

Peter's Mission to Samaria in (Acts 8:14-25): A Model for Contemporary Nigerian Evangelists

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Abstract

The study examined Peter's mission to Samaria as recorded in Acts of the Apostles by St. Luke as a model for contemporary Nigerian evangelists. Data was collected using primary and secondary methods of the qualitative research approach. The research adopted the descriptive and textual critical method of analyzing data. The study reveals that some of the distinctiveness of Peter's mission to Samaria is not yet manifesting in the lives of most evangelists in Nigeria. The implication of this is promotion of tribalism, denominationalism, and insincerity in prayer, ineffectiveness in mission field and egoism which can never encourage the true purpose of evangelism. The study recommends the need to embrace faith and prayer as virtue evangelists cannot do without, shun simony among Christians, the need for humility to be inculcated in their day-to-day activities, enlighten themselves with word of God in order to be very effective in the mission field, to see preaching of the gospel as an inescapable obligation, team evangelism, unity and fellowship of the believers.

Keywords: Acts 8:14-25, Peter, Mission, Model, Nigerian, Evangelist

Introduction

Evangelism is the dominate feature of the first century Christianity. William Temple viewed evangelism as presenting of Jesus Christ so that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, men shall come to put their trust in God, accept Him as savior from the power of sin to righteousness in Christ, to serve him in the fellowship of the church and to follow Him in the vocations of the common life (Booth 1967). The essence of evangelism is to be Jesus' witness in order to transform lives and society (Acts 1:8). Witness for Christ consist of ministration, preaching, teaching, exercising the power of the Holy Spirit and living out the life of Christ. Peter, the first century apostle in the history of Christianity was one of the representatives sent from Jerusalem to Samaria in order to confirm the acceptance of the gospel by the Samaritans (Gentiles). Luke as noted by Johnson (2009: 242), "Philip had his mission confirmed by representatives from Jerusalem (8:14-24) and this shows that mission

maintained continuity with Jerusalem. The primitive Jerusalem Church is the restored people of Israel. Continuity with it is critical if the gentile Church is to be rooted in the Israel of the promise.” Peter’s mission to Samaria plays important role in breaching the gap between the Samaritans whom the Jews regarded as the Gentile because they inter married with the foreigners. This fulfilled the words of Jesus to his apostles before his ascension concerning be my ‘witnesses in Samaria’.

His missionary approach such as selfless service and devotion has remained unique in Christendom. He rejected the offer of Simon the Magician who intended to buy the charismatic power. This Simon, then who feigned faith, supposing that the apostles themselves performed their cures by the art of magic, and not by the power of God; and with respect to their filling with the Holy Ghost, through the imposition of hands, those that believed in God through Him who was preached by them, namely, Christ Jesus -suspecting that even this was done through a kind of greater knowledge of magic, and offering money to the apostles, thought he, too, might receive this power of bestowing the Holy Spirit on whomsoever he would (Irenaeus 1885: 347) Peter was not after materialistic desire of this world but to preach the gospel and exercise the gift of the Holy Spirit upon his life so that men will see the good works of God. Even though his Jewish nature influenced his life, he still remains committed, devoted and an ardent minister to the Jews and Gentiles. He understood the purpose and calling of the Holy Spirit upon his life. His mission in Samaria seems to be a challenge to contemporary evangelists. His life reflected to his gospel.

Unlike Peter, among many modern-day evangelists, there seems to be lack of selfless service, quest for materialism, segregation and lack of knowledge of God’s word. It is heart breaking to perceive the spirit of materialism and unhealthy competition among some Nigerian evangelists in the urban areas. Iheanacho (2009: 106) lamented that “spiritual growth and moral sanctity towards better eternity is fast giving way to material craving, as the ‘new idea of fulfillment of life and ultimate reality.’” It is quite unfortunate that many evangelists lead the people under them to serve their selfish interest. Evangelism has to do with sacrifices. Can the modern-day Nigerian evangelists show the world that they are willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the gospel? There is no doubt that evangelists have contributed to the growth of Christianity in all its ramification through Information and Communication Technology as noted by Ekweme (2011:115), “Evangelists in Nigeria have extensively used the mass media especially, radio and television in reaching their audience in both their immediate and distant location.” In spite of their contribution, there is need to address the unenthusiastic side of contemporary evangelists.

This paper looked at Acts 8:14-25 in order to see the works of Peter in Samaria as a model to the contemporary Nigerian evangelists, not minding the Christian denomination one

belongs. In achieving this purpose, the researcher adopted the descriptive and textual critical method of analyzing data.

The Background of Acts 8:14-25

Acts of the Apostles is a missionary book which shows how the early church spread Christianity beyond Palestine. Many accordingly outline the book of Acts of the Apostles under two main headings: Peter and the Jerusalem church (chaps. 1–12) and Paul and the Gentile mission (chaps. 13–28) (Dockery, Butler, Church, Scott, Ellis Smith, White, and Holman Bible Publishers 1992, 634–635). The passage under consideration is found within first section- Peter and Jerusalem church (chaps 1-12). The setting of Acts 8:14-25 took place in Samaria. Samaritans became the first group to receive the gospel beyond Judaism. This passage above pictured the ministry of Peter and John who became a representative from Jerusalem to Samaria to confirm the acceptance of the gospel by the Samaritan. Their mission there was as a result of the outcome of evangelical work of Philip. They perform their work after Philip had cleared the ground for the Samaritan to accept the good news of salvation. In Acts of the Apostles, he was the first to break the cross-cultural barrier.

The passage begins with sending of Peter and John. There in Samaria, the representatives met Simon the magician who amazed the people with his power and was rebuked for his evil towards the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that after the incident that took place in Samaria, Luke did not mention another mission work in that city. The event was not mentioned in the work of other writers of New Testament, rather they emphasize the need for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Critical Exegesis of Acts 8:14-25

V. 14-15. The Greek word Ἀκούσαντες is the aorist active participle of Ἀκούω meaning to hear. It is in nominative case meaning they heard. The Apostles in Jerusalem just heard and not perceived that Samaria, with definite article had accepted the word of God. In Jerusalem, it implies that the city is located in Judaea of Palestine. It indicates that during persecution some apostles were still there taking care of church. Samaritans were regarded as unbelievers by the Jews. In this verse, Samaria is a country and not a city. The Greek word Δέδεκται is the perfect indicative passive/middle; third person singular of δέχομαι. it means ‘had accepted’. It implies that Samaritans had welcomed the good news and not that she is still welcoming/accepting. The position of the word ‘had accepted’ is in past tense. So, they had accepted before the news came to the apostles in Jerusalem. τὸν λόγον is the masculine noun, accusative singular of λόγος meaning word. The word here according to Luke is the spoken word, it goes with definite article which implies that there

is one word of God and not words of God. τοῦ θεοῦ is in genitive cases means of God. The word belongs to God and not human. God's word is the gospel of salvation which the Samaritan had accepted through the preaching of Philip.

ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτοὺς Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην (They sent to them Peter and John). This implies that Peter and John who were the chief Apostles served as the only representatives sent from Jerusalem to believers in Christ in Samaria. ἀπέστειλαν is the aorist indicative, third person plural of ἀποστέλλω meaning I send. This indicates that the apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaritans. It wasn't one man decision but group of people called apostles. There is a dotted bracket beside αὐτοὺς, it designates the second occurrence of the word. Holmes (2010) stated "αὐτοὺς WHTregNA28] + τὸν RP" this is an indication that αὐτοὺς was added by WH, Treg and NA28. RP offers τὸν than αὐτοὺς as a reliable representative of the Byzantine Textual tradition. The Greek word οἵτινες καταβάντες προσηύξαντο περὶ αὐτῶν mean "who went down prayed for them". The term καταβάντες is the aorist participle, plural nominative masculine of καταβαίνω meaning to go down. This indicates that the apostles really went to Samaria. It shows sign of submission to and obedient to the apostles who sent them. Προσηύξαντο (They prayed), the term is the aorist indicative middle, third person plural. Luke distinguishes between the ministry of Philip and the representatives. Philip proclaimed Christ and did miraculous signs while the representatives prayed. Calvin and Beveridge (2010: 338) argued that "undoubtedly they taught first, for we know that they were no dumb persons but Luke passeth over that which was common to them and Philip, and declareth only what new thing the Samaritans had by their coming." perhaps, Luke wanted to avoid repetition of what Philip had already done. The Greek word ὅπως λάβωσιν πνεῦμα ἅγιον mean "so that they would receive the Holy Spirit". This implies that the representative prayed with a purpose. They did not pray to fulfill all righteousness. Their purpose and eager desire for the believers in Christ in Samaria to receive the free gift of God goes together with prayer. λάβωσιν is the aorist subjunctive active, third person plural of (lambano) meaning to receive. πνεῦμα ἅγιον -The Holy Spirit is a person who comes from God (1:8). The Holy Spirit plays role in the book of Acts than any other New Testament. Estes (2012) noted that "the Holy Spirit is the protagonist of the story, an active and involved person (8:16) in Acts of Apostles.

V. 16. οὐδέπω γὰρ ἦν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιπεπτωκός, (for he had not fallen on any of them,). This implies that before the representatives came, the believers in Christ had not yet experience/ receive the Holy Spirit. Here, the condition of the believers goes in line with that of the early believers before the Pentecost, they believed in Jesus like the Samaritans but had not received the Holy Spirit until Pentecost day (1:4, 5, 2:4). For Luke, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the common characteristics of the early church. Baptism in the Holy

Spirit is a second encounter with God (the first is conversion) in which the Christians begins to receive the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit into his life as promised by Jesus in Acts 1:8 (Onwu 2014: 23-24). The Greek word *μόνον δὲ βεβαπτισμένοι ὑπῆρχον εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ* translated 'But they were only having been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus'. This implies that the new converts experienced only regeneration from sin to righteousness of Jesus. Calvin and Beveridge (2010: 339) commented that "they were only endued then with the grace of common adoption and regeneration, which is offered to all the godly in baptism." *Βεβαπτισμένοι* is the perfect participle passive, normative masculine plural of *βαπτίζω* meaning to baptize. They had been baptized only in the name of Jesus Christ and not in the Holy Spirit. Luke acknowledges Jesus as Lord (*Kurios*). *εἰς* mean into is a preposition commonly used for baptism.

V.17. *τότε ἐπέτιθον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτούς*, (Then they placed their hands on them). Placing on of hands was another common characteristic among the early Christianity as noted by Luke (Acts 19: 6). *ἐπέτιθον* is the imperfect indicative active, third person plural meaning 'to place upon'. It was not only peter who placed his hand on them but together with his associate. Here, the place on of hand became an instrument to offer the believers in Christ the grace of the Spirit. Today, the idea of confirmation is derived from this verse. *καὶ ἐλάβανον πνεῦμα ἅγιον*—and they received the Holy Spirit. The outcome of the apostles' prayer and placing on of hands was that they were endowed with the grace of the Spirit/ charismatic power. This validated the ministry of Philip.

V.18. *ιδὼν δὲ ὁ Σίμων ὅτι διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων δίδεται τὸ πνεῦμα προσήνεγκεν αὐτοῖς χρήματα* (Now Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hand the Spirit was given He offered them money). *ιδὼν* is the aorist participle active, nominative masculine singular of *ιδὼν* meaning to see. This implies that there was external manifestation of God's power, perhaps the gift of tongues but it was not stated (2:4, 10:45-46). This verse distinguished Simon from other believers in Christ. It wasn't only Simon who saw what happened, Luke was so much interested in bringing out the evil motive/ hypocrisy of him. *Προσήνεγκεν*- he offered: this is an aorist indicative active, third person singular. Simon offered money to the Apostles to get this power (*ἐξουσίαν*). He thought that he would receive such power by giving out money to the Apostles. Calvin and Beveridge (2010) noted that "Simon did not adore the gift of the spirit, neither acknowledge the power of Christ, he did not confess that the apostles were endued with heavenly power, to set forth Christ's glory by their ministry; his ambition drive and carried him headlong, so that he desired to become excellent; and to make the world subject to himself, setting God apart, he will buy the Holy Ghost, as if he could be bought with money." He did not only offer money but demanded the power.

V.20-25. Πέτρος δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν (But Peter said to him). This implies that when Peter heard the demand of Simon, he did not keep quiet but he rebuke him from such thought, added a bitter curse to him, though he did not intend destruction to him. Here, Luke distinguished Peter from John as outspoken person who would not see evil and keep quiet. Peter understood that money could not be used to buy spiritual things, i.e. why he said destruction be unto his money and himself. ἀργύριον- money is the neuter noun, nominative singular. Money or silver is a material thing used for exchange of/ acquire other material things not spiritual. Simon's heart is not upright, not honest, not straight- forward before/ not in a good relationship with God. It is only those that are upright before God can partake in the ministry of God's kingdom. If though Simon professes to believe and was baptized before Peter came, yet he is not honest. Peter exhorted Simon to turn from his wickedness to righteousness in Christ. The word Μετανόησον (repent) is the aorist imperative active, second person singular of μετανόεω meaning to repent. Repent means to change from or turn from something to something. Calvin and Beveridge (2010) noted that "Peter raise up Simon now unto hope of salvation, whom he had thrown down before with the cruel lightning and thunderbolts of words; and yet Simon's sin was no small sin." They also noted that the word εἰ ἄρα signified as much as if a man should say, if by any means thou must obtain pardon of God. Peter used this word, not that he may leave Simon's mind in confusion, but that he may prick him forward to be earnest in prayer. Peter urged him to pray for God to forgive the intent of his heart. On hearing Peter's statement, Simon answered and said to Peter to intercede on behalf of him to Lord so that destruction will not befall him. There is no indication here that Simon repented of his unrightfully heart before God, rather. He fears the consequence of Peter's statement. The apostles did not leave Samaria without telling the Samaritans about gospel of salvation which centered on Jesus Christ. εὐηγγελίζοντο - they were proclaiming the good news, this is the imperfect indicative middle, third person plural meaning to proclaim good news or to preach the gospel. The gospel has to do with the life and works of Jesus Christ to save mankind from sin. The evangelistic work that began in Samaria started with Philip the Hellenistic evangelist and continued with peter and John the Hebraic Jews.

Unenthusiastic Side of Evangelist in Nigeria Christianity

The researcher identifies four unenthusiastic sides of the contemporary evangelists. They are lack of selfless service, quest for materialism, lack of knowledge of God's word and segregation. This has become a problem affecting many evangelists. The help of this researcher is to correct those weaknesses associating with contemporary evangelists.

Lack of selfless service: Today many evangelists lack commitment and devotion to the works of Jesus Christ. They only attain the masses in order to suit their own motive and

promote their own wellbeing instead of rendering service to God who sent them through bearing one another burden. Selfish service is a characteristic of one who goes contrary to the will of God. God loves selfless service and he wants human to express his nature.

The quest for materialism: This has become a serious problem affecting today evangelists. Many evangelists in the mission field sold and still selling so called holies like anointing oil, soap, salt, water, candle, sand etc. in the name of God. Some even collect enormous amount of money so called seed of faith in order to pray for people to receive liberation, baptism of the healing, favor and promotion etc. The elevated level of greed and materialism exhibited by many of them is complete departure from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sadly, many so called evangelists still patronize simony. Udeolisa (2011: 1) lamented that “today the church seems to lose grip of the foundation laid by Jesus and his disciple. The materialistic desires seem to overshadow the spiritual essence of the church.” Modern evangelism fails in loyalty to the commission of our Lord. It is insane, unscriptural and sensational to a great extent. It strives to appeal to the emotions rather than the understanding. In many instances it is not positive in pointing out the oneway of salvation; in many instances, overlooks baptism altogether; and, in most instances, pays but little attention to the care of all the churches (Crawford, 1919: 273).

Lack of Knowledge of God's word: They claimed to know the word of God, but its application differs from their lifestyle. It is as result of lack of knowledge of God's word that they were able to exploit new converts in order to satisfy their own selfish motive. They carried 'I' gospel (self-centered gospel). Crawford, C. C. (1919: 270–271) noted that “The modern evangelistic message tends to overlook the sovereignty of Christ; to dwell more upon the ethical value of Christianity than its saving value; to underestimate the word of God by substituting human philosophy and phraseology.” Modern evangelism overlooks the need to study, mediate and acquire the word of God.

Segregation: This is a serious problem as a result of different denomination and tribalism. It is difficult to find a Non-Roman Catholic evangelist being invited to minister in a Roman Catholic mission field. Denominationalism was not the aim of Martin Luther's reformation in 16th century A.D. Diara (2009: 61) wrote that “thus, the aim of the reformation was not to found denominations hence the movement was not protestant in nature as it is traditionally described but rather evangelical.” The essence of reformation was to restore the Catholic Church to the evangelical foundation of the first century Christians. The modern “union” meeting, so called, is deceiving in the fact that the third specific command of the gospel is omitted altogether because it is somewhat obnoxious to certain denominationalists (Crawford 1919:271).

These unenthusiastic sides have contributed negatively to the church and the society at large. The evangelists supposed to be the eyes of the gospel but reverse is the case. The church is expected to rise and fight against these problems affecting the contemporary evangelists.

Characteristics of Peter's Mission to Samaria and its Implication on Contemporary Evangelists

Peter was one of the disciples, an inner circle of the apostles who followed Jesus up till his ascension. After Pentecost experience he was able to preserve and preach the gospel. His distinctiveness in Samaria stood as a model to the contemporary evangelists. Its implications require man dependent relationship with transcendent being as experienced and expressed in human society. The characteristic of Peter's mission to Samaria were:

i. Faith and Prayer

Faith and prayer are characters found in Peter. They are elements of religion. Faith is when a man says 'yes' to the grace of God which is offered to him in Christ. It brings the sinners and the savior together in the closet fellowship (Ituma 2014: 7). It is an act of trust and submission to God through Jesus Christ, the savior of the world. The apostles were faithful to the commission given to them. When Peter prayed and laid his hand on the Samaritans together with his associates so that they may receive the Holy Spirit. The Samaritan received as they prayed. This is an act of faith in Jesus Christ just as he did in Acts 3. This is a brand of faith which produces assurance to man's rapport with God. The contemporary evangelists need this faith in sequence to overcome different challenges connected with mission. With this faith they can move mountain, effect optimistic change and impact the gospel in the lives of the people. Peter believed that it is through faith in Jesus Christ that one can receive the Holy Spirit and be saved. Faith deals with belief in Jesus Christ who saves. Peter did not leave Samaria without proclaiming the good news of Salvation. The life of Peter is characterized with Prayer. The evidence is seemed before and after the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The Nigerian evangelists are encouraged to pray to God in Jesus Christ audaciously and be confident that the grace will be provided to them. Here is the basic characteristic of Christian prayer: a new access to the Father which Christ secures for the Christian, and prayer in harmony with the Father's will because offered in Christ's name (Thomson 1996: 949). Through prayer, they can be able to support the new converts, the society and handle difficult challenges associated with the contemporary society. They will also be able to know the mind of God, since prayer has to do with communion with transcendent being. This work urges evangelists and Christians in general to see prayer as something they

cannot do without. Dependence on prayer is one of the features of true believers in Christ. It is unfortunately that many Christians are like Simon who said to Peter pray for me so that your declaration will not come to me. They depended on one preacher and prophet or others for salvation, healing, breakthrough etc without having effective communion with God themselves. Lack of effective prayer among Christians led to dependence on earthly things like so called holies, bogus prophets and bogus evangelists. Peter's faith and prayer calls the Nigerian evangelists to renew their relationship with God.

ii. Denunciation of Simony

An evangelist is called and sent by God to be a minister of the word in power. Peter distinguished himself as a minister of the gospel by denouncing simony. The term simony is derived from Simon the Magician. Toussaint (1985) defined simony as "buying and selling of things considered religious or sacred such as an ecclesiastical office, comes from Simon's desire to purchase the ability to impart the Holy Spirit to others." Simon was known for pulling crowds, unfortunately, the people's attention shifted to the ministration of the apostles. He was rebuked for unrightful heart, sharply by Peter without mincing words. For Peter, the power of the Holy Spirit can only be acquired through right heart before God. Being right before God encompasses having faith in God through Jesus Christ. Peter was not after the materialistic desire of the world. He only wanted the truth of the gospel to be revealed to the people. The idea of buying and selling of Pardons and indulgences is still found in the church of Rome as asserted by Henry, M. (1994: 2097), "This is the product of this same wicked thought, that the gift of God may be purchased with money, when the offer of divine grace so expressly runs, without money and without price." The contemporary evangelists and Christians in general should learn how to shun this evil called simony and rebuke ungodly people from such thought. This will enable Christians and non-Christians to see that the gift of Holy Spirit or anything that has to do with triune God should not be bought with money. Today misguided "evangelists" use radio, television, mailing campaigns, and even the Internet to garner money for religious favors of one kind or another. In many cases, they are no better than Simon the sorcerer; exchanging funds for God's grace (Gangel 1998: 124). They should discourage the idea of buying offices and prosperities dedicated to God for the work of the ministry and edification of the saints. If Christians be condescending simony, it will trim down their nature such as truthfulness, boldness and fearlessness etc. Nigerian evangelists should stop misleading themselves when it comes to offering of money as a means of attracting the gift of God.

iii. Humility

According to (Hardin, 2003), humility is "the personal quality of being free from arrogance and pride and having an accurate estimate of one's worth." Humility always implies selflessness and obedience. It is a virtue that should be embraced by all Christians

especially Nigerian evangelists for the development and growth of the society. Humility is the complete crucifixion of self—the complete subjection of the individual will to the will of Christ (Crawford 1919: 63). Peter grew up under the teaching of Jesus Christ. He learns how to be humble to the teaching of Christ. If Peter had been, as some say he was, the prince of the apostles, he would have sent some of them, or, if he had seen cause, would have gone himself; but he was so far from this that he submitted to an order of the house, and, as a servant to the body, went whither they sent him (Henry 1994: 2097). In spite of his position among the apostles in Jerusalem, he humbled himself and obeys the apostles at Jerusalem to represent them in Samaria (verse 14). His submission to the authority of believers in Christ offers a model to today's evangelists and Christians in general.

According to Luke, he did not reject the mission to be God's minister in Samaria in spite of the unfriendly relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans. In spite of the challenges, he stills humble to the gospel of Jesus Christ against any form of wickedness against the Holy Spirit. Humility calls for service. Peter's uniqueness portrayed a sense of humility. For instance, when he turned down the offer of Simon, he offered him the hope of salvation, calling him to repent from evil ways. This is a sign of humility to the word of Jesus Christ. The modern-day evangelists should learn how to accept the call of God upon their lives through their church leaders/ administrators. According to Arnold (1992), "We often worry about how we look and whether we'll know what to say." Most time, lack of confidence and fear contribute to ineffectiveness of modern-day evangelist. There is need for them to put trust in God through Jesus Christ which will enable them to surmount some challenges connected with modern mission. This can be done by identifying and putting the need of the people first. They should denounce egoism and be subjected to the will of God. Humility as a virtue must be essential feature in the Christians' character. If egoism is patronized by Nigerian evangelists, it will lead to lack of discovering the problem of Christians and society at large. There will also be lack of understanding the mind of God towards his people and the gospel.

iv. Knowledge of God's Word

Peter as a Jew, grew up under a Jewish rabbi- Jesus Christ, grounded with the truth and teaching of the gospel and guided by what he learnt from his master Jesus and his people. Through knowledge of the word, he was able to affect lives positively, able to plant, shun evil and allow the truth to stay. According to Gangel (1998: 124), "Whatever Simon believed back in verse 13, it was certainly not faith for salvation, else Peter could never have said he would perish." Peter understood the mission of Jesus, the person and work of the Holy Spirit. This enables him to be able to resist evil of his day. Peter represented the gospel of Christ while Simon represented the sin of ambition and double standards in the church.

The contemporary evangelists should have the Spirit of understanding and Knowledge of God's word which will enable them to detect and denounce wolfs and spirit of Mammon in the church today. Christians should allow the word of God to dwell in their heart because God looks directly at the heart condition of Man. If not Peter's knowledge of God's word he would have been overthrown by Spirit of Mammon. The response of Christians towards temptation determines the weight of God's word in their lives. Why Christians and the society are not experiencing positive change is as a result of lack of knowledge of God's word and spiritual ignorance. Instead of the modern evangelists to educate the people with God's word, they added more problems to their problem. There is this adage that says one cannot give what he/she does not have. This calls on the Nigerian evangelists to renew their interest in the study of the scripture which is the source of life. They should see the word of God as something that they cannot do without. Lack of the knowledge of the scripture leads to lack of knowledge of Christ because Christ is the central theme of the scripture.

v. Preachers of the Gospel

Subsequent to denunciation of Simon's mind-set, he offered him chance of repentance from his unrightfully heart. Luke presents Peter as a preacher of the gospel. The gospel is the message of salvation. The New Testament scholarship presents the gospel as noted by Baiyeri (2011: 163), "the word gospel (euangelion in Greek) as Good New which refers to the fact that the son of God died for salvific destiny of mankind (that many may have eternal life)." The gospel portrays the life of Jesus Christ. He overcome the cross-cultural barriers and preaches the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. Ngele (2014:30) wrote that "the Samaritans could communicate with the Jews because most of the semitic world spoke Aramaic at that time. However, they had a different religion and different culture." Lack of difference in language, even though there may be, enable Peter to established mission in the Gentile world. Nigerian evangelists should always take benefit of language whether English, Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba etc. in spreading the gospel of Christ. There is needed to keep away so called 'I' gospel which is not the core aim of evangelism. This 'I' gospel has receive the place of gospel of Jesus Christ that deduce to convey man in a good relationship with his maker, unravel societal problems such as corruption, kidnapping, homosexuality, abortion, intolerance, drug abuse etc. The problem of mankind can be ease when the truth is being revealed to him and he applies it to day-to-day activities in spite of the challenges he may face from the society and things around. Contemporary society necessitates solution to their societal problems, so evangelists should awake to offer solution through preaching of the gospel because the gospel offers love, unity, tolerance, hardworking and harmony.

vi. Team Ministry

The word 'team' means a group of people coming together with the purpose of carrying out a specific project. Oga (2006: 27) defined the term team work as "a veritable tool that has

the power of advancing and enhancing the gospel.” Team evangelism deals with group of people coming together with the aim of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter strategically used team evangelism in carrying out his assignment. The book of Acts of Apostles reveals that Peter worked with an associate especially John. Elwell and Beitzel (1988: 1664) asserted that “John was with Peter in the temple (3:1), prison (4:13), and Samaria (8:14).” Other New Testament passages that support team ministry of Peter are Luke 22: 8, Mark 14:37, Matthew 26:40. He appreciated team ministry. He imitated Jesus Christ who worked with group of people of which he was one of them. He had companions who helped him in preaching and building the body of Christ. There is need for contemporary evangelists to understand the importance of team evangelism and embrace it because it promotes efficient work in the mission field. Regrettably, they negate the place of team evangelism because of selfish interests. They wanted their name to be heard than another person. The implication of this distinctive of Peter is that it will discourage denominationalism, egoism, tribalism and encourage oneness among evangelists for effectual ministry.

vii. Unity and Fellowship of the Believers

Unity is the state of being undivided; having oneness; a condition of harmony (Church 2003:1635). Jesus’ prayer for the unity of his disciple (John 17:11, 21-23) was realized in the life of the earliest Christians. Luke seems to emphasize the unity of the church. Believers in Samaria linked immediately with believers in Jerusalem to protect the unity of the church, an issue especially crucial when Jerusalem and Samaria were involved (Gangel 1998:123). Elwell and Beitzel (1988: 20), noted that “The Jews regarded Samaritans as racial and religious half-breeds; in Samaria Jews and foreign settlers had intermingled as a result of Assyrian policy after the fall of the Northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.” The apostles’ mission to Samaria was of significance because it breached the longstanding hostility, animosities and hatred between Jews and Samaritans. Wiersbe (1996: 436) viewed the impartation of Peter’s mission “God wanted to unite the Samaritan believers with the original Jewish Church in Jerusalem. He did not want two Churches that would perpetuate the division and conflict that had existed for centuries.”

During the first century era, there is no church that needed more unification than the church of Jerusalem and Samaria. The Holy Spirit unifies the body of Christ through the ministry of Peter and John. The contemporary evangelists should embrace unity irrespective of the believers’ background, culture, socio-political setting and ethnic nationality, etc. Christians are one in the family of God. They should keep denominationalism aside and see them as brothers in Christ. This will reduce conflict and violence that used to take place among different Christian denomination in Nigeria. They should encourage Roman Catholic evangelists assisting Protestant evangelists in the mission field. It will promote sense of

belonging among all Christians. Where there is unity among believers in Christ, there will be moral development of an individual and society at large because the gospel preaches tolerance, peace, honesty and love. These are virtue for national development. The evangelists or ministers of the gospel that are in higher position should learn how to help or assist those at the lower position. This will strengthen unity and fellowship among themselves. This will preserve the unity and fellowship which they inherited from the apostles. There is need for unity that would break denominational walls, sink all parties in Christ, and unite all disciples of Christ into the one body called Church, with no other name but the name of Christ, no other power but the revealed will of Christ, no doctrine but personal belief in the divinity of Christ: making them one in faith, purpose and practice. Modern evangelism should learn how to renounce denominationalism, Sectarianism and Schism among Christians. This will enable those outside the Christian faith to accept the gospel.

Conclusion

The ministry of the first century apostle laid the foundation to world evangelism. The study has examined the distinctiveness of Peter's mission to Samaria which distinguishes him from other apostles. Peter is a model to contemporary evangelists. However, in spite of the challenges facing the contemporary evangelists, they should learn and imbibe the uniqueness of Peter's mission to Samaria. The unenthusiastic sides of the contemporary evangelists affect both the church and society at large. The church has role to play to ensure true evangelism which is the beacon of Christianity. This will promote honesty, transparency, accountability and growth of the church, Christians in general and society at large. When Peter's distinctiveness is being adopted in the mission field, there will be success in transforming lives positively.

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