusade ground, in the church as or at ceremonies etc. It started in the 70s. Obasi (2000:np) claims that he was

the first to play gospel music in Igbo language in Igboland. This he said was in the 70s and he played at the crusades held by the Assemblies of God church in Eastern Nigeria (n.p). The important thing about music ministry is that it has a message to pass across and that is done through this entertainment media. Listening to the gospel music apart from its entertainment, gives message of hope, spiritual upliftment, consolation, and knowledge of some issues or facts about life, God and man. Some gospel music are good enough and powerfully melodious that they captivate one's spiritual feeling and desire to convert or rededicate oneself to the worship of God. Obasi (2010) noted that "so many churches exploit the gospel acts. They use us to gather their crowd, build the churches". (n.p). Gospel music is therefore inspirational.

Video Films/Drama: This has to do with the organized presentation of human lifestyle through dramatization in order to teach some valuable lessons to the audience. Nnadi (2010) stated that "the church makes use of drama to teach the congregation and it as well entertains the church members" (n.p). Man's daily life is x-rayed through dramatization for necessary improvement and knowledge of those who watch it. It can be recorded in a compact disc as home video for entertainment or presented live just like music. Watching it as home video or live presentation teaches the audience the gospel message of the producer and also entertains them. Just like music it is evangelization through entertainment.

Prints: These include pamphlets, posters, books, magazines and fliers. The Christian evangelists make use of these means to reach out to their audience,

especially the literate ones. Catholics have their monthly product known as ‘The Word Among Us’, ‘Jesus The Sharer’. Christ Embassy Church produces ‘The Rhapsody’ monthly pamphlet. ‘The Christian Mirror’ magazine is produced monthly by the Deeper Life Church. The ‘Leader’, ‘Forum’ and ‘Trinitas’ are monthly News Papers produced by Owerri, Orlu and Onitsha Catholic dioceses. The Watchtower and Awake and some other instructive books are from the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Anglicans publish the Echoes of Hope, Niger Christian Times, and many others. There are many others. The content of these prints bears on captivating the readers to convert them, re-covert them or to help them grow in faith and remain faithful. They are sold either within the church premises, in the bookshops or by the road-side hawkers. However they are circulated depends on the church and the leaders and what their target is. Posters are pasted at strategic places for people’s consumption, while fliers are shared to people wherever they are. All these are to ensure that evangelization goes on.

Internet Sources: The world has become a global village through the modern development in technology and communication. Evangelization is carried out through e-mail websites. Christ Embassy church is good at the use of TV has one of their websites as www.christembassy.org. Christian messages are passed across through the internet. This reaches far than the TV but its short-coming is that it is only the computer literate that can easily access it. Communication across the globe is made easy and can lead the church to greater heights.

Preaching in the Vehicles: Preaching is the verbal communication which the itinerant evangelist does directly to the audience. The modern Christians choose to preach where they deem viable including inside the vehicles. This group of evangelists usually boards the vehicles from where they load and start off their evangelization with prayer for safety of the commuters. The preaching does not seem to have any form of regulation or prior notice to the passengers before the message is launched on the audience. The evangelist can board the vehicle, preaching for as long as possible. Some alight on the way to board some other vehicles and continue their work of evangelization, while some other evangelists will stay back in the vehicle preaching till the vehicle gets to its destination. To some passengers it is a welcome venture to keep the vehicle and the commuters in God's protective design and ward off accidents believed to be caused by blood-sucking demons on the dilapidated roads. Ojo (2010) noted that:

Lagos in the 1980s and 1990s was reputed for breeding a type of preachers that operated only in molues and in other public conveyances exhorting Nigerians to repentance. In the new millennium, not only do they preach and pray, they also collect offerings, a reflection of the changing economic situation of the society. Very often they see Satan and his cohorts of demonic spirits, 'vampires' and 'blood-sucking demons' on the pot-holed and poorly maintained Nigerian roads which they assail with 'Holy Ghost Fire' and the 'blood of Jesus' (p. 3).

It is a fact that these preachers ask for monetary donations from the commuters in support of the spread of the gospel. Some even share envelopes for the passengers to put the money, ensuring that each person in the vehicle gets an

envelope. In other words none should be left out in the donation. They give their phone numbers for further references or contacts.

