

GEORGE IZUNWA LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM, THE STRATEGY FOR GLOBAL MISSIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper on George Izunwa lifestyle evangelism focuses on this gospel Presenters' lifestyle, conduct and his way of living within their communities. The gospel is best presented through friendship when the opportunities arise and that is how it can go globally. The news filtering our ears about activities of some modern day's Religious leader's lifestyle live much to be desired of them. Many have forgetting what their calling is all about, and have resorted to living way-ward lifestyle such as immorality, tampering with church funds, using manipulative means in their arts of healing and performance of miracles, etc. These individuals are also the ones that are critical about lifestyle evangelism because, they are either ignorant of the Biblical mandate or because they enjoy their unfruitful lifestyle. The methodology used is hermeneutical and exegetical analysis of the relevant scriptural passages. The result of this paper will make lifestyle evangelism strategically, rewarding and necessary for Global missions. That is bringing the people back to the early church days were their leaders were highly regarded. Furthermore, both the message preached and the characters of the preacher become balanced in faith and in practice and the hope of the people restored to believing their Religious leaders again. Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "keep a close watch of yourself and on what you teach".

Keyword: Lifestyle Evangelism, Strategy, Global Missions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Throughout our world of today, Pastors, Mission Leaders, the lay men and women are working towards the time when every person on earth will have access to the fulfillment of the task given by Jesus Christ. There are different movements worldwide that have taken the task of World Evangelism. Various researchers are also conducting measures to achieving the Great Commission. In as much as one does not seem to quarrel over the general method of Evangelism, which is principally that of confrontational approach, with a remarkable result but much more is still to be done. It was Ralph Winter that brought the idea of unreached peoples group the attention of the Lausanne Congress in 1974 with an estimated unreached peoples of 16,750ⁱ⁾ and now has been reduced to 2,365 peoples groupⁱⁱ⁾ (unreached people April, 2010).

It is really difficult to keep track of the Evangelization of every person since on a daily bases there are hundreds of persons engaged in Evangelism. Similarly, thousands of children are born

into our world on a daily basis; however it is the duty of every Christian to join in the task of fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19. The researcher believe that every Christian has a unique grace of loving one another and also working together so as to use each and every one gifts and calling for the good of the body of Christ. But unfortunately, most of the time, our gifts are utilized for personal gains and the purpose of our calling is left unfulfilled.

The church today stands at the dawn of a new era. The decade before us is the most important in the history of our universe. It is a period characterized by civilization and technological innovations, a period of unprecedented economic opportunities and political maneuvers and great cultural rebirth.ⁱⁱⁱ

Jesus attitude toward non-believers was that of relationship. He showed concern in the people's pain, their joys, sorrow, etc. He paid more attention to the aspect of relating with people. No wonder, why in social action, relationship evangelism appears to be more effective than proclamation Evangelism.

It is indeed wonderful, when Christians begin to live out their faith as an absolute imperative. The paper seeks for a situation where every Christian leader shows and practice humility as a reflection of the life of Christ. Mathew 24:14 gave the Biblical basis for fulfilling the Great Commission, but in the midst of these, however, there is still some problems, in achieving the commission, hence Mathew 9:37, 38 provided an additional encouragement for Christians to pray for workers of the kingdom. 1 Timothy 4:16 and Acts 5:13 are primary and addresses the topic of this paper.

2.0 KEYWORD STUDIES

Lifestyle: This word refers to interests, behaviors, orientation of an individual or group. The term was introduced by an Austrian Psychologist Alfred Adiers. The actual meaning refers to a person's basis character which could have been established during the childhood development.^{iv}

Spaargaren, G. & B Vanvliet, sees lifestyle typically as a reflection of an individual altitude, way of life and values. It is also a means of forgoing a sense of self and to create cultural symbols that resonate with personal identify.^v

For Giuffrae, K & Digeronimo, T, Lifestyle may include views on politics, religion, health and many more. All these play a role in shaping someone's lifestyle^{vi}. In addition to how Diet and Environment Affect what you think and feel, others include habits, attitudes, tastes, moral standards, these together constitute the mode of living of an individual or group.

2.1 Lifestyle Evangelism

This has been popular since the 1990's and many Western Christians have sought to share their faith through lifestyle Evangelism.^{vii}

According to the Encyclopedia of Protestantism, Lifestyle Evangelism is an approach to Evangelism that is characterized by someone demonstrating his or her faith with the hope that

people around them become impressed with how God affects people's life, and become Christian.^{viii}

An alternative to lifestyle is friendship Evangelism which is an approach to Evangelism that is characterized by developing a good relationship with people in order to show them kindness as one continues to minister God's grace to them. Believers in this preposition say that this approach agrees with the model used by Jesus who took interest on those he relates with as friends. The case of Lazarus, Mary, Martha and Zarchius are good examples.^{ix}

2.2 Exegesis

The two key prominent Biblical passages for this discussion are 1Timothy 4:16 and Acts 5: 13

2.3 1Timothy 4: 16-

According to Expositor's Greek Testament, the passage says that the teacher/leaders must need prepare himself first and foremost before he prepares what to teach others^x. In the words of Gills Exposition, the command was not referring to a man or a Christian only but to the Christian Leader; who should make his life a wordy exemplary lifestyle and should attract his followership to God.^{xi}

Ellicot^{xiii} in his commentary, presented the verse 16 as accurate in its rendering from the original text. He made a further observation on the faithfulness required in carrying out the demand of this passage. The key thing here is that church leaders must keep their attention fixed on their own demeanour and conduct while at the same time given equal, and careful attention to the quality and character of their teaching. This teaching must be true and manly indeed. Furthermore, church leader must exemplify his teaching in words and deeds. Without a true and efficient teaching of God's word, the pure and upright life of the church leader will fail to lead people to Master Jesus.

The forerunner commentary, commented on the passage by saying, "Guard yourself, this will need a great deal of effort. This also reminds us of Jesus injunction in Luke 21: 36, on Watch and pray always". The passage further reveals that the church leader is constantly requested to be at a constant vigilance. Finally, Christian leaders should jealously protect their spiritual growth.^{xiii} The leaders have been directed to "Take heed to yourself". Church leaders have been shown the way to present themselves.. The message is not an administration to watch world event, but instead Christian leaders are to watch themselves. The Greek word translated "Watch", meaning "to be sleepless", it also means to exercise constant vigilance over something, always being at alert.^{xiv}

2.4 Acts 5: 13-

This passage is unique and special. The passage is divided into two different issues. The verse has had very low work done on it. The first part has a "none of the rest dared to associate with them". The news of the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira created great fear all over the ancient Greco- Roman world that people we: no longer willing to be associated with the Apostles or the new church. The verb associate (Kollao) means "glue together" or "to connect together" it gives an interesting picture of why people refused joining the church. This is

contrary to what happens today where people join churches without “glued to” where people join churches for the sake of solving their problems. The death of Ananias and Sapphira repositioned the earlier church that people stopped joining carelessly. There was a holy awe that kept people irrespective of the position from joining^{xv}. The second part of verse 13, states thus “the people held them in high esteem”. Who were this people of course of, the Jews. The event here happened when the Jews became those who respect Christians. Is this still the position today, the answer is no. the word held in high esteem (Megaluno) from the (great) to declare great. In the New Testament it means to magnify or to praise^{xvi}. In Acts 1 0: 46, it describes exalting God and in Acts 9:17 of magnifying the name of God. Therefore true worshippers of God ought to be glorified because of their dedication for the service of God. All those who see them are appreciative of how genuine they are and are praise worthy.

(A) Statistical Percentage (%) of Friendship/Relationship Survey for the effective Membership provided by the Adventist Church

Table 1

S/NO	Grouping	%
1	Those that were brought up by church	44
2	Those brought through friendship/relationship	58
3	Those brought through evangelical campaigns	36
4	Those brought through the Media	20
5	Those brought through others	20

Respondents were invited to indicate what they ascribe as their position — the most frequent comment had to do with Christian Education. The most effective method was through friendship/Relationship Evangelism from this research.^{xvii}

(B) Study of the factors that influence people to join the church

Grouping	%
Special occasion	1-2
Pass-bys	2-3
Visitation	1-2
Evangelism Crusade	0-5

Friendship/Relationship	75-90
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Compositions of respondents, Gender-wise 57% Female, 43% Male 60% were Adventist for over 20years, 15% were members for 11-20years. 4% were members for less than one year. 61% grew up as Adventists.^{xviii}

2.5 George Izunwa's Lifestyle

George Izunwa, a member, a chorister, a teacher, a prayer warrior, a Sunday school teacher. The head Pastor of Gate way is an all involving person in the ministry God called him.

He participates in every activity of the church. He does not wait for others to start an assignment before he joins them. In fact he kick start virtually every activity of the church.

George Izunwa demonstrate lifestyle by practically involving himself in all the various aspect of the church business. He demonstrate service to the core. He practices leadership by example. He is a good organizer, a time keeper and a lover of his people. This is the reason why he has a large followership in his church. His followership cuts across the length and breadth of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

On the area of social welfare, his church has a unique structure, He carries a hospital retreats at different States in Nigeria, where the sick are given free medical treatment. Others are Scholarship scheme, Entrepreneurships skill development and help for the handicap among many others.

3.0 CONCLUSION

It is absolutely that we believe that living out our faith is an absolute imperative. Every Christian leader should be a humble reflection of Jesus. The message of the preacher is hollow if he lives do not contradict the words he preachers and relays on the Holy Spirit as his genuine source power and strength.

The researcher is encouraging Christian leaders to grow in loving one another and working together to fulfill the standard of the Church. God has given each person and organization unique gifts and callings. Leaders should endeavour to honour those callings.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The paper stands as a reflective material on the lifestyle of church leaders
- The lost glory of the church can be restored when the life of the leadership counts.
- This paper is a call for Church leaders to live their lives as in the Bible times.

ENDNOTES / REFERENCES

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