

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN AND THEIR HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE IN THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56293/IJMSSSR.2025.5621>

IJMSSSR 2025  
VOLUME 7  
ISSUE 3 MAY – JUNE

ISSN: 2582 – 0265

**Abstract:** Christianity as we see it today has passed through difficult painful stages of its existence, right from its inception as a world religion. It was started by Jesus Christ, the proclaimed Savior of the world and His immediate co-workers, the twelve disciples, whom He commissioned (Matthew 28:19-20) to continue the work after the lapse of His earthly ministry. He promised them the Holy Spirit, who would be their helper, guide, counselor, and strengthener in every situation they find themselves. This study is to critically examine the historical roles and importance of some early Christian Church centers in the roles they played in the spread of Christianity. Primary and secondary sources of research will be used in the study. The findings of the study include: persecution as a catalyst in the spread of the Gospel and extension of Christianity to other places; the beginnings of theological institutions and the rise of theological writings; beginnings of Missionary expansion work to the Gentiles; the use of Latin as language of worship and its effects; the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek at Egypt and many more. The recommendations include: the use of proper evangelistic methods of evangelism; the use of the language of the people to enhance proper understanding and assimilation of the Gospel; and the robbing of the Church from its ecclesiastical responsibility by the state.

**Keywords:** Early Christianity, Christian Church Centers, Church History, Gospel Spread, Theological Schools, Religious Persecution

**Introduction:**

Christianity began humbly in Jerusalem through the efforts of Jesus' disciples and later their associates after Jesus' ascension. He had already instructed them to begin preaching in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the world (Matthew 28:19-20). This injunction and command of Christ known as the "Great Commission" was not only for the twelve disciples, but for His followers of every generation to come – the Church. They are to go into the world to preach the Gospel to all peoples, despite their race, color, or creed. This task includes the primary responsibility of sending missionaries into every nation (Acts 13:1-4). The purpose is to make disciples, not just converts, who will observe Christ's commands. This imperative is intended not that evangelism and missionary witness result only in conversion decisions or spiritual energies or be concentrated in merely enlarging Church membership, but in making disciples who would observe the commands of Christ, and follow Him with all their hearts, minds, and wills (John 8:31). Furthermore, it is to be noted that Christ commands us to concentrate reaching lost men and women, an imperative on Christianizing society or taking over the world. Those who believe must come out of the current evil world system and be separated from its immorality (Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14). The study is undertaken specifically to examine "The Early Christian Church centers and their historical roles and importance in the spread of Christianity. These Early Christian centers include: Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria in Egypt, Rome, and Constantinople. Each of these will be examined as to the roles they played.

**The Jerusalem Church:**

The importance of Jerusalem as sacred religious city is traced back to the time of David and his successors. When David conquered the Jebusite city (Jebus), he established Jerusalem and made it the capital of the nation of Israel (2 Samuel 5:6-10; 1Chronicles 11:4-9). David's decision to secure Israel's throne in Jerusalem established it as permanent home of Israel's human monarchs. Nevertheless, it became more than the nation's human monarchical

center. David brought the Ark of the Covenant to reside in Jerusalem their constitutional seat of the government. It was also the seat of the Jewish religious leaders and a sacred place for religious activities carried out in the temple. The temple was the life-blood of the Israelites. It was at this temple Jesus drove away money changers and buyers and sellers of goods (Matthew 21:12-13; Luke 19:45-46).

The Church in Jerusalem was started by the twelve disciples. Before Jesus' ascension, he had told them to remain in Jerusalem until they receive the Holy Spirit, (Luke 24:48-49). Though some historians attributed the beginning of the Christian Church to the Ministry of Jesus Christ, yet we can say that the three years of Jesus' ministry was seen as a time for teaching, training, and mentoring the disciples whom he later commissioned to do the work after him. This was fulfilled during the Pentecost. The Pentecost marked the birth of the Christian Church. The filling of the disciples by the Holy Spirit and Peter's powerful sermon marked the beginning of the Church. The Church began to increase daily through the bold witness of Peter and John (Acts 2:43-4:37). The infant Church was not without problems; there was opposition from both within and outside; internal deceits and complaints were experienced. The apostles were at times beaten, imprisoned or killed. From within complaints by the Grecian Jews about the Hebraic Jews who overlooked their widows in the daily distribution of the food items.

In Acts 15, the problem of the Gentiles was discussed. The Jewish authorities advocated for circumcision of the Gentile believers before being accepted into the fold of Jewish Christians. This issue brought controversy between the Church in Antioch (mostly Gentiles) and the Jerusalem Church (Jewish). However, the two Churches were able to resolve the problem at the Jerusalem Council, considered to be the first synod of the Church.

The spread of Christianity outside Jerusalem was as a result of persecution of Christians which followed Stephen's death. The persecution came to its peak at the killing of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church. The Church was eventually scattered and many of the apostles left Jerusalem and ran to other places around Jerusalem and beyond, spreading the Good News and soon, there were converts in Samaria, Judea, and other parts of Palestine and areas outside it. Instead of stopping Christianity, opposition and persecution served as a catalyst for its spread. The believers took the message of the Gospel with them wherever they fled (Acts 8:4).

### **The Church in Antioch in Syria:**

The Church in Antioch was the launching point of the worldwide mission where the believers/apostles aggressively preached to the Gentiles. Philip had preached in Samaria, but the Samaritans were part of the Jewish Church (Acts 8:5); Peter preached to Cornelius, but he was already a worshipper of God (Acts 10:2). Believers who were scattered after the outbreak of persecution in Jerusalem spread the Gospel to other Jews in many lands they fled to (Acts 11:19). At the time, the believers began actively sharing the Good News with Gentiles. With exception of Jerusalem, Antioch in Syria played a more important prominent role in the Early Church than any other city in sending missionaries to Gentile areas. In Antioch, the first Gentile Church was founded and it was here that the believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Paul used the city as his home base for his missionary journeys. Antioch was known for the worship of several pagan cults that prompted much sexual immorality and other forms of evil common to pagan religions. Antioch also was a vital commercial center – the gateway to the eastern world. It was a key city both to the Romans and to the Early Church. It was founded by Seleucus about 300 B.C. and was the capital of Syria until A.D. 300.

According to tradition, St. Peter and St. Ignatius were among its bishops. In A.D. 387, it was the scene of a serious riot. The Dedication Council also known as the Council of Antioch, was held here in A.D. 341 on the occasion of the consecration of Constantine's Golden Coin. By the fourth century, it ranked as one of the Patriarchates of the Christian world and until fourteenth century, it was the residence of the Latin Patriarch. It passed to the Turks in 1516, now called Antakya, it is a minor town in Turkey.

### **The Church in Alexandria:**

Egypt had been an important nation in the world history. Beers (1983) says that: "By the time Tutankhamon inherited the throne in 1361 B.C., Egyptian civilization was already almost 2,000 years old. Between 3500 and 3000 B.C., People in the Nile River valley had established the first civilization in Africa. Early Egyptians probably had established some contacts with Sumer, a civilization in the Tigris – Euphrates valley of western Asia" (p.19).

At the time of Christ, Egypt was not an independent kingdom; it was part of the Roman Empire. The country was very important as a centre of learning. It had the first theological school known as the “Catechetical School” equipped with a powerful library at Alexandria. It was at Alexandria, the Greek version of the Bible known as “Septuagint” was translated from Hebrew to Greek.

According to Hilderbrandt (1981), The Egyptian Church was established by John Mark. According to Coptic Orthodox Church historian, after Paul and Barnabas had disagreement about John Mark at the beginning of the second missionary journey, Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus to minister, after which Mark went to Pentapolis where he born to preach. From Pentapolis, Mark went to Egypt and began his ministry in Alexandria. Alexandria at that time was the center for Jewish religious activities. In Alexandria, the Coptic historian reported that Mark witnessed to a shoe-maker. The cobbler responded to the message and invited Mark to his house, where he and his household were baptized... This family became the first converts of John Mark in Egypt and this marked the beginning of the Egyptian Church. The authenticity of this tradition is supported by the fact that, Mark was the companion of Peter to whom the mission of the Jews had been entrusted. Alexandria was the home of the Jewish Diaspora. It is believed that Peter might have visited Alexandria with Mark before (p.6-7).

With regards to the question as to when Christianity began, Boer (1996) says that “The beginning of Christianity in Alexandria is not known. Perhaps Christianity in Egypt and especially in Alexandria, had received little attention from the leaders of the Early Church because of the extensive Gnosticism that was found in Alexandria” (p.90).

Hilderbrandt (1981) reasons that: “Although the founder of the Church in Egypt had been martyred, the Church itself could not be killed so easily.” Evangelism continued so that by A.D. 180, there was a well established Church in Egypt” (p.8). Going by the above date, we find that the Church in Egypt might have probably been started in a date earlier than this. Baur (1994) says: “We may therefore, with a good reason, refer to the year A.D.62 as the founding date of the Christian Church in Africa” (p.21).

It is generally believed that the first converts in Egypt were the people of Greek origin who lived mainly in the city of Alexandria. Later the Gospel spread to the Copts or Egyptians of Hamitic origin. The importance of Alexandria as cradle for Christianity in Africa lies in its theological school. Alexandria became the metropolis of the entire Mediterranean East, a cultural centre even more important than Athens. Though the Romans conquered it in 30 B.C., it remained a Greek city, and its top philosophical school extended its influence even to Rome. So, it is to be noted that Christian theology and philosophy first started in Alexandria, Egypt. As such, Africa is to be remembered and given the credit of being the first continent in the world to have established such theological and philosophical schools. The development of theology came as a result of specific philosophies that encountered the faith by way of confrontation or adaptation. The Gnostics attempted to influence the faith by teaching what reduced Christianity to a philosophical speculation, mixed with pagan rituals. This attempt failed. The Alexandrian School of Theology was able to quench the thirst for knowledge of the young Egyptian Christians. This School was founded by Pantaneus (A.D. 180), whose successor was his disciple, Clement of Alexandria (A.D.200). Under Origen (A.D. 220 – 254) it attained its zenith.

Christianity spread to other parts of Egypt during the persecution under Emperor Septimius Severus, following his addict of A.D. 202, forbidding conversion to Christianity and Judaism. Dispersion through persecution led to further expansion of the Church. The Christians fled to the south to the cataract regions, and to the west into Libya, proclaiming the Gospel to the people. The Church became rooted in the native population; the Coptic language was employed or used and the Church took on a national character.

### **The Church in Rome:**

Outside Palestine, Christianity spread westward from its urban base in Antioch. It found a home in many of the cities of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the most important. After crossing the Aegean Sea, the Missionaries, established Churches in Macedonia, Achaia, and Italy, notably in the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth and Rome.

During the second and third centuries, the most influential cities in the Church were Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria. Each has its own character and contributions to the life of the Church in general. From the beginning

these Churches were loosely related to each other. They had a common faith but not a common organization or a common center. It was at the death of the apostles and the rise of heresy and persecution that brought the Churches together into firm and close relationship. Rome was Latin and the capital of the Empire. It is not known when Christianity was introduced in Rome. Some historians suggested that the Church in Rome probably was founded by Aquila and Priscilla whom Paul met at Corinth (Acts 18:2). They left Rome as a result of Claudius expulsion of the Jews at Rome. This claim is very much doubted since it is not stated that they were already Christians, so the question must be left open.

According to Marshall, Millard, Parker, and Wiseman (2000), say that “Another source of information about early Christianity in Rome was given by Suetonius who said that the trouble in Rome was caused by certain Chrestus...” (p. 1028). Since this could be a variant of Christus, it has often been argued that Christianity had already reached Rome, however, this claim has no substantial proof. The agitations over Christus could have been caused by any Jewish Messianic Movement, and not necessarily by Christians alone. Moreover, there is no hint in the Epistle to the Romans of any conflict between Jewish and Christians at Rome, and when Paul himself reached Rome, the Jewish leaders professed personal ignorance of the sect (Acts 28:22). John Laux (1930) also argued that: “Christianity may have been taken to Rome by the Jewish converts in dispersion after the Pentecost” (p. 4).

In the second century A.D., the tradition of the Church appears that Peter had worked in Rome and died there as a martyr. In the fourth century A.D., the claim that he was the first bishop of the Roman Church appeared. It was believed that Peter travelled to Rome, where he converted Jews in the capital to Christianity. The later bishops in Rome claimed to have outranked all other bishops because Peter had been the leading apostle. Roman bishops argued that Peter was the first Pope – the father of the Christian Church.

The Church in Rome was not only Christian in character, it was also truly Roman. Its members, especially its leaders, brought to the service of Christ those characters and qualities that had made Rome great. These qualities were moral discipline, respect for authority, judicial mind, ability at organization, and a good practical judgment. The Roman Church was not in any way inclined to philosophical thought; but was a good judge of a clear thinking. It was this combination of common sense and ability to maintain unity in diversity that gave such long life to the Empire, coupled with the Pax Romana, provided ample opportunity for the growth of the Christian Church within its borders and provinces.

### **The Church in Constantinople:**

Constantinople was founded by Rome's first Christian Emperor, Constantine, in A.D. 330. He built the city on the site of a Greek seaport known as Byzantium. It was situated at a point where major trade routes between Asia and Europe meet. The city was blessed with a spacious harbor known as the Golden Horn. According to Kurian (2001), “Constantine called his Eastern capital new Rome” (p. 205). For two centuries, Emperors in Constantinople ruled the eastern part of the old Roman Empire. The lands under their control included: Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. The Empire was later called Byzantine Empire after the original Greek town on Constantinople site. Constantine had many reasons for building Constantinople as a new capital. He believed that Rome was full of its “pagan” or non – Christian past. He wanted the new capital to be Christian city. Constantinople was close to the great commercial of eastern Mediterranean. The trade and commerce of those cities supplied most of the Emperor's riches. Furthermore, the eastern frontiers were secure from invaders than the western frontiers.

Christianity had been in existence in Constantinople as far back as the time of Emperor Vespasian (A.D. 69 – 79). It was formally a minor sect, but in A.D. 313, Constantine issued the edict of Milan extending toleration to Christianity and made it the official religion of the Empire –“religio licita”, and was stimulated by the imperial patronage of Constantine and his sons.

The exact date as to when Christianity came to Constantinople is not known, but some historians do believe that it was brought by apostle Paul during his third missionary journey which covered most areas of Asia Minor. Christianity continued to grow under Constantine and it was closely linked to politics. Even before Justinian, the eastern branch of the Christian Church had refused to acknowledge the bishop of Rome as the sole leader of the Christian faith.

Constantine favored the Christian Church so much that, the Church property confiscated during the persecution he returned them to the Church. The Church also benefited financially and materially from the Emperor's patronage. New copies of the Scriptures were made available, members of the clergy were given important positions in the state and were exempted from taxes on their lands, and a fixed proportion of state revenue was set aside for Church charitable works. Many new churches were erected where martyrs had died. In the Holy Land, the name of Jerusalem was restored (the Romans had named it Aelia Capitolina) and the exact location of the spot of Christ's crucifixion was located and the Church of Holy Sepulchre was built on it.

Because of the preferential treatment of the Church, Christianity became fashionable. Many pagans started to attend Church and become nominal Christian members, perhaps to enjoy some of the benefits Christians have gained. The Church responded by allowing Constantine the opportunity to exercise spiritual authority over the Church. On two major occasions, Church leaders appealed to the Emperor for ruling on matters which were ecclesiastical which the Church leaders themselves should have settled.

In A.D. 313, a group of Christians from Carthage in North Africa, begged the Emperor's support in a dispute with their bishop. The Donatists, who refused to accept Caecilian as bishop of Carthage because he betrayed the Church during the persecution, championed their own nominee, Donatus. The Emperor called a council of bishops at Arles in A.D. 314. The council dismissed the charges labeled against Caecilian and decided in his favor. Constantinople remained the capital of the Empire until the Turkish conquest in 1453. By the fourth century, it had become the Seat of one of the four major patriarchates, second in pre-eminence after only Rome. In the sixth century, the patriarch of Constantinople was acknowledged as the ecumenical patriarch of all orthodox Churches. After the Turkish conquest, the city was renamed Istanbul.

### **The Church in Carthage:**

The Church in Carthage played a pivotal role in the early development of Christianity, particularly in North Africa. It served as a major centre of Christian thought and activity, producing influential theological thinkers and establishing a strong presence across the region. Carthage was exercising a kind of informal primacy, acting as the most important center of Christianity in Roman Africa.

The Church in Carthage produced key figures like Tertullian, Augustine, and Cyprian, who were Latin Church Fathers who made significant contributions to the development of Christian theology, especially in Latin language. Tertullian's work was particularly influential in shaping Western theology. Tertullian, a theologian of part of the Berber descent, was instrumental in the development of "Trinitarian theology," and was the first to apply Latin language extensively in his theological writings. According to Gonzales (2010), Tertullian has been called "the father of Latin Christianity" and "the founder of Western theology". Bunson (2002) adds that, Carthage remained an important centre of Christianity, hosting several Church Councils, including the council of A.D. 397, which reaffirmed the Canon of Scripture and addressed issues of Church governance and doctrine.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, turbulent controversies in teachings and struggle for leadership positions affected the Church in Carthage. Donatism, Arianism, Manichaenism and Pelagianism, all these brought divisions in the Church, where some proponents established their own parallel Churches and hierarchies. The Church was weakened in such a way that the Muslim conquest of A.D. 698 was made easy.

### **Findings and lessons from the study:**

Several findings and lessons could be learned from these Early Church Christianity. The study could only highlight on some few salient ones as they are so conspicuous to the understanding of the reader. These include the following:

### **The persecution of Christians:**

The persecution has been a major contributor in the spread of the Gospel and Church growth. The two incidents that took place in Jerusalem among others that led to the spread of the Gospel outside the city of Jerusalem were the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) and the killing of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:2). The

Jewish authority thought they were putting an end to stamp out Christianity and the spread of the Gospel by persecuting the followers of the sect, but instead as a matter of fact, they were helping promote the spread of the Gospel outside of Jerusalem. Instead of stopping the spread of Christianity, opposition and persecution served as a catalyst for its dispersion and growth. The believers took the message of the Gospel with them as they fled from Jerusalem (Acts 8: 4).

### **Antioch as base for the Evangelization of the Gentiles:**

The Church in Antioch in Syria played a more important role the Early Church than any other city of the Roman world. It was the first Gentile Church founded, and it was here that the believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Antioch was a launching base for missionary enterprise to the Gentiles. Paul's missionary journeys were all launched from Antioch in Syria.

### **The Catechetical School of Alexandria:**

If there is anything to remember and praiseworthy for Africa to be proud of, is nothing than the Catechetical School of Alexandria. This famous School, founded by Panteanus in A.D. 180, became the metropolis of the entire Mediterranean East, a cultural centre even more important than Athens. It is to be noted that Christian theology in the proper sense of the word was started in Alexandria, Egypt. This School became the world's biggest center of learning of its day. Egypt was one of the civilized nation ranking after Mesopotamia in Babylonia. The Septuagint, the Greek Bible was translated in Alexandria. The first attempt by the Gnostics to influence the faith failed simply because the Alexandrian theological school was able to quench the thirst for knowledge of the young Egyptian Christians. So, the lesson we learn from this is that, Africa received the credit of having the first theological institution in the then world of its time. This school was able to produce great theologians of North Africa, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, and many others who worked hard to combat the Gnostic heresy in Egypt.

### **The use of Latin:**

For proper evangelism, preaching of the Gospel and worship to take root in the lives of people and the Church, the use of the language of the people where the Church finds itself is very important. This will help bring the message home and enable the people comprehend and assimilate the message very well because it is their language.

The church in Carthage was Romanized. Latin was the only language used in Church services, and this had a devastating effect on the congregation and the life of the Church in Carthage. Most of the indigenous people were not carried along. The Bible was not translated into the Berber language, the language of the natives, and neither was there any attempt to evangelize the Berbers in the rural areas. Christianity utterly remained the business of the urban population and mostly practiced among the privileged class people, the Romans and the Punic. This is a very important factor in the history of the Church in Carthage. It had a negative effect on the Church. At the time Rome fell, the people from the upper class fled to Europe, leaving the Berbers, most of whom were not evangelized and illiterate. When the Muslims conquered Carthage, they offered the Berbers a straight forward religion which they accepted without hesitation. This led to the collapse of Christianity in Carthage.

### **The State Run Church:**

Constantine, the first Christian Emperor who came as a savior of the Church from persecution, is also seen here as its destroyer. He came with a full authority and instituted himself over the Church to run it, robbing the clergy of their ecclesiastical duties. He paid the monthly wages of the clergy, carried out some Church projects using state funds, made decisions for the Church, and was always consulted by church leaders on ecclesiastical matters and to give its final ruling. He made the church to be at laxity. The clergy, instead of doing what they were supposed to do, were completely busy enjoying the privileges offered them by the state. They lost focus of their authority and duties to Emperor Constantine. They could not speak out to defend the Church and the people. Evangelism was a thing of the past and many pagan and nominal Christians entered the Church and influenced it negatively. They wanted to join and enjoy the privileges given the Church by the Emperor. These and many others

are good lessons that we need to learn today.

### **The Church Today:**

The Church today, whether it is in Africa or Europe or in America experience numerous challenges that seem to divide the Church further, apart from Lutheran split that took place in the seventeenth century. The Liberals introduced the issues of same sex marriage, trans-gender, gays and the lesbians into the Church. This has brought much heated debate and has made some provinces of the Anglican Church to break away from the See of Canterbury. A good example is the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). The Global South, though still maintains and attends Lambert Conference, is not known as to how far this relationship will last.

Again, the politics practiced by the state have now crept into the Church altars and pulpits. Some politicians today influence the leaders of the Church and want them to do whatever they tell them to do, things that are completely political and have no connection with ecclesiastical and independent running of Church administration. They dictate the Church administration.

According to Padinjarekutt (2005), when “Augustine declared the Donatists as heretics, Emperor Constantine gave approval and supplied state troops to persecute and banish the Donatist Church in North Africa” (p. 31). The study therefore, is of the opinion that any government that encroaches into Church affairs, is to be seen as that which would bring confusion and destabilize the operations of the same. The Church is an independent body, but also has the mandate from God to teach, rebuke, correct and train people in all righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). This is what any government should know and allow the Church run her functions without any interference or molestation.

### **Conclusion:**

The Early Christians have revealed and given us enough important insights about the roles they have played in their own time. The lessons learned from the study give us more knowledge and strength to remain focus in matters that affects the Church positively or negatively. There is need to maintain the standard, and resilience in the extension of the Gospel to the **unreached** to bring them into the fold, the body of Christ. For this was the instruction from day one “...Go ye and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19-20).

### **Recommendations:**

The study after having gone through the selected Church centers, has the following recommendations to put forward:

#### **(i). Evangelism:**

Church leaders and planners should priority evangelism. Experience has shown that in most of these Church centers, evangelism was concentrated in the urban cities while the rural areas were left with no evangelization work carried out. For example, in Carthage, the rural population was left without any evangelization, neither was the Bible translated into their language and this has a devastating effect on the Church which led to its fall.

#### **(ii). Leadership Positions:**

The Church, like any other institution has become a place where leaders struggle and fight for positions of authority. Such leaders do not always contribute positively to the development and extension of the Gospel and God’s Kingdom among men. Leadership positions should be given to dedicated men of God with good leadership qualities (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

#### **(iii). The Autonomy of the Church:**

The autonomy of the Church should not be compromised. The Church is an independent organization within a state that should be recognized as such. It should be allowed to operate independently without any harassment of

any form, from individuals or the state. The government is to protect the Church and the Church is to respect constituted authority of the state and to abide with its laws.

**(iv). Denominational Unity:**

The leaders of Churches should strive for unity and co-operation in matters of common interest. They should throw matters of doctrines aside because doctrine divides us and brings hatred among us. They should not compromise evangelism if they want to achieve much in outreach.

**(v). Church Leaders should be Literate Enough:**

Coupled with the trends of globalization and technology, Church leaders should be literate and current enough with the events of the time. They should embark on teaching their congregations as to enrich them spiritually and boast their faith. The Bible says: “My people perish because of lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). This verse highlights the consequences of ