



...Set For the Defence of the Gospel. (Phil 1:17)

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T H E M E :

THE EVANGELIST

DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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EDITORIAL

The theme of the third edition for 2024 is the Evangelist. The work of the Evangelist is given by Jesus Christ so that the church can grow to maturity as planned by God. Topics under this theme include The work of evangelists, The relationship between Evangelists and Bishops, Hiring and Firing Evangelists, Supporting an Evangelist Effectively and The Harvest is Plentiful But The Labourers are Few. We trust that you will be edified in reading this edition.

Previous editions of the magazine can now be viewed and downloaded from the website www.defenderoftruth.com.ng. The site also has articles, books, audio and video sermons which the reader will find edifying.

THE EVANGELIST

by **Afolabi A. Akinyemi**

Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the head of the church gave roles to men in the church *“to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we mature to the full measure of the stature of Christ”*¹ (Ephesians 4:12-13). One of these roles is that of the Evangelist. The word Evangelist or Evangelists is used three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11). The word means *“one who announces glad tidings, preacher of the Gospel, the name given to the NT heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles”*². Preacher is a synonym used more commonly (eleven times) in the Scripture to describe an Evangelist. Paul the Apostle underscored the necessity for Preachers when he said *“How then can they call on the One in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? **And how can they hear without someone to preach?**”*¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: *“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”* (Romans 10:14-15)

The glad tidings or good news that the Evangelist preaches is the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Paul instructed Timothy an Evangelist, (2 Tim. 4:5) to **“Preach the word;** be prepared in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and encourage with every form of patient instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2). The methods to be employed in preaching are to:

1. **Reprove:** This means “to convict, refute, confute, to find fault with, correct”. The word of God is to be used to convict men of sin and call them to repentance (Acts 20:20-21).
2. **Rebuke:** “to tax with fault, rate, chide, rebuke, reprove, censure severely to admonish or charge

sharply”³ (Gal.3:1-3;4:16;1 Cor.3:1-3) The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God should be used to *“pierce even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12). Paul, the Apostle did not hesitate to call out the foolishness of the Galatian Christians and the carnality of the Corinthian church. This may seem harsh to men but this is what the word of God does.

3. **Encourage:** “to admonish, exhort, to beg, entreat, beseech, to strive to appease by entreaty, to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation”³. The word of God should be used to encourage and build up people. The Apostles begged his various audiences severally in the New Testament (Rom. 15:30;1 Cor. 1:10;1Pet.2:11)

All of these should be done with every form of patient instruction. The Evangelist must make endurance, longsuffering and perseverance his watchword in doing this work. The gospel of Christ should be preached regardless of whether it is accepted or resisted. God told Ezekiel *“Son of man,” He added, “listen carefully to all the words I speak to you, and take them to heart.”*¹¹ *Go to your people, the exiles; speak to them and tell them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says,’ **whether they listen or refuse to listen**”* (Ezekiel 3:10-11). The Evangelist should work for the long haul.

Paul's instruction to Timothy is the same instruction God gave to the prophet Jeremiah when He commissioned him. *“Then the LORD reached out His hand, touched my mouth, and said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms to **uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant.**”* (Jeremiah 1:9-10)



THE MOTIVATION

The motivation for preaching the gospel should be love for God, the word of God, the church and lost souls. The work of a preacher should not be a last resort as it has become for many nowadays. By this, I mean those who take up the role because they have tried their hands on other professions without success only to take up preaching as a 'fallback' option. It should also not be a 'fill-in' option until better opportunities arise. The motivation is not to please people neither is the purpose to entertain or make the audience happy. Paul, the Apostle demonstrated his love for lost souls. He said *"Yet when I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, **because I am obligated to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!** If my preaching is voluntary, I have a reward. But if it is not voluntary, I am still entrusted with a responsibility. What then is my reward? That in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not use up my rights in preaching it. **Though I am free of obligation to anyone, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.** To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), to win those under the law. To those without the law, I became like one without the law (though I am not outside the law of God but am under the law of Christ), to win those without the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. **I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings**" (1 Corinthians 9:16-23).*

TRAINING

The responsibility of training men who wish to take up this work is given to Evangelists. Paul told Timothy *"And the things that you have heard me say among many witnesses, **entrust these to faithful men who will be qualified to teach others as well**"* (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul mentored several men among whom was Timothy (Gal.2:1; 2 Tim. 4:9-12) and he instructed Timothy to do the same. The qualification for training is that the individual should be a faithful Christian.

The church is divinely saddled with the responsibility of training Christians for work in God's kingdom. Timothy was instructed by Paul on how each one must behave in the church of God (1 Tim. 3:15). The training of Evangelists should therefore be under the oversight of the church.

QUALITIES

1. A faithful Christian brother (2 Tim. 2:2)
2. Able to teach (2 Tim. 2:24)
3. Not quarrelsome, kind and forbearing (2 Tim. 2:24-25)
4. Devoted to studying the word of God, exhortation and teaching (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15)

The Scriptures do not specify age limits, marital status and educational qualifications for Evangelists. Churches should be careful not to go beyond what is written in this regard (1 Cor. 4:6)

Finally, churches should realize that Evangelists are not church managers, janitors or social workers neither are they Pastors. Evangelists are commanded to *"Pay close attention to your life and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for by so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you"* (1 Timothy 4:16)

¹ All Scripture quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible

² Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

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SUPPORTING AN EVANGELIST EFFECTIVELY

by Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

"Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:14)

Introduction

One major area relating to the evangelist that is perhaps often ignored by many is the support of his work. Many preachers are inadequately supported today because of certain misconceptions about this issue. Some have taught that the only time a preacher may receive support from the church is when he is needy. In other words, if a preacher had a side business, that would make him ineligible for support by a local congregation. Some others have even opposed the fact that preachers should be supported. Some churches do not consider what the preacher does as work and would insist that the preacher should "go and work" as if what he does in God's Kingdom is not a work that one deserves to be adequately supported for doing. More than once, I have heard congregation members say to their preacher that he should look for a job. They think that a preacher who does not have a side job in addition to preaching is a lazy man. In this writing, we shall look at the New Testament to find out what the will of God is concerning the support of a Gospel preacher.

An Evangelist Is A Labourer or Worker In God's Kingdom

An evangelist is a servant of the Lord and a labourer in His kingdom. In I Corinthians 3:9, Paul said *"For we are labourers together with God..."* (KJV) He is a preacher of good news and evangelism is the major work an evangelist does. I.e., he preaches that good news. An evangelist is to preach the gospel to the world to save it from sin. A careful study of the New Testament will reveal to us various men who served as evangelists and the nature of the work they did. Paul and Barnabas were said to be *"men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Acts 15:26). Paul preached the gospel of Christ both *"publicly and from house to house."* (Acts 20:20) Philip was an evangelist (Acts 21:8) who preached to the unsaved (Acts 8:5,12). Timothy was an evangelist (II Timothy 4:5), who preached to the church (I Timothy 1:3-4; II Timothy 4:1-4) and also to the world (Acts 16:1-3). Titus was also an evangelist (Titus 1:5) who was expected to set in order the things that were lacking in the local church. Part of the work of an evangelist is *"equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of*

Christ" (Ephesians 4:12 NASB). In a nutshell, the work of an evangelist is to preach the gospel to the lost of the world around him and to fellow Christians in or out of the congregation of which he is a member. He is to do it in season and out of season (II Timothy 4:2).

The Labourer Is Worthy of His Wages

One principle that is taught throughout the Scriptures is the fact that the labourer is worthy of his wages (See Leviticus 19:13, Deuteronomy 24:15, Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7 & I Timothy 5:18). Since gospel preachers are labourers in God's Kingdom, it follows that they are worthy of pay or support. A careful reading of the New Testament would reveal that God showed us both by direct commands/statements and approved examples that those who work in His kingdom as evangelists are to be supported (or paid) for the work that they do. For example, the text for this lesson (I Corinthians 9:14) is a clear indication of that. The text reads, *"Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel."* This means that those who are preaching should earn their living from the gospel work that they do – they should be paid for the work they do. This is a very plain statement which shows that God wants the evangelists to be supported.

In fact, within the context of that same verse, Paul made a few arguments to justify why a preacher should be supported. Let us read carefully I Corinthians 9:3-14

"My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If



we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:3-14)

A careful reading of the above passage will reveal the following points:

- Paul notes that people expect to be compensated for whatever kind of work they do, and preaching is not an exception (verses 7-8).
- He refers to the Law of Moses to establish that even oxen had the right to eat while they were threshing grain, and if God was concerned with oxen, how much more is He concerned with providing for human workers? (verses 9-10)
- He emphasized that those who provide spiritual blessings to Christians have the right to expect physical blessings in return (verses 11-12).
- Those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar (verse 13)

All of these reasons justify why a preacher should be supported. Further in Galatians 6:6, Paul writes: "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches" This clearly shows that God expects the preacher to be supported. Both the church and individuals are to do this.

We have examples of Paul receiving support from churches when he was preaching:

"I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself" (II Corinthians 11:8-9).

"For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!" (II Corinthians 12:13).

"Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of

the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:15-17).

"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, **not because we do not have authority**, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us" (II Thessalonians 3:7-9).

What About Preachers Taking Up Other Jobs In Addition To Preaching?

Sometimes when preachers are not adequately supported, they may take up other jobs in addition to preaching the Gospel to take care of their families since "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (I Timothy 5:8) This is not bad, but it may not allow the preacher to work as effectively as he should, especially if the other job takes a lot of his time. In Acts 18:3-5, we saw Paul engaged in the business of tentmaking for a while with Pricilla and Aquilla while he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath. While "tentmaking" may help provide support for the preacher, the work of God may suffer.

