Episcopacy and Evangelism in the Diocese of Niger Delta North, Anglican Communion

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Introduction

That evangelism, which is the act of spreading the gospel and making disciples for Christ, is a core mandate of the church is not arguable. It then behoves every church and its leadership to comply with this as traceable to the Great Commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28: 16-10. The Diocese of Niger Delta North (DNDN) was inaugurated on May 16, 1996 (Ascension Day) at Cathedral Church of Saint Paul Diobu, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The focus and direction of the Diocese is missions and evangelism which is captured in the motto "Service to God and Humanity". It is the 53rd Diocese in Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and 4th to be created out of Niger Delta Diocese. There have been three Bishops who have at various times introduced diverse approaches to evangelism as to promote the growth of the Diocese. This paper discusses efforts by these Diocesans in promoting evangelism in the diocese, administrative evangelistic policies that brought about growth in the Diocese, strategies of evangelism and impact of evangelism on the diocese.

Concept of evangelism

According to Kuwornu-Adjaottor (2008), evangelism is preaching or an aggressive attempt to spread the gospel or the passion to promote the cause. It has been described in various ways by different scholars. For some, it is a method of preaching the gospel and winning souls to the church through the use of God's word, scriptural interpretation, and strategies. For others, it is the delivery of Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that people can be guided in believing in Him as the Saviour and following Him as the Lord with the fellowship of His Church. Furthermore, evangelism is seen as the process of sowing, nurturing relationships, and gathering souls to Christ, which converts individuals into mature members of the church who await Christ's return. Again, it is said to be the proclamation of Jesus Christ's salvation, which is the good news, in order to manifest the reconciliation of unbelievers with God the Father through the replenishing power of the Holy Spirit. For Englo (2004), this was Jesus Christ's directive, which serves as a means for churches to increase their numbers through new believers. The great commission of Jesus Christ is to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth through various evangelistic practices (Matthew 28:19-20, c.f. 24:14). By this, each Christian's primary responsibility is to go into the world and spread the "good news" or the word of the faith to all creation.

However, the internet and social websites have emerged as a utility that can be explored, providing a fast, strong, and cooperative communication method. The internet has shrunk the world into a global village, and Apostle Paul's fading outreach strategies can now be realized through effective use of the global web. Therefore, Churches and Christians must learn to harness the power of modern information and communication tools to spread the universal faith in order to fully realize the Internet's evangelization potential (Ogu et al., 2014).

Concept of Bishopric and Episcopacy

In Anglicanism, the Bishop is the administrative head of a diocese. However, the church is said to be episcopally led and synodically governed; which means that he works in cooperation with the synod in the general administration of the diocese. In addition to this, he is a figure of symbolic or sacramental significance; he represents the eschatological fulfilment of the triune God's communion, which is experienced in the Eucharist.. This conception of the Bishop as a physical

manifestation of ecclesial unity and connection with the Holy Trinity underpins and informs the numerous evangelistic and pastoral responsibilities of episcopal ministry. The Bishop sees the effectiveness of the ministry of evangelism and directs the strategies used in his diocese. The episcopate in diocese of Niger Delta North is engaging in series of galvanising human and material efforts and support in this issue of evangelism, with engagements in foreign and local missions.

The Anglican Mission in the Niger Delta

The church reached the Niger Delta through Rev. Hope Masterton Waddel who started work at Calabar on April 10, 1846. The seed of the Anglican faith was planted in the Niger Delta region by Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther at the Island city of Bonny on April 29, 1865. The Bonny mission was declared Niger Delta Pastorate (NDP) on April 29, 1892 and became Niger Delta Diocese (NDD) on January 1, 1952 with the See at the Cathedral Church of Saint Stephen, Bonny. Samuel Elenwo was elected the fourth bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta after Ebenezar Dimieari (1952-1961), Bara-Hart (1962-1970), and Yibo Fubara (1971-1980). The Diocese of Niger Delta North was created on May 16, 1996 after the Dioceses of Calabar (December 20, 1990) and Uyo (November 27, 1992).