Open-Air Preaching: Preaching is now commonly held at various places such as the streets, market places, and at various times such as early morning cry, during moral instruction periods in schools, revivals etc. It is a system of evangelization in an open place. Open-air preaching – Wiki (2010) describes it as “an act of publicly proclaiming a religious message to crowds of people in open place. It is today associated with Christian fundamentalism or evangelicalism” (n.p). Though in Nigeria there is ban on open-air preaching, it does not seem to be enforced in Imo state and other places in Nigeria. According to allAfrica.com (2010), “in an apparent move to check the possible spread of ethnic and religious conflicts currently ravaging some parts of the country, the Kogi state Police Command has issued a statement reminding the public that the law banning open-air preaching is still in force (n.p).” In another instance, IRIN Africa/Nigeria(2010:np) reported that the Governor of Ondo state, Adebayo Adefarati, announced through the television the ban on open-air preaching by any religious body in the bid to reduce religious tension. Nnadi (2011) stated that He-Reigns Church in Owerri uses among other strategies morning-cry every Tuesday morning, and Open-Air preaching in the market and other places for evangelization (n.p).

Evaluation of the Use of the Modern Evangelization Strategies

By its nature and purpose, evangelization is the life-wire of Christianity. The strategies as listed above are utilized for positive response to the church. Nnadi (2010), stated that the church uses the various strategies to reach people for Christ and more specifically to win souls for Christ” (n.p). In reference to the activities of the original propagators, the missionaries, it has been toned with rivalry and competition. Bosah (n.d) pointed out that “the relationship between the proselytes of the missions was invariably influenced by forces of religious rivalries” (p.72). Recent developments in Christianity have not proved to be better. The evangelization strategies mapped out and used by the Christians of modern era bear with it a more fierce approach. The different churches are advertised and people are urged to attend them for better results and probable answer to their various requests and desires. Chupungco (1992), notes that “there is rising of sects and religious movements who promise of false hopes in the midst of apparent hopelessness and confusion” (p.68). Those who are charismatic or radical enough break off and start their own churches, when they can no longer contend with some ills of their former churches, hence proliferation sets in, creating opportunity for fraudsters to come into the scene.

Music as a source of evangelization has shown to be entertaining, educative as well as evangelizing. It can be played live, recorded in compact disc or tapes

and sold to make money. It is prominent in the recent society that people often play gospel music, produced in compact disc or tapes, in their homes. Ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, crusades and church services are graced with gospel music. It serves as a source of employment especially to the youths. The money making venture nature of this evangelization style has lured many into it, including non-talented ones. Obasi (2000) explained that in the field of gospel music, many have lost the sense of creativity and originality. Any kind of music can pass for gospel music (n.p). This implies that people these days out of economic difficulties jump into gospel music business out of the desire to alleviate their economic difficulty and end up feeding the public with what may not serve the purpose of gospel music. Of all the strategies used by the preachers, music is the most central to evangelization in Christianity because it plays generally on spiritual upliftment without special attachment or advertisement of any particular church. This is quite unlike crusades, televangelism or preaching in the vehicle which ends up particularizing a designated church giving phone numbers for subsequent contacts.

Apart from gospel music, crusade is another strategy for evangelization. Its peak is usually during festive periods like Easter, Christmas, and New Year celebrations etc. It serves as a source of spiritual upliftment and preparation towards a successful festive celebration. Organizers preach the sermon, pray for the congregation, and collect offerings from the audience. Some people are actually converted to Christianity through crusades. Miracles are testified. Their

mega phones are placed in strategic places to reach out to people who are outside the crusade arena. Apart from the strength of the mega phones to give loud information, the Evangelists shout into the mega phones and all collectively form a source of nuisance to the public. Some people have relocated their residence because of the noise generated by the churches in their vicinity.

The sowing of seeds, which is known as giving much; usually money, to get great reward is usually stressed in the crusades, attaching miraculous expectations to the amount donated. God of wealth and prosperity has taken over the air. In a crusade held in Onitsha in June 2004 by a pastor from Port-Harcourt known as pastor 'Fast Fast' at Modebe Memorial High School, the pastor made it clear that he came to Onitsha to make the money to sponsor his evangelization trips to parts of West Africa. It was not actually organized for spiritual development but mainly to make money. Bishop Idahosa of blessed memory will mark his special bags for collection of offerings on the crusade ground. Nchekwube Iredu of the Sisters Fellowship during offering time will say 'offering time; blessing time'. The people will at this point be asked to raise their money for offering for her blessing. Automatically those who lack courage will at this point choose to raise a higher denomination or sum of money to appeal to peoples' sight. Some may have to engage in going out of their way to spend what they do not wish to or money meant for someone else. The Watchman Catholic Charismatics Renewal Movement in Owerri seem to be exceptional for they do not collect offering during crusades.

The praying style of destruction of enemies by 'Holy Ghost Fire' has become the order of the day and the crusade ground is reckoned on as conducive to nail the enemy to death as some crusade posters will depict for the readers. Converts whether from another church or not are urged to come out to testify to their conversion. This implies that such forum is utilized to foster their church to the public for its probable expansion. Some of these converts got convinced by what they see or hear in the crusade ground, especially the testimony of some people. The problem and poverty stricken masses develop interest. Achunike (2002) noted that "healing and open air crusade draw wide audiences but conversion is merely peripheral. Conversion is shallow and therefore problematic" (p.2). This implies that the fact that miraculous experiences are being testified, many with various problems get enticed and decided to convert either to Christianity or from their incumbent church to the church that has held the particular crusade. Modern evangelization has turned Christianity into a vehicle of solutions to all problems, hanging the hope of the people on the solution to their problems solely on attending particular churches. Those who are merely converted for the sake of solution to their problems and are impatient, move from one church to another in the bid to get solution to their problems. This is a typical indication of faithlessness and lack of true conversion as a result of the trend of modern evangelization strategies.

In all Christ is portrayed, but the God of their various churches with their unique characteristics for solving all problems without difficulty is stressed. The

promise for problem-free life and God of prosperity defiles the biblical suffering of Joseph, Job, and even Jesus, who is God. Even the Bible said in psalm 34:18 that ‘many are the afflictions of the righteous’. One wonders, in this case, if fake pastors/evangelists have not entered the field of evangelization. The gullible minds of some problem stricken people have made it easy for fakes to thrive. Africans are known to believe in good and evil spirits who are responsible for good and evil experiences respectively. The modern evangelists cash in on this to reap successes. Casting out of demons and other forms evil spirits and releasing people from their bondages, initiations, and covenants form part of the crusade intentions. This has graduated into ‘olu ezi-na-ulo’. A situation where the pastor/evangelist visits someone’s home on invitation to for the purpose of destroying any evil planted in the person’s compound.

Hitherto, evangelists preached in the vehicles without asking for financial benefit. In recent times, every preaching in the vehicles attracts offering. An itinerant preacher boards a vehicle and distributes envelopes at the end of the preaching so that the passengers will submit their offering in it, while some other preachers collect their own offering without envelope. There is no check to this development and many are into it. It serves as an economic relief to the preachers and as a source of confidence to the passengers who believe in such prayers, but the danger thereof is yet to rear its head.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses are known for being famous in house to house preaching and the sell of printed matters and tracts. Other Christian

denominations are not left out in the production of books, magazines, tracts, etc. Printed materials are numerous, but not as music and televangelism. The content of some of these printed materials are very refreshing, educative and encouraging to read. Some are provocative, disheartening, and discouraging as the author may be interested mainly in using derogatory language on churches other than his own. Though most people are literate, some people seem to be too busy to read especially non comic/entertaining books of the church. It is a dreary thing to do except for the interested few. The modern technological advancement has taken over the interest of many and attention is paid more on watching video and television set. The daily prayer books are the most favoured.

Televangelism is popular in the entire society. People are glued to their television often and find it easier to listen to the televangelist on the screen than making use of other sources. Daily there is always an evangelist or more on the screen. Some are interesting, while some will make one to turn off the television. The Television Stations are favoured as they receive patronage from the evangelists. Preaching on the screen can take the form of care of the peoples' predicament, and needs. Using the Bible references to address predominant issues and problems, forms part of the messages of some Evangelist. Some exhibit their power to heal and solve problems. But mostly at the end of each TV programme, the Evangelist gives out his/her address, admonishing listeners to attend the church for more miracles and wonders. The

good aspect of this is that some people may wish to have the address for subsequent contacts. These Televangelists have revived many whose spirits are down and converted some people, while some have raised conflict among family members. People who lack the effort to attend church services receive the gospel message right inside their bedrooms. Onweni (2011) stated that the Jehovah Witnesses do not use the television network. They prefer the house to house evangelization strategy (n.p).

The exhibition on the screen can be real or deceptive. Eke (2011) explained that with the modern technological gadgets a pastor preaching right inside his house or elsewhere can be merged with video copy of a rented crowd to give a boost appearance of the Evangelist on the screen. That way the ignorant audience will fall prey to the Evangelist's preaching. The display of their power to do miracles and wonders has led many ignorant people astray. The style of prayer watched on the screen has permeated the fabric of the entire society. Every prayer goes along the line of attacking the enemies. This is a very dangerous infestation which may be difficult, if not impossible, to wash off the possessive and materialistic Igbo. The whole air is filled with enemies and demons possession and destruction. Both worthy and unworthy displays transmitted through this media mostly in competitive intention to catch more adherents and survive the competition of various denominations. Their displays lack standard and every Evangelist is the architect of his/her own style.

The use of the various evangelization strategies by the evangelists has created a landmark in history of Christianity in Mbano, Mbaitoli, Ikeduru, parts of Owerri and Mbaïse and in other parts of Igboland in general. It has led to the conversion of many as well as being the source of disillusionment on some. Evangelization is organised like warfare or competition, which has sparked off serious conflicts and rivalry between adherents of different churches. It appears like exhortation of the Evangelist as testimonial statements are made of how the Evangelist's prayer has healed them of their ailments, some chronic and others that have proved incurable. The mysterious healing of the deaf and dumb, and how communication starts with ease. There are reports of someone who has never spoken before who begins to speak on crusade grounds and on TV screen. It appears ridiculous too that a blind person on receiving the sight is able to identify colours at the same moment.

The Outcome on the Development of Christianity in Igboland

The modern evangelization strategies have touched many lives and have enabled Christianity to spread to all areas of Igboland. Though there are some who are non-Christians, the numerical strength of the Christians has increased in bounds.

The miracles that happen in the church have opened to many the way out of their inherent problems. The church as Jesus has described it turned out to be the mustard seed that grew into a big tree and provided shield to many. The

assurance of its protective and miraculous power as is exhibited in the crusade grounds and TV screens has led people to turn over to Christianity. The faithful have learnt to rely on the interference of Christ Jesus into their problems, and like Hannah of 1Sam in Old Testament, they rather run to church with fasting and supplication for a miraculous answer from God. This in turn has built the faith of many.

The evangelization strategies adopted by the various church groups in Igboland has given rise to many recent developments. The relationship between churches is like a combatant issue. This could be traced to the origin of Christianity and evangelization in Igboland which was graced with rivalry and competition. Ozigboh (1985) remarked that Christianity in Nigeria today is the product of European corrupt practices (p.59). The modern Christians have succeeded in improving on what their predecessors have left for them. It is still the struggle for numerical growth and territorial influence, producing Christians who lack dedication to the faith in God, but dedication and loyalty to their various churches.

The increase in number has brought into the church a people of various grades and calibers, with differing intentions. Those who are naturally charismatic, turn out to be leaders and consequently start their own churches. The heavy donations of money and other valuables in the church especially in the crusade grounds have attracted many of who are fake pastors to establish their own churches. Many vices are synonymous with Christianity of modern

era. This is the result of numerical increase of the effort of the modern evangelist without standard.

Christians or Believers who convert from one church to another has become the order of the day. This is as a result of the search for miracle which has attracted their interest at the initial time. This could be miracle of healing, prosperity, liberation from spiritual attacks attacks, barrenness etc. The promises credited to the modern evangelization strategy to take care of peoples' problems no matter the form, and the exhibition of those who testify to their reception of the miracles, have wooed many into the field of church going to receive what others have received. True response to worship of God is lacking. The essence of the conversion is to receive miracles. Achunike (2002) stated that these "Christians go to church but in the face of any difficulty, they fall back on traditional beliefs, they consult the diviners or oracles" (p.33). Ezeanya referenced in Achunike (2002) addressed this as 'endurance of conviction' (p.33). In this case their conduct as Christians is a sorry sight.

Selfish intentions appear to be promoted as people are led to concentrate on prayer that negates anything good for their perceived enemies. These prayers are learnt from the crusade grounds, from radios and TV screens where people are taught that children of God are not supposed to encounter any problems. Should there be any problem, the enemy known, unknown or suspected is held responsible and therefore should not live. Achunike (2002) reiterated that:

many members of the Christian churches are today sharing the same belief with traditionalists on witchcraft, charms and divination. Consequently they do not believe in natural causes of misfortunes but attribute them to either evil spirit, the agency of witchcraft, poison or spiteful charms placed on them by enemies (p.37).

Hence the prayer style which demands for the death of the perceived enemy. The spirit of wickedness is encouraged and propagated among the Christians as against the 'love for one another' and 'to love those who hate you' (Matt. 5:44-47) as taught by Jesus Christ. There seem to be more curses today in Christian prayers than blessings. Negative trend of development and mind construction has taken precedence in Christianity of the modern era.

The praying style of shouting like the prophets of Baal has spread like wildfire because people have watched it on the TV screen and on the crusades and revival arena. Every new idea spreads fast getting its commendation or criticism as quickly as people adopt it. These modern strategies have propagated the easy spread of the knowledge of the aggressive praying style.

These modern evangelization strategies were mainly known among the new churches of Pentecostal order. But it has spread like wildfire to the mainline churches that were almost facing a threat losing their members to the Pentecostal Churches. The Catholics have the Catholic Biblical Instructors Union (C B I U), and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, while the Anglicans have the Evangelical Fellowship of Anglican Communion, which serve to meet up to the challenges of the Pentecostal explosion era. The mainline churches have been heavily influenced and inspired to action by the new generation

Christianity which modern evangelization styles have propagated. Achunike (2002) noted that “the Pentecostal style of prayer has tremendous influence on Christians in Igboland. It has also influenced the liturgy and practice of the mainline churches’ (p.61)’.

This new generation of evangelists of ‘prosperity crusades’, has propagated in the church, the negative attitude towards cross and suffering. According to Achunike (2002), “prosperity churches claim that they worship wealthy God” (p.1). This has in turn instigated the establishment of fake miraculous displays to lure people into their churches. Ingenuity in the use of evangelization strategies in order to appeal to the peoples’ desire has taken over the churches; creating weak spiritual foundation or no spiritual basis at all in the church. In some other cases the work of evangelization is carried out for the purpose of showing people the way to salvation. Nnadi (2011), claimed that his church ‘He-Reigns’ uses many strategies to address the situations of the moment in their evangelization ministry. Their target is to win souls for Christ (n.p). Many Christians have of late discovered this foul play and some have lost interest in Christianity. Clement Osuji from Umuezela-Ogwara claimed that he has had enough of the church and opted to keep away from the church. Many are left at cross-roads on whether to go back to traditional beliefs or to continue with Christianity.

The proliferation of churches has become a source of concern to many citizens of Nigeria. Achunike (2002) expressed his worry over the rate of

proliferation of churches and wondered if there could be no end to this proliferation (p.60)

The Effect on the Society

Religion is part of a societal way of life. Therefore it plays some important roles in the lives of the society. Christianity in the modern era has created some impact on Mbano, Mbaitoli, Ikeduru, parts of Owerri and Mbaise

Evil workers are exposed during some crusades. Some confess their sins in the society. At times those they hold in bondage are released as they renounce all they have done. After attending a crusade held by the Scripture Union at Afor-Inyigugu, Aboh Mbaise in the 70s, Okoro Grace publicly confessed and denounced her sins of prostitution. She at the same time pronounced her conversion to Christianity.

Spreading the gospel to all corners has touched many and some have genuinely dropped their bad attitude to life like fighting, prostitution. A woman who identified herself as Madam Ekwelem Bibian (aka Madam Odiche) from Ibeme, Mbano narrated her ordeal in running a hotel business where she sponsored prostitution and led many young girls astray. Through the evangelization effort of the Christians, by 1990, she converted and became a Christian. She as well gave over her hotel to the church for fellowship till date. She later became an Evangelist. Chukwu Sabastian from Ogbo, Mbano gave up his addiction to drinks, cigarette and women and became a model of father, husband and a Christian till he died. These were sources of nuisance to the

society and their families, but who later turned out to be a fortune to the society and their families.

Naturally the Igbo are notoriously religious. Every act is attached to religious observances. Parrinder (1974) noted that “the Igbo are incurably religious” (p.9). The relegation of these Igbo holy observances took a new turn as many turned their back to the traditional religion, and joined the modern Christianity which is a product of the modern evangelization. The traditional observances such as Ahajoku, Otakwu, Mbaa, Uramiriokwa, Akatarankwu Iyiafor etc has left the circuit of existence among the Mbano, Mbaitoli, Ikeduru, parts of Mbaise and Owerri; who are the custodians of the sacred observances that has kept the cohesive existence of the society. According to Crusade Watch, (2010) “prove of Christian deception and annihilation of local cultures by them, lines the annals of history” (n.p).

The white man’s relegatory ideology of the Igbo of Igbo culture is tenaciously upheld by the new the breed of Christians; the product of modern evangelization, especially the Pentecostals. Duru Longinus from Ogbaku Mbaitoli, is vehement about disassociating himself from his kinsmen. He rather prefers his church brethren. This he claims is to ensure that he does not go back to sin; for he believes that the culture is sinful. The tradition is evil and must be avoided for one to be a full fledged Christian; hence some go to the extent of disassociating themselves from their kinsmen, supporting their action with the biblical injunction that they will not be equally yoked with unbelievers. The

blood brother of a Christian is discriminated against. Njoku Veronica from Ngugu Ikeduru refused to be part of the Umuada of her Village. She claims that she cannot associate herself with the cultural practices of the land.

Materialism is growing in bounds as the church grows. This points to the fact that the spread of the church to every nook and cranny has materialistic undertone. Achunike (2004) noted the opinion of people in comparing the growth of the church with that of the filling stations because of their economic viability (p.6-7). The fast means of evangelizing is spreading the message of prosperity so fast that the entire society is into the quest for quick means of making money. Crusade Watch (2007) stated that “Christian religion has weak standard and base. The missionaries with their money are becoming more selfish and are garnering wealth for themselves” (n.p). This has led the society to inexplicable odds. Money is valued above all things and has become a measure of God’s blessing. Obasi (2000) remarked that the pastors will demand that the people should sow seed in the name of donations and by the next Sunday service they bounce on the people to redeem their pledge (n.p). Exhibition of wealth has become the order of the day. People engage in all sorts of vices to make wealth, creating unhealthy and insecure environment for the people.

It has become a mark of noise generation when the Christians engage in the crusade events and other means of open air preaching. This has posed as a source of nuisance to the health of some, especially those who live near the

arena of the source of the noise. Noise pollution is bad in itself. It generates illness.

Many evil minded people hide under the cloak of Christianity while they still carry out their nefarious activities like stealing, prostitution etc. Okonkwo (2010) narrated the fraudulent act of the treasurer of the Mary League of St. Ita's Church, Ibeme; who made away with the money in the coffers of the Mary League (n.,p). Hence it is often said that the worst sinners are found in the churches. People can no longer trust others in the name of Christianity.

The incessant reference to the enemy as the source of failures and other odd experiences has left many in the society in the bondage of mental and emotional slavery. Achunike (2004) noted that "evil spirits or devilmania has gained currency among Christians as a result of the emphasis on it. Spirits appear to be multiplied the more. There is the evil spirit of theft, the spirit of fornication, marine spirit etc" (p.110). People avoid others as an epidemic all in the name of avoiding being poisoned or attacked spiritually. Suspicion has filled the air and people no longer freely associate with others in the society. Oguejifor (2004) remarked the rate at which every movement and appearance of animals such as snake, vulture and the use of weave-on are associated with evil spirits (p.48).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Proselytization is a phenomenon associated with religion of modern era. Unlike the primal religion that advocates unity of time and place, Christianity is apt to spread to all the ends of the world as Jesus instructed in the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20; Mk 16:15ff. This brought Christianity to the door steps of the Igbo. The circumstances surrounding the adoption of Christianity in this area of concern have contributed immensely to the prevailing practices of evangelization in this modern era. Evangelization therefore has taken hold from the legacies adopted by the originators of Christianity in Igboland – the european missionaries. Rivalry and competition still ravage the efforts of the Christian Evangelists. This has produced Christians some of who are not truly converted and who lack the required faith. It has as well led to architectural design of new and viable evangelization strategies to meet up with modern reality in human existence. These strategies include the Televangelism, Crusades, the print, Open-Air preaching, Music etc. These strategies have yielded various results both to the society and to development of Christianity in Mbano, Mbaitoli, Ikeduru, and to the Igboland in general.

The researcher found out that many go to church in the name of receiving solution to their varied problems as is promised and testified by the Evangelists

and the adherents respectively. Some true converts are made and even fundamentalists/fanatics are the products of the modern radical evangelism. Preaching tend to toe the trend of prosperity, and freedom from all hardship. The economic social stress encountered by the populace made the preaching of the modern Evangelist viable and the people troop to the church in search of God's intervention to their difficult situations. The church consequently turned into a solution ground for all problems. Many of the adherents have ended up being members to many churches without commitment. Proliferation of churches has become the order of the day and many fake Evangelists and Pastors have come into the scene. Many church members are being exploited and even duped in the name of church going; some through crusades, television preaching etc. This modern evangelization strategies are carried out with a radical zeal that touches on peoples' lives and needs that many testify that their case saw its end in the encounter with the evangelical work at crusades grounds, reading of books, watching and responding to the Televangelist's preaching on the television screen etc. Evangelization of modern era has achieved much in touching the lives of the populace, but many have been led astray as devilmentia has taken a large chunk of the society.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made. Christian leaders should come together to find out how to conquer the devil of rivalry and competition in Christendom.

Christian leaders should focus on unity and progress of the church and shun self aggrandizement. God is one and should be seen as one. The case of God of various churches should be abhorred.

Government should make a policy that will guide seriously the operation of the evangelist and ensure its implication.

To avoid the people from falling prey to the snares of the wolves in the clothes of pastors, the government should provide the basic needs of the people to alleviate their problems which often lead them into the hands of the fake evangelists

The National Orientation Agency should be properly engaged to re-orientate the people towards positive attitude to life.

Proliferation in the name of evangelization should be curbed with the help of the church leaders and the government working together.

Contributions to Knowledge

The research has been able to find some facts about evangelization strategies of the modern Christians. These findings will serve as source of useful knowledge to the society and to the Christians. It serves as a source of alert to the populace

who fall prey to the hawk of Pastors/Evangelists. Many believe that the causes of all problems are linked to the evil spirit, but in their sufferings, if they remain faithful to God, God will deliver them from all the troubles. This study exposes the mental and emotional torture and slavery people are engaged in the name of worshipping God and expecting favour from God. This can lead to a research on the implication of modern evangelization strategies on social lives of the Christians. The findings can help the government formulate a law on the use of the modern evangelization strategies. A comprehensive trend of development of evangelization in Igboland is x-rayed.

Suggestion for Further Research

Though this research was carried out on evaluation of modern evangelization strategies, the following areas are suggested for further research.

1. A study on the social implications of the modern evangelization strategies on Nigeria.
2. The impact of modern evangelization strategies on poverty eradication in Nigeria.
3. Modern evangelization and politics in Nigeria.
4. Strategies to eradicate rivalry in Christian evangelization.

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Table of Interview

Name	Occupation	Age	Home Town	Date
Uwakwem Egenonye	Farmer	65	Ogbor	23/12/2010
Lolonna Nwehie	House Wife	89	Umozu	20/12/2010
Clement Osuji	Teaching	45	Umuezeala-Ogwara	20/12/2010
Ekwelem Bibian	Evangelist	56	Ibeme	23/12/2010
Njoku Veronica	House Wife	54	Ngugo	2/01/2011
Onwenu Casmir	Watch Repairer	70	Ibeme	2/01/2011
Dike Longinus	Driver	52	Ogbaku	19/12/2010
Fr. Okonkwo	Priest	68	Ibeme	18/10/2010
Rev. Nnadi Chinedu	Clergy	33	Izombe	10/02/2011
Pastor Ejiofor Chukwuemeka	Priest	42	Owerri	10/02/2011