Conclusion

Preaching the gospel is a great and noble work that the preachers do. It requires study on their part, both on what the Bible text says and how to refute what is being taught contrary to the Bible. Churches must remember that **preacher support is not benevolent relief**. The preacher should be paid as an act of justice, according to what he deserves, rather than as an act of mercy. If he is working hard at preaching and teaching, he should be rewarded accordingly.

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THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

by Bro Opemipo Olusola

Introduction

The effectiveness and success of every institution depends on the understanding, accountability and responsibility of each member thereby leading to good teamwork, and so is the church of God. Her growth depends on the active recognition and participation of the members and the leaders, especially evangelists (Eph.4:16). Poor understanding of the Divine roles which God had given to the evangelists has led to much confusion and unhealthy situations in the local assembly of God's people (Matt.22:29).

An evangelist is a function or work rather than being seen as a religious title "...do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim.4:5). It is derived from evangelize, to proclaim glad tidings, "good news", the gospel".

Duties Of Evangelists

Evangelists fill an important role in the leadership of the Church of Christ. God has appointed work for the Evangelist (2 Tim.4:5). However, confusion among church members as to what an evangelist's work and duty are often generates problems for both the preacher and the church.

The pastoral epistles in the New Testament offer insight into this subject matter;

1. **Preaching The Gospel:** Evangelists are divinely saddled with the duties of bringing the wonderful message of God and salvation to the lost mankind. *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"* (Romans 10:14-15). They are commanded to preach the word in season and out of season (2 Tim.4:2). He proclaims the pure gospel of Christ not preaching motivational speeches nor philosophies of men. *"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"* (1 Cor.2:2). Evangelists share the light of the gospel to new lands, cities, towns and regions of the world as missionaries. We saw the example of the Antioch church sending out Paul and Barnabas on their first

missionary journey which led to the spread of the New Testament Church to the Gentile world (Acts.13:1-52).

2. **Equipping And Training Of New Evangelists:** Evangelists have the responsibility of training and mentoring faithful men who would be able to teach others also, thereby ensuring the continuity of the sound doctrine of Christ from generation to generation (2 Tim.2:2). Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the greatest Evangelist of all times, multiplied Himself by mentoring twelve Apostles who later laid the foundation for His church (Eph.2:19-21). Apart from the twelve Apostles, we read of seventy disciples sent out in Lk.10: 1-12. After our Lord's ascension to Heaven, we read of one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room praying (Acts.1:15). Later on the number kept growing exponentially to three thousand (Acts 2:41), then to 5,000 men in Acts.4:4 then to the uncountable multitudes in Acts.5:14. Such is the power of training and mentoring faithful men to preach the gospel of Christ. Every faithful evangelist must make an effort to multiply himself by training other sound preachers of the gospel (Acts 20:1-5).
3. **Correcting False Teaching:** Evangelists have the divine role of addressing, exposing and correcting false doctrines and misconceptions. (1Tim.1:3-7). The mouths of false preachers must be stopped. For this reason, he must be a studious person, always willing to search the Scriptures, open to scriptural discussions including with those of opposing views to re-examine or verify his faith (1 Tim.4:13-16; 2 Tim.2:15). The church becomes defiled spiritually when false teachers or heretic members are allowed in the local assemblies (Rev.2:15,20). Hence, the evangelist is expected to fight the good fight and defend the "one faith" of Christ (Eph.4:4) whenever it is threatened by false teachers. We may learn from Paul and Barnabas at the Antioch Church. (Acts.15:1-5; Jude.1:3-4)
4. **Edifying The Church:** Evangelists show concern for the spiritual well-being of the believers guiding and supporting them in their faith (2 Cor.11:28). As a minister, his services are in the area of spiritual things, serving a spiritually balanced diet to the people of God both publicly and from house to house, declaring the whole counsel of God. The evangelist is enjoined to build up all members regardless of



age, gender and maturity in faith. (Acts.20:17-20;27; Tit. 2:1-10) This duty also includes rebuking erring members (1 Tim.5:20).

5. **Leading By Example:** Evangelists are charged with the responsibility of modelling a godly and righteous life, demonstrating the character and conduct expected of believers (1 Tim.4:12; Tit.2:7-8). He is not only to preach the gospel but live up to the sermon he preaches. An evangelist is expected to discipline himself and be free from suspicions by living a transparent life, not compromising with evil conduct and avoiding being bought with money by the wealthy members (1 Cor.9:24-27) Preachers who are men of integrity and dignity display courage to fight against lawlessness, lateness, stinginess, immoral fashion, poor home management, youthful exuberance, coldness in evangelism and other similar vices. (Prov.28:1; 2 Tim.1:13-14).
7. **Setting The Church In Order:** It is the work of the evangelist to set in order things that are lacking in his local church (Tit.1:5). This he does by teaching the word of God which thoroughly furnishes all the saints unto every good work (2 Tim.3:16-17) and how they ought to behave in the church (1 Tim.3:15). He is to lead the church into maturity and guide them to ordain the Bishops and Deacons (Tit.1:5-9). A preacher is a watchman and he must watch in all things (2 Tim.4:5) He warns of dangers and gives the call to duty (Ezek.3:16-21). An evangelist must not be a person who is obsessed with selfish ambitions or else he would block every opportunity to ordain qualified men as Pastors and Deacons in the local church where he is serving. (1 Tim.3:1-13; 3 John.1:9-11).

Conclusion

Having learnt the vital importance of evangelists in God's eternal purpose, how often do we destroy God's work as we try to talk down this office in our local assemblies, neglect to provide adequate wages that meet their living standards, and demonstrate cold attitudes in training and supporting new preachers?

To the preacher, have you not soiled your garments with partiality, covetousness, and false teachings for material gains? Have you not jeopardized God's work because of your ungodly conduct at home? Have you not been

swallowed up by the worldly traditions and inherited customs, (1 Tim.4:16)? It is not too late for everyone to come to repentance for the Lord does not desire that any should perish (2 Pet.3:9). We must acknowledge the importance of the evangelists in God's scheme of redemption for mankind. They ought to honor them for the sake of the eternal effects of their work in the church. *"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake"* (1 Thess.5:12-13).

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THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL

by Kayode Adekunle

"For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13-14)

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise. ... The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise". (Proverbs 11:30)



Introduction

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" (Matt 9:37-38)

In this passage, Jesus is speaking to his disciples about the vast opportunities for preaching and evangelism. He uses the metaphor of harvest and labourers to describe the abundance of people who are yearning for the gospel and the need to have preachers reach out to them.

The importance of having Christians, particularly young men, desire the work of preaching is underscored by the prayer our Lord Jesus Christ asked his disciples to render in that passage "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." No doubt, there is a great need for spiritual labourers to share the Gospel and bring people to Christ. The harvest as used by Christ here, is a wakeup call to all faithful Christians that there is so much work to be done, and we should be earnest in our desire and efforts to share the Gospel to save souls.

Who Is An Evangelist?

The word "evangelist" as used in the New Testament, is derived from the Greek word "euangelistes" which means "proclaimer of good news" or someone who "heralds the gospel". This is considered a specific work in the New Testament, as Paul urged Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim 4:5). Phillip is referred to as an "evangelist" (Acts 21:8). Other terms used for the evangelist are "a preacher" (I Tim 2:7); "a minister" (I Tim 4:6).

Importance Of The Work Of An Evangelist

1. He Is Sent To The Lost Souls

The importance of the work of an evangelist is underscored by how it features prominently in the plan of salvation. The Bible says "All have sinned and that the wages of sin is death" (Rom 3:23; 6:23). The word of God brings hope and life to the dead. (John 6:63; Eph 2:12). The desire of God is for man to be saved from eternal damnation (I Tim 2:3-4); and the bible makes it very clear that the power of God to save is in the gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16), that is why the gospel must be preached and man must hear and believe it to be saved (Mark 16:15-16). Paul says "How can they believe what they have not heard and how can they hear without a preacher" (Rom 10: 14). The importance and urgency of reaching out to the lost souls is further underscored when Paul instructed Timothy, the evangelist, to "preach the word, to be instant, in season and out of season" (II Tim 4:2). He said "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Cor 9:16).

2. He Is To Teach The Church

The evangelist is appointed by Christ to edify the church, that is, to teach and exhort them. He is one of the personnel that Christ appointed for the church. Paul states this about Christ "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11-12). Paul confirmed this when he said he was "appointed both a preacher and an apostle to proclaim the truth to the Gentiles" (I Tim 2:7).

The great work of protecting the souls of the brethren with sound doctrine is committed to the evangelist. No wonder Paul says this to Timothy the evangelist "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (I Tim 4:16). The evangelist must "hold fast to sound words" and use them to teach, exhort, instruct and rebuke the church when necessary (I Tim 4:6; 5:1; 5:20).



The evangelist is also charged to teach other men so they can also become preachers. Paul says this to Timothy in II Tim 2:2 *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"*.

Why Faithful Christians Should Desire To Take Up The Roles Of Evangelists

1. It Is The Commandment Of Christ

Jesus Christ said *"You are my friends if you do whatever I command you"* (John 15:14). Taking up the role of an evangelist shows obedience to the instruction of Christ in Mark 16:15-16 and Matt 28:19-20. Christ's desire is for sinners to be saved and that is the main reason why He came into the world and laid down His life (Rom 5:6-8). Without hearing the gospel of Christ no one can be saved that is what necessitated His statement in Matt 9:37-38.

2. It Helps To Take The Truth To Lost Souls

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth, and it is essential to spread it to those who may not know it. In John 14:6, Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* By sharing the Gospel, we are helping others find the truth that can free them from eternal damnation.

3. Evangelists Are Coworkers With God

The salvation of the soul of man is a project that is dear to God. Out of His infinite love, He decided to sacrifice His only begotten Son so man can be saved (I John 4:9-10). In His desire to save man, He came up with a plan of salvation which revolves around obedience to the gospel. The work of the evangelist is to take this message of salvation to man. His status and work make him become God's partner or coworker in the scheme of salvation. Paul refers to himself and others who worked with him as *"God's fellow workers"* (1 Cor 3:9).

4. To Bring Glory To God

Preaching the Gospel of Christ is also a way to bring glory to God. When we share the good news of salvation with the lost souls, we proclaim His greatness and show others what He has done for us. In Psalm 96:3, David says, *"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples."* By sharing the Gospel, we are declaring God's glory to other people.

5. An Evangelist Is A Soldier Of Christ

No status is higher than being enlisted as a soldier of Christ in the war to win souls from the kingdom of Satan. Paul charged Timothy to *"endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"* (II Tim 2:3). This is no doubt a great privilege that any faithful Christian should aspire to attain.

6. Growing In Faith

Getting fully involved in evangelism helps faithful Christians deepen their understanding of their faith and become more confident in sharing it with others. Peter has this to say *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed"*. (1 Peter 3:15-17)

7. It Helps To Build And Strengthen The Body Of Christ

When the gospel is preached and people obey it, they are added to the Church Acts 2: 36-47. The Body of Christ which is the Church is built up through evangelism. Furthermore, the converted souls have to be taught so they can continue to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. An Evangelist plays a very vital role in this regard (Eph 4: 11-16)

Conclusion

The greatest way Christians can reciprocate the love of Christ and show obedience to His commandment of loving their neighbours is to take the gospel to them. The purpose of Christ's sacrifice is fulfilled when a lost soul is converted into His Body through obedience to the gospel. The Bible says *"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance"*. (Luke 15:7). Young and faithful Christian men, should rise to the great commission of our Lord and take the work of saving souls after all Solomon says *"he who wins souls is wise"*. (Proverbs 11:30)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELISTS AND BISHOPS

by *Oladapo Olawale*

INTRODUCTION

In the New Testament, the offices of the evangelists and bishops are part of the divinely ordained functions in the church (Ephesians 4: 11- 12). Each local congregation is expected to mature to become scripturally organised by appointing men who meet the qualities set out in 1 Timothy 3:1- 11; Titus 1:5ff into the positions of Bishops. Bishops in the New Testament are also called shepherds (pastors), elders or presbyters (Acts 20:17, 28, 1 Peter 5: 1-4). The role of these Bishops is to oversee or shepherd the local congregation or the flock of God among them (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7,17).

The Bible also established the functions of an evangelist which primarily is to "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). In carrying out the work of preaching, evangelists are to do so with all authority (1 Timothy 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:15). It is therefore pertinent to inquire into the relationship between the evangelists and bishops. Do they both share authority to manage the affairs of a local church? Does the evangelist exercise authority over the elders? Or do the bishops' oversight functions extend to the evangelists?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EVANGELISTS AND BISHOPS

It can be rightly understood from the New Testament that the authority of the elders extends to the evangelist who works with the local congregation that the elders oversee. The word bishop as seen in Acts 20:17, 28 means overseer (*episkopos*) referring to someone who is tasked with the duty of ensuring that things needed to be done by others are properly done. In effect, a bishop is a superintendent or steward (Titus 1:7) who is entrusted with the management of a local church.

Unlike what is noticeable in many denominations, a preacher or an evangelist is not a pastor or bishop. Pastors exist in plurality in a local church and part of their qualifications is that they must be married (1 Timothy 3:15).

The authority of elders is bestowed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and it encompasses: (a) *ruling over God's House* (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 3:4,5; 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13) and (b) *shepherding and leading the flock of God* (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5: 1- 4). In ruling over the house of God, the bishops are to do so *willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly nor as being lords over those entrusted to you but being examples to the*

flock (1 Peter 5: 2-3).

It is important to note that the New Testament did not refer to evangelists as overseers (*episkopos*). This is because the responsibility of the management of affairs of the local congregation has been specifically assigned to the bishops. Everyone (including the evangelist) in a local congregation where the bishops rule will therefore come under their authority. By the very fact that the bishops oversee the flock of God among them, they exercise the same authority over evangelists who preach in that local congregation.

It is often misconstrued that the charge of the evangelist to preach, convince and exhort with all authority and letting no one disregard them (Titus 2:15) precludes them from the oversight functions of the elders. The authority the evangelist exercises in Titus 2:15 is such that is inherent in the word of God. To preach, rebuke, exhort with all authority means to do so according to God's commandments in His word (see also Romans 16:26; 1 Corinthians 7:6; 25; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Corinthians 8:8). To preach with all authority means to preach as God commands. The inherent authority of the gospel is greater than the elders, evangelists and even angels and no one is permitted to disregard it (Galatians 1:8 – 9). This kind of authority does not however take away the authority conferred on bishops to manage the affairs of the local congregation.

Managing the affairs of a local congregation naturally involves determining who can or cannot preach in the local congregation as this would fall under the responsibility of watching over and feeding the flock of God (Acts 20: 28ff). The bishops can therefore hire an evangelist to preach in a local church but where they observe that the souls of the members of a local congregation are being endangered by what is being preached by the evangelist, they can fire him in line with their duty to watch out for the flock.

Some have also incorrectly applied Ephesians 4:11 to state that the offices in the New Testament church were listed in order of hierarchy thus: apostles, prophets, evangelists, bishops and teachers. It is then surmised that the evangelists are greater than the bishops. Ephesians 4:11 only lists the offices the Holy Spirit created in the church, it does not in any way indicate that any office is greater or more important than the other.

Again, there is the false notion that since in Titus 1: 5, Paul left Titus (an evangelist) in Crete to set in order the things that are lacking by appointing elders in every city, the evangelist cannot be under the authority of the elders. It is assumed that evangelists having ordained the bishops have the right over



them. The Greek word *Kathistemi* translated as ordain/appoint does not usually mean the person ordaining also took part in selecting the persons ordained. The duty of the evangelist to ordain (or appoint) elders does not necessarily mean that the evangelist took part in selecting the men so ordained as elders. To ordain or appoint as seen in the New Testament can simply mean merely installing or confirming a selection. One instance where this can be found is in Acts 6: 3 – 4 where the apostles stated clearly that their functions do not include serving of tables. They stipulated the criteria for the brethren to appoint deacons thus:

Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:3-4, NKJV).

In this context, the congregation have picked out from among them seven men qualified to serve, whilst the apostles merely appointed or ordained (ratified) the men already picked to serve. In the same vein, Titus couldn't have lived or stayed so long around Crete to be able to identify qualified and suitable men to be appointed as elders. This would require a process of selection involving members of the local congregations in Crete.

In any case, the bible is clear that the bishops have authority over the flock they have been charged with. Only the bishops have the authority to rule over a congregation (1 Timothy 3:5; 5:17); an evangelist has no such authority to rule even where he has 'ordained' the bishops to their office. This is the plan of God regarding how churches are to be governed and we ought to strive to uphold it.

THE ROLE OF THE EVANGELIST IN A CONGREGATION WHERE THERE ARE NO BISHOPS

Whilst the scriptural ideal is for every congregation to appoint elders to direct their affairs, many churches are not so scripturally organised. There has been the temptation in such situations to have the evangelist act as pastor, taking charge and shepherding the flock. In a congregation where there are no Bishops, the responsibility of directing the affairs of the local church falls on the men in the congregation in line with the principle of male leadership in the church (1 Timothy 2: 8 – 15). Before Titus was commanded to appoint elders in Crete the churches were already in existence functioning as local congregations albeit imperfectly. The men in a local church who do not have qualified males to act as bishops have the

authority in such instances to hire an evangelist and he will be subject to the authority of the local church.

The evangelist does not assume the authority to manage and direct the affairs of the local church simply because there are no elders there, this will be a contravention of God's plan. Even in a congregation without elders, the evangelist's role remains the same: to proclaim the gospel of Christ (both to the lost and the saved) and defend the same (Philippians 1:17), preaching the word in and out of season, exhorting, rebuking with all longsuffering (2 Timothy 4:2), He has the duty of teaching and training faithful men to be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). As part of these duties, the evangelist must teach and remind the Christians about the need of desiring to hold the office of a bishop in the church.

CONCLUSION

We must not only understand God's commandments regarding the roles of bishops and evangelists in the local church, but we must also see to it that we obey them. The preacher cannot arrogate to himself or be given the responsibility to rule over a congregation. That responsibility falls on bishops in a congregation that has appointed them. But where there are no elders the authority to direct the affairs of the church rests on the adult males in that congregation. The evangelist must continue to preach *thus saith the Lord* to the church, exhorting and rebuking with all authority (Titus 2:15).

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"HIRING AND FIRING" OF EVANGELISTS

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

Bible Gem: "And **He Himself** gave some to be apostles, some prophets, **some evangelists**, and some pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching ... do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:2-5).ⁱ

The Evangelist

The Bible is clear in Ephesians 4:11-13 that the work of the Evangelist is a distinct and definite role in the Church of God. The passage states that the Lord *Himself* "gave some to be ... evangelists" amongst other rolesⁱⁱ with the purposes being "for the edifying of the body of Christ" and to promote "the unity of the faith". The Apostles and Prophets who were the only divinely inspired or miraculously guided functionaries in Lord's Church, and who were also preachers (1 Timothy 1:12; 2:7; Ephesians 3:3-5), were the earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7) to whom God committed the gospel for its revelation and confirmation (1 Timothy 1:11; Mark 16:20). The Apostles and Prophets have no successors (much in the same way that a foundation is not part of the main building – Ephesians 2:20), but their authority and work remain with us today (as that foundation) through their writing and examples (Philippians 3:17-19) which are codified in the New Testament for us (2 Peter 1:3, 13-15).

Notwithstanding, the Lord ordained that His Gospel continue to be preached (Matthew 28:19-20). The special role to lead this charge in the Church on a permanent or continuing basis is the Evangelist (2 Timothy 4:1-2). We see examples in the scriptures such as Timothy (ref. our Bible gem above), Philip (Acts 21:8) and Titus (Titus 1:5; 2:1, 15). Those who perform this role today do so because they have chosen to serve the Lord in this way.

The role of the Evangelist is to "preach the gospel of Christ, and to be urgent in so doing whether in season or out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). The essence is conveyed in the very meaning of the name which is the English transliteration of the descriptive name used in the original Greek New Testament ("euangelistes"), that means a proclaimer of good news or "a preacher of the Gospel"ⁱⁱⁱ. Evangelists undertake to spread the Gospel of Christ by teaching and preaching it publicly and privately using all opportunities they can find.

The Evangelist And The Local Church

Given that the Lord *Himself* created or ordained the special role of evangelists in His Church, the work of an

evangelist (or of evangelists) will always be key to progressing the work of the Lord in every local church. This is due to the very useful purpose that evangelists serve in worship and work. To be scripturally organized, a local church is required to have bishops (elders) and deacons (Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5). Yet, the evangelist's role is a key part of both the journey and process leading up to appointing such elders and deacons, as well as the facilitation of the ensuing work of edification and evangelism (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:17-20). Barnabas and Saul worked with the church in Antioch for a year (Acts 11:26), and later Paul at Corinth for a year and a half, and at Ephesus for three years (Acts 18:11; 20:31). Paul enjoined Timothy to abide with the church at Ephesus for this purpose (1 Timothy 1:3-4; 3:14-15) and left Titus with the church in Crete for the same purpose (Titus 1:5).

However, an evangelist or preacher is made such, not due to an official act of a local church, but by his study and preparation for the work (1 Timothy 4:11-13) as well as his having chosen to serve the Lord in this way (1 Corinthians 3:5-9). Being an evangelist is not dependent on recognition by a local church as no church is an agency of the Lord in deciding who can or who cannot preach.

Nevertheless, a local church does have the right to choose or select a preacher to work with it (or to select a preacher to support in gospel work carried out elsewhere) within the bounds of scriptural principles. A preacher may also continue working as an evangelist with Christians converted by him who have formed a local church provided they can work together without schism, significant hindrance or objection (Acts 18:6-11). Every local church in such a position must recognize and accept its responsibilities and duties to the preacher. This is just as important as the preacher's recognition of his duties to the church. The church owes the preacher moral support in his work as well as financial support. Preachers need food, shelter, clothing etc., and they have the same obligation to provide for their own that the rest of us have (1 Timothy 5:8). When a local church fulfills its financial duty to its preacher to the best of its ability, the preacher will be receiving the "wages" (2 Corinthians 11:8) which the Lord "ordained" (1 Corinthians 9:14) to be given to those devoting their livelihoods to the gospel. A



local church that fails to do so is defrauding the preacher of his rightful due (Luke 10:7) and the leading men in such a church should expect the same reward from the Lord as for the unjust rich who kept back the wages of their workers (James 5:4).

The Hiring And Firing Of Evangelists

There is a general principle of secular law that an employer who has the right to hire also has the right to fire. And it is often thought or presumed that this principle equally applies to the relationship between the local church and its preacher, or to a preacher that works with the local church. Is this correct? Well, just as there are exceptions to this principle even under secular law^{iv} This principle becomes an unsound one when situated in the context of the Lord's arrangement for evangelists in His Church.

It would be an error to conceive of the work of preachers with local churches as a matter of mere employment or to treat such work as akin to secular employment rather than a matter of divine arrangement in the church. The scriptures describe preachers as “workers together with the Lord” and “labourers together with God” (2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 3:9). It is the Lord's making that men are made evangelists to discharge duties for the progress of His church. Because the Lord has also ordained for preachers' work to be remunerated by local churches does not reduce the position of an evangelist to that of a mere employee who may be “hired and fired” at will.

The scriptural relationship between a preacher and a local church (or indeed between a preacher and any Christian) that supports him is that of fellow workers in the Lord. The Lord commands the preacher to preach the gospel and those who hear him to support him morally and financially in his work. Together, they have “fellowship in the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:6-14; Philippians 1:5-7; 4:15-17). This is not a mere “employer-employee” relationship. This is a spiritual partnership (fellowship) in the great work of preaching the gospel for the saving of the lost in the world and for the edifying of the church. The Biblical principle is set out in Romans 15:27.

Contemporary Trends In The Hiring And Firing Of Preachers

A preacher is a servant of the Lord (1 Timothy 4:6) and not a mere employee of the local church. He is not to “entangle himself with the affairs of this life, *that he may please Him* who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Who is this enlister? Not the local church, but the Lord! Hence, every local church must realize that the primary accountability of a preacher is to the Lord, as it is the Lord's work that has been entrusted to the evangelist.

Thus, in commenting on or assessing the performance of a preacher, a local church (and indeed all Christians) must look to the work, qualifications and qualities expected of an evangelist as set out in the word of God (see 1 Thessalonians 2:2-12), rather than to contemporary or modern expectations or the subjective views of leading men or members of a local church (1 Corinthians 4:6). Sound scriptural principles must inform or underlie our assessment and judgment of the effectiveness of a preacher rather than a carnal or worldly mindset (Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:20-21).

In John chapter 6, after Jesus fed a congregation of over 5,000 people with sumptuous food, they continued enthusiastically as His followers. But after sharing hard and bitter truths of God's word with them, almost the entire congregation gradually withdrew and left Jesus, except of course the twelve disciples. A whole congregation of over 5,000 was suddenly reduced to a paltry twelve in number by the work of its preacher! Our churches or leading men of today would “fire” such a preacher almost on the spot! The Lord Himself would have failed their performance appraisal – so it is no wonder that neither the evangelists that “*He Himself*” (see our Bible Gem above) has given to work with the churches can avoid being “fired” today on trumped-up ideas lacking in scriptural basis.

A church can indeed stop supporting a preacher and require him to hand over the preaching work assigned to him by the church if they find him to be neglectful in the preaching of the word or to hold or be persistent in teaching error or false doctrine (1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 4:2; Titus 3:10-11). However, in recent times, we have heard of local churches adopting secular human resource principles and practices to evaluate the performance or effectiveness of their preachers. Recently, we heard of a local church in Lagos, Nigeria which decided that its members would each assign a score in percentage terms representing their views on the preacher's performance. The average of all the scores being below a certain set threshold was adjudged a performance failure on the preacher's part and a congregational verdict that the preacher was fired.

More and more unscriptural practices of these types are making in-roads into our local churches in the same way as churches have continued to introduce additions to and departures from the qualifications that the Lord has set in the scriptures for evangelists that “*He Himself*” gave

(see our Bible Gem above) in His Church. Many church advertisements seeking applications for the role of preacher would ban applications from unmarried men, thus rejecting several of the preachers accepted by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (such as Paul, Barnabas, Timothy – 1 Corinthians 9:5-6; Acts 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:12). It is common to read in such advertisements that applicants must possess “good leadership skills” or “good managerial skills in church administration” or that applicants should be a degree holder (or that such qualification would be an advantage), qualifications that are completely lacking in scriptural precedent.

Worse still, and fast becoming the classic today, there is the usual requirement for applicants to have graduated from “a recognized bible college” or, as we have seen with some of our brethren, for applicants to have “a degree or diploma from a recognized institution affiliated to the Church of Christ and fully recognized by the board of trustees of the Church of Christ-Nigeria”. *My brethren, these things ought not to be so* (James 3:10b). Not only do “institutions affiliated to the Church of Christ” and “Church of Christ-Nigeria” have no basis in the New Testament (Hebrews 8:2,5; 2 John 9) the type of arrangements for producing preachers indicated in these advertisements make a mockery of the Lord's design for the self-sufficiency and self-edifying character of the Church (Ephesians 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:2).

Conclusion

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15). Local churches (and preachers themselves) should desist from minimizing or secularizing the role of these servants of the Lord that evangelists are (1 Timothy 4:6), through the unscriptural hiring and firing trends that we see increasingly infiltrating the churches (1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9). *“If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are”* (1 Corinthians 3:17).

“appointed” or “ordained” in the Church

ⁱⁱⁱ See W.E. Vine, BS440.S746 1996, page 208.

^{iv} In secular law, there is the concept, for example, of “employments with statutory flavour” or “statute-protected contracts of employment”. This carries an exception to the rule that who has the right to hire also has the right to fire.

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ⁱ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James' Version (NKJV).

ⁱⁱ The passage speaks in similar terms to 1 Cor 12:28 which describes various roles or functions that God has “set” or