Evolution of Diocese of Niger delta North

The Diocese of Niger Delta North (DNDN) was inaugurated on May 16, 1996 (Ascension Day) at Cathedral Church of Saint Paul Diobu, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The focus and direction of the diocese is missions and evangelism which is captured in the motto "Service to God and Humanity". In pursuant of her mission, clergy and lay have been sent on foreign missions to Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, Philippines, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Italy, and Canada. It is the 53rd Diocese in Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) and 4th to be created out of Niger Delta Diocese after Diocese of Aba (created January 9, 1972), Calabar (December 20, 1990) and Uyo (November 27, 1992). The Primate of Church of Nigeria, Most Rev. Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye presided at the inauguration service which featured the enthronement of Right Reverend Samuel Onyuku Elenwo, who was translated from the residual NDD. On inauguration, the Diocese comprised of the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, Diobu and Archdeaconries of Port Harcourt, Ahoada,

Ikwerre, Etche, Ogoni, Evo, Ikwerre South and Eleme. These archdeaconries have today become autonomous dioceses.

Evangelism challenge in the diocese

The Anglican Diocese of Niger Delta North has been operational for over 25 years, yet it has encountered limited success in its endeavours to cater to the increasing population of young individuals. The absence of documentation to support the execution and maintenance of a substantial evangelistic strategy aimed at conveying the Gospel to the younger generation within the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Niger Delta North has been observed. For some time now, there has been a consistent increase in the number of young individuals, who have departed from the Diocese and joined the Pentecostal fold. The aforementioned phenomenon can be attributed to contemporary evangelistic approaches that are particularly appealing to the younger demographic within the jurisdiction of the Anglican Church in Niger Delta North (Onu 2014). The potential lack of involvement of the youth and young adult demographic in the church's evangelistic efforts could imply that the conventional practice of conducting tent meetings may have lost some of its appeal to these particular groups. The decline in question has been attributed to various factors, including inadequate employment of contemporary evangelism tactics, deficient leadership, lack of foresight, ineffective communication, and failure to engage the millennial demographic. The potential challenge may not be unconnected to limited comprehension of contemporary evangelism methodologies, including televangelism, trickle-down, personal, internet, props, and phone-based approaches, and their potential to foster an increase in church membership within the Diocese of Niger Delta North. Given the circumstances, there exists the integration of novel and captivating programmes to involve these demographics such as the introduction of Youth synod, Talent hunt, Boys Time Out, etc.

Episcopal achievements and functions

The Diocese has witnessed three (3) successive transitions of leaders, which has in various times introduced diverse approaches to evangelism as to help promote the growth of the Diocese.

Rt. Rev'd Samuel Onyuku Elenwo

The pioneer bishop Rt. Rev'd. Samuel .O. Elenwo laid the foundation of evangelism by sustaining the copious Anglican heritage in the Diocese. He urged young, enthusiastic and God fearing persons in the Diocese to express their gifts and callings in ministry. This made a lot of young men and women to be enrolled into the priestly order and lay reader ministry respectively. Hallelujah and noisy worship was a taboo but he encouraged the young people to continue in it. He instituted the investiture of Knighthood which encouraged lay men and women who were zealous for the work of God in the Diocese. He promoted unity, peace and love during his episcopacy. He also discouraged flamboyant burial ceremonies. The diocese adopted the 2 weeks burial duration for the wellbeing of its members (Wotogbe-Weneka, 2000). The then bishop did this to show that the Diocese is not meant for only the rich and affluent, as was the thought then.

Most Rev'd Dr Ignatius Crossby Ogboru Kattey (JP)

Archbishop Kattey consolidated what his predecessor the Rt. Rev. Samuel O. Elenwo began. He started the Port Harcourt City Wide Mega Crusade, a revival programme, which caters for the salvation of many souls within and outside the diocese. He equally introduced the Diocesan Anthem which is evangelistic in lyrics. During his tenure as bishop and Archbishop he planted 152 churches within the Diocese and in the foreign missions; he created 15 Deaneries, and relinquished five Dioceses, namely: Ahoada, Ogoni, Etche, Ikwerre, and Evo. He started annual Youth synod for youths in the diocese. He supported and recommended the consecration of ten of his pastors to become Bishops in other dioceses (Onu 2014). Archbishop Kattey established and supported foreign Anglican missions. He introduced many arms and units in the diocese which have greatly brought growth to the diocese down to the grassroots. Under his episcopacy, the diocese started the organization and registration of a Security outfit as well as construction of an Investment House (F-MEC 2017) as part of the social gospel.

Rt. Rev'd Wisdom Budu Ihunwo

Since his Episcopal ministry began, he was able to complete and dedicated the Investment house and the security outfit that his predecessor Archbishop Kattey began. He initiated scholarship scheme for indigent students in the diocese, which has helped a lot of members pay school fees. He has started a world class model

secondary school (still ongoing) and initiated and completed a table water factory (Onu 2022). In all of these, he is strongly consolidating on the evangelistic spirit which his predecessors initiated. Regular episcopal visits home and abroad are maintained during which members are confirmed as communicants and inducted into various arms of the church. More noticeable is that he uses such opportunities to preach the word of God, during which souls have been won. Of note is that every programme in the Diocese has an evangelistic touch.

Administrative evangelistic policies that brought about growth in the Diocese

The establishment of policies have helped in the evangelical growth of the diocese. They include:

Authority

The authority and relationship between clergymen were streamlined. It was ruled that a disciplinary action would be taken against any clergy in whose favour any obnoxious protest is made by parishioners where he had served after a new disposition. The clashes of interests that had existed between some Archdeacons and their headquarters church vicars were resolved through the ruling that "Archdeacons would be Vicars of their headquarter churches" (Interview with I.C.O. Kattey). They are to take precedence over any other clergy in the headquarter church as well as superintend over all churches in their Archdeaconry. On the other hand, Archdeacons are to be relocated at the discretion of the Diocesan like any other class of clergy.

Welfare

The payment of Utility, Children education and Investment allowances were introduced to enhance the welfare of church workers. In recognition of the vital role played by clergy wives in the mobilization of women, it was ruled that a monthly allowance be paid to the Bishop's wife and all clergy wives and church teachers' wives by all churches in the Diocese (Synod report, 1999). The Diocese expressed concern for the welfare of members and community people by regulating against extravagancy in burial. It was resolved that "the remains of a deceased member of this Diocese must be buried within 14 days from the date of death". Again, service of songs was introduced in place of 'wake keeping' in honour of a deceased member.

Denominational identity

In his drive for growth, Archbishop Kattey understood that people are more receptive when they are approached by authentic Christians from within their own social network, which is key to congregational church growth. Efforts were made to grow the status of the Cathedral church of Saint Paul, Diobu as the principal church of the diocese and centre of excellence. The bishop started by appointing a Canon Residentiary to assist in the administration of the Cathedral. In May 1997 the Very Rev. Fyneface N. Akah was appointed the provost and on July 6, 1997 he was installed accordingly. Also, an annual Cathedral lecture series was started on June 17,1999 when the Rt. Rev. Ugochukwu U. Ezeoke, Bishop of Umuahia Diocese delivered a Lecture entitled "Pentecostalism: How does it fit into Contemporary Anglican liturgical tradition". The event also marked his 18th Consecration anniversary. Some churches and group of churches were constituted and approved as Parishes and Archdeaconries. In doing this, respect was given to ethnicity and location as part of the socio-cultural network. Between June 1996 and December 3, 1999 ten (10) Archdeaconries were created after proper inspection of the sociability of the areas. However, three emerged through Episcopal fiat for the purpose of missionary expansion. Over 25 station churches were granted parish status and 5 ecclesiastical entities had their nomenclatures changed to reflect their growth experiences.

Empowerment

The function of appointing and licensing ordained and lay persons for ministry in the diocese is vested in the bishop. Bishop Sam Elenwo pursued the task of qualifying and authorizing the faithful to fulfil their ministry. He encouraged and promoted the ministry of ACB which was made up of young boys and girls. As the friend and guide of his clergy and people he had eight interactive sessions at his Cathedral between June 11 and July 17 1996 with all the clergy, Diocesan officials, Clergy wives, Catechists, Church teachers, Clerks, Lay readers, representatives of Mothers' Union & Women's Guild, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Men's Christian Association now Christian Men Fellowship, Sunday school Council, Choir and Mission and Evangelism Council from all the Archdeaconries. An orientation retreat was organized for Diocesan officials at the Cathedral on October 23, 1996. This was followed with a workshop for members of the various

District and Parish Church Councils on November 20, 1996 and March 19, 1997 respectively.

He used his visitations to encourage individuals, parishes and districts to foster the true spiritual unity of the diocese. In his character of entering into personal relation with every member of the flock, he was always cheerful, accommodating, very generous, hospitable, humble and forgiving. His fatherly words of encouragement, *Nye gbekei* meaning "clean person" and *Izi-nkpa nu obodo* meaning "you are important in the community" drew many closer to him as well as gave them great confidence to do ministry. He had pleasure in visiting residents at the Cathedral premises encouraging and pronouncing God's blessings upon them. He ministered the rite of Confirmation to all those that desired to grow in faith and licensed many Lay readers whom he regarded as "blue pastors" making them to put on blue preaching scarf. Females that were married according to Church rites were inducted into the Mothers' Union, while all who had become of age were admitted into the membership of the Women's Guild.

In his commitment to the development of lay ministry and equipment of all for service, he empowered enterprising men and women through knighthood and merit award. On Saturday August 7, 1999 fifteen men were honoured with the Sacred Order of Knights of Saint Christopher (KSC) at the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul Diobu for service in the diocese. The service also featured the presentation of Merit Award to 52 persons selected across the Diocese. Many young men were empowered to enter the ordained ministry and a good number of the serving clergy were given delegated authorities to function effectively for the growth and expansion of the diocese. He made 105 deacons, ordained 102 priests, installed 31 honorary Canons of the Cathedral of Saint Paul Diobu and collated 15 Archdeacons between May 1996 and December 1999.

Investment

A Committee was appointed to execute physical developmental projects of the Diocese. It was proposed that a Diocesan Conference Centre with different facilities would be developed within the Diocese. Another investment dream was the establishment of Bishop Elenwo Missionary Hospital with a Diocesan Medical Board appointed for its realization. These projects were to help in reducing the

financial burden of running the diocese on the faithful. There was also plan for the diocese to enter into a joint business venture with CSS Bookshop Ltd. Currently the diocese has a printing press to itself , a water factory, and library. Skill acquisition was also organized annually for the indigents.

Staff Welfare

In his passion for the welfare and security of church workers, a Diocesan Educational Pensions Scheme (DESP) was proposed. The scheme was to assist those that work in all educational institutions of and in the Diocese which aim was to motivate them as they carry out their indirect evangelistic work. A Staff Welfare Committee was constituted in 1997 with the vision of working out conditions of service that will be favourable and make for a happy future for serving and retiring workers.

Preferment

The preferment of clergy is a call for more effective service and not a debt owed to the clergy. As a prerogative of a Bishop, it is based on the worth, dedication, faithfulness, loyalty, doctrine, straight forwardness, initiative, reliability, etc of the clergy (Synod Report 1997). This preferment has encouraged a lot of clergymen to put in their best in their pastoral work which has brought about tremendous growth in the diocese.

Clergy Development

The School of Ordination was to be reorganized to include training of young dynamic clergymen in evangelism. For the purpose of maintaining qualitative clerical personnel, qualified and equipped brethren for missions and evangelism were to be admitted into the Holy Order. Today, it is called Clergy school, during which training was periodically organised for the clergy and retreats sessions for them and their wives.

Administrative acumen

Upon his installation as diocesan, Bishop Elenwo moved into his bishop court. He maintained the government of the Diocese by presiding over periodic administrative Board meetings and annual synods. His policies and empowerment lifted the standard of the Diocese and quality of both clergy and

lay faithful for ministry within and outside the diocese and applied himself to the principles of the Constitution and Canons of the Church in his foundational work. He believed that "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:9).

His ministry was blessed with significant "4 Fs". He was the First bishop from the upland Niger Delta region (Ikwerre land); he was elected the Fourth Bishop of Niger Delta Diocese; enthroned the Foundation Bishop of DNDN, and presided over Four synod sessions in DNDN. He was succeeded by a Lay reader, deacon, priest, Canon and Archdeacon, I.C.O. Kattey The expansion work of the diocese under the episcopacy of Most Rev. (Dr) Ignatius C. O. Kattey was enormous. In all, it will be said that Elenwo laid the foundation, Kattey continued with his foundation which Ihunwo is consolidating.

Church Discipline

At the beginning of Archbishop Kattey tenure it was noted that discipline among both the laity and the clergy, particularly within the ranks of the latter, was disquieting. However, by the end of his first year in office the Bishop openly noted with satisfaction the "great improvement" in the general discipline of Church members and more so the clergy who have consistently been described as the best in the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. The clergymen became increasingly aware of the requirement that they should be prepared to work wherever their services might be mostly needed and not merely within Port Harcourt. It is on record that some of the "dying Churches" have been strengthened both in the material and spiritual aspects by resourceful and visionary clergymen posted to their stations. The laity also became conscious that they were not to be used to sustain the indiscipline of very few clergy or to influence the posting and transfer of pastors.

It is worthwhile to state that under the leadership of Archbishop Kattey some of the clergymen have served and are still serving meritoriously on secondment or outright transfer elsewhere in the Church of Nigeria on the invitation of the Primate and many Bishops who also use them to organize staff development courses, seminars, workshops and Church revival crusades, etc. Some of these

examples include Ven. Isaac Orama (Rt Rev Isaac Oroma now late), Ven. Sosthenes Eze (Rt Rev Sosthenes Eze), Ven. Chidi Oparaojiaku (Rt Rev Chidi Oparaojiaku), Ven. Azubuike Ugoha, Ven. Israel Omosioni and Ven. Dr. Prince Orafu (Rtd), Ven Fred Anga Nyanabo (Rt Rev. Fred Anga Nyanabo Rtd). Rev Canon Ikechi Favored, etc. Others are doing commendable work in foreign missions.

Intercession

The policy to establish intercessory groups at the Station, Parish, Deanery, Archdeaconry and Diocesan levels has contributed tremendously to the growth of the diocese. Prayer meetings, mid-week services, night vigils, prayer conferences, etc. are a regular feature in the Diocese. Individuals and families were encouraged to establish altars in their homes. Weekly fasting is a mandatory requirement in every church.

Teaching ministry

The Bible Teaching Ministry is systematically promoting the Sunday school and Class meetings. To ensure success in this crucial aspect of Church life the Diocese uses two Bible study outlines, namely the Church of Nigeria Booklet for Friday class meetings and Bible Study and the Diocesan Adult and Children Sunday School manuals every Sunday. To consolidate Sunday school as an anchor of the teaching ministry, the Adult Sunday school committee was established with a chairman, secretary and chaplain to oversee it. Yearly programmes are organised for Sunday school teachers across the diocese to deepen their engagement and consolidate their commitment. Beginning from April, 2006, the Bishop began paying unscheduled visits in respect to mandatory Friday Bible class for all Churches to ascertain the level of seriousness in attendance.

Church growth

A decision to enhance church planting and spread of the gospel to the grass root was taken on November 12, 1997. Some city churches were mandated to sponsor new congregations in missionary areas. The mega churches were St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Matthew's Nkpogwu, St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani, St. John's Rumueme, St. Andrew's Rumuola, St. Michael's Rumuomasi, and All Saints' Rumuokwurusi (Synod Report 1998).

The decision resulted to the planting and strengthening of the following churches among others:

- Immanuel Church GRA III Port Harcourt;
- Bethel Church Rumuibekwe (now Diocese of Evo);
- St. James Church Oro-Akwor Rumueme (Headquarters of Port Harcourt West, DNDN), and
- All Saints International Airport Omagwa (now Diocese of Ikwerre)

Furthermore, Districts and parishes were directed to set aside certain amount in their annual budgets as training fund to enhance the empowerment of clergy and lay workers for effective mission and evangelism.

The pivot of the policy of Church Planting lies in the establishment of new Churches in order to arrest the movement of our youths to other denominations and to minister effectively to those living in densely populated or urban areas which should have at least one Anglican Church every two kilometres while every village should have at least an Anglican Church. As at the end of 2015, one hundred and thirty five (135) recognized and identifiable churches planted under the episcopacy of Archbishop Kattey. To sustain this effort, there is a standing instruction that there should be a Church Planting Committee in the respective Parishes, Districts, Deaneries and Archdeaconries (Onu 2008).

Evangelism practices in the diocese

The diocese of Niger Delta North is highly involved in both traditional and modern day evangelism methods. The diocese has a Facebook page called DNDN created on 22nd December, 2016 with over 5,500 followers, who are both Anglicans and non-Anglicans. The diocesan media team currently runs live streaming of diocesan programmes which allows members at home and in diaspora to view and follow up with happenings in diocesan programmes like diocesan city wide mega crusade, synod proceedings, youth conferences, episcopal functions etc. The bishop's monthly prayers are also aired on social media.

Missionary Work

Mission is a cardinal mandate of the diocese. This led to the establishment of the Home (H-MEC) and foreign (F-MEC) mission commissions. Churches and individuals in the diocese undertake and sponsor these programmes respectively and impact is quite encouraging. The home (local) mission activities involve

camp/rural rugged evangelism to communities where tracts, bibles, clothing, shoes, raw material, food stuffs, school bags, free haircut weaving and making hair free and medical are undertaken, climaxed with crusades (synod report 2019, DNDN presidential address 2021).

Often times the personnel who participate in this missionary work are volunteers from the diocese .The diocesan women also established a unit called "WHEELS" during the tenure of Mrs Beatrice G. Kattey. This unit is geared with the task of visiting missionary clergy wives on foreign mission in some countries like Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, Philippines. They go with local food stuffs, toiletries, provisions, cash etc. to encourage the missionaries and their converts.

Revival Meetings

Throughout history, churches, communities, and nations have experienced a spiritual phenomenon which Christians have generally chosen to identify as revival. Revival is described as a return to a unique quality of spiritual life. Passionate preaching and worship aimed at inspiring and reawakening the spiritual renewal and conversions for the church members are organised at various levels. This has greatly helped in stabilizing the spiritual atmosphere of the church and helped the individuals in their Christian lives. These revival programmes include worship, praise, prayers, anointing service, and impartation of the Holy Spirit.

Personal Evangelism

This approach to evangelism is when one Christian evangelizes to one unbeliever or only a few unbelievers in a conversation; sharing one's personal experience and faith journey with others to inspire them to explore the same faith. This is a common phenomenon in motor parks, streets, gas stations and other public places. Common approaches used include sharing of scriptures, showing kindness to people, courteous dialogue, prayer etc. The effectiveness of personal evangelism often lies in authenticity, empathy, and understanding. It's about creating a space for meaningful conversations rather than imposing beliefs.

Door To Door Evangelism

Door to door evangelism is an approach where a group of Christians go from house to house in a neighbourhood to share the Gospel and distribute Christian literature such as tracts or books. Before the diocese sets out on door to door evangelism, the evangelism commission usually put some measures in place including knowing the specific number of people who will attend from the various churches. Issues of allotted time, period, definite location and plan are drawn up. Believers are sent to houses, markets, parks, near the church or home, with tracts for distribution to people. Often times, this practice becomes a regular part of programmes during conferences by units in the diocese.

Evangelism by lifestyle

Lifestyle evangelism is an approach to evangelism characterized by someone demonstrating their faith by their actions in the hope that people around them will be impressed with how God affects that person's life and become a Christian. Matthew 5:16 says, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (KJV)." This approach is supported by the assumption that people will accept Christ based alone on a Christian's acts and deeds. As a result, the Gospel "never" needs to be verbally articulated because these acts of kindness and compassion are a demonstration of the Gospel. Parishioners of the diocese are encouraged to always practice good deeds and be examples wherever they may find themselves, as they never can tell who their life style can affect. However, it would not be prudent to assume that all people will always associate good works and acts of kindness with Christianity. Therefore, a Christian's good works and conduct should be viewed as an avenue for opportunities to share the Gospel. If a Christian's conduct is exceptional and set apart from the world, an unsaved person will ask about the hope that is in them.

Creativity Evangelism

This involves the use of Music, drama, dance and film to present gospel message. These are organised as concerts especially during Christmas and Easter services when many unsaved people are most likely to visit the church. The Anglican Children ministry presents choreography as a form of entertainment but its motive is to evangelize to the congregation (Kattey 2007). It can be said that every aspect

of an Anglican divine worship is meant to preach Christ, from the procession to recession. This method of evangelism involves the congregation.

Tract sharing

Tracts with the diocesan head quarter address or church address, phone number, email address attached are distributed to people as a source of information about the Gospel of Jesus. Testimonies abound of people who walk into the church compound to tell of how they were convicted of their sins after reading the tracts.

Street Preaching

This is usually done with mega phones or public address systems for the purpose of evangelizing people who would not typically enter a church. While the gospel is usually heard by those inside the churches from pulpits, those outside in the world (passers-by) do so by this means.

Open-Air Preaching

With inspiration drawn from John the Baptist in Matthew chapter 3, this is usually organized by the evangelism department of the various churches, in the market place, mechanic workshop, bus- stops etc. Sometimes, individuals preach in an open area, on a corner or set up a stand to draw crowds. In 2015 at St. John Anglican church Rumueme, during the diocesan synod, one of the activities featured was evangelism. All the synodists were asked to go out into the streets and markets of Rumueme to evangelize to the people, with the participation of the then Bishop and wife. This exercise lasted for one hour with lot of testimonies much later from this. It has become a regular occurrence at the diocesan, bloc, parish and station levels.

Rally

This is done to create awareness and invite people to church programmes. More often, it holds within the vicinity of the organisers. During the annual mega crusade the current chairman of home and evangelism commission (HMEC) Ven. Dr. Ifeanyi Aniagboso leads the diocesan faithful to rally, distributing tracts and evangelizing to people on the streets of Port Harcourt. Sometimes some individuals who were approached are hostile while others are receptive.

Props

Props has also been used by choreography dancers during diocesan functions; young boys and girls full of energy dancing to rhyme but without songs, carrying cardboards and hard books with write ups of especially bible verses and Christian quotes which communicate simple messages for both the young and old to understand. The most recent was in January 2023 during the annual mega crusade when the *danseurs de la transfiguration* (children from Chapel of transfiguration) did a choreography presentation. Teachers use props not only to teach the children but to add fun and entertainment; even the little child who wants to run off to his mother is hesitant due to its captivation.

Televangelism

Some of the stations that have aired DNDN programmes are AIT, NTA, RSTV, TBN, etc. Currently the diocese is being featured on Wish FM 99.5 every Saturday, titled African half hour, which is open to many not just Anglicans as members of other denominations send in their prayer requests, with lot of listeners been blessed by it.

Impact of evangelism on the Diocese of Niger Delta North

Evangelism has been called the "heartbeat" of the church. The word evangelism breeds evangelists, which are necessary for evangelism to exist. Through missionary labour Churches are being planted. As a result, evangelism is the fulfilment of a supernatural vocation, which is to spread the gospel and carry out the task of making Christ known throughout the world. Evangelization or evangelism, in its proper sense, is always about proclaiming the Good news of Christ, of God's kingdom, which aim is to promote God's glory through the spread of His kingdom, to enable men achieve eternal life, by knowing the only true God and His son, Christ Jesus. The Diocese of Niger Delta North has conducted various evangelism campaigns with notable successes, including:

- Planting churches that gave birth to other dioceses;
- Taking care of the widowed in our society;
- Free education for the less privilege;
- Use of social media to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- Crusade hosting to reach the unreached;
- Taking care of the elderly men and women in society;

- House-to-house evangelism.

We discovered that evangelism has fostered spiritual growth among believers as they actively engage in sharing their faith with others. It also leads to a close work with God. This has in turn brought spiritual prosperity to the diocese. The church now provides divine healing for members who come to seek God.

Church planting has also been enhanced including the creation of other dioceses from her, namely:

1. Ahoada 2004
2. Ogoni 2005
3. Etche 2007
4. Ikwerre 2007
5. Evo 2009

The diocese has grown over the years to 116 congregations comprising of the cathedral, 9 deaneries, 12 archdeaconries and chaplaincies headquarters, 36 other parishes and 58 station churches (Onu 2023).

Also, the diocese has become more visible through the use of technology in promoting evangelism; thus, it has helped create more awareness about the diocese and its activities. The diocese has over 5000 followers both on her Facebook and YouTube page. The result is that there are Anglican churches all over the metropolis. This has put the clergymen on their foot. Due to the competitive nature of other denominations around the diocese, the clergymen have to sit up and be more abreast with ministerial demands. Some go to the higher institutions to further their studies at home and abroad. This has helped attract more persons to the church because the diocese now has polished literate clergymen compared to the past. It has also increased collaboration among clergymen in the Diocese.

Conclusion

That the Bishops in the Diocese of Niger delta North have maintained the tradition of evangelism is not in doubt. This they have done through various policy initiatives and actions in terms of approaches that relate to each age. The result is that the diocese is growing spiritually and numerically to the extent that community bonds are strengthened, deeper sense of purpose and mission is

engendered, fostering of spiritual renewal and revitalization within congregations, leading to greater engagement and commitment to spreading the gospel. Despite challenges being encountered, evangelism remains a vital aspect of the church's identity and mission, empowering believers to share the message of salvation and transform lives through utilizing technology for outreach, organizing events and participating in community activities to connect with others.

Recommendations

In view of the current trend, it is recommended that

1. Televangelism should be established
2. Use of the social media platforms owned and managed by the Diocese should be established
3. Regular training on modern evangelism strategies should be included in the clergy school and ministry
4. There should be deliberate effort in bringing about all-members (inclusive) evangelism action
5. Evangelistic efforts should be genuine, respectful, and empathetic in sharing one's faith.

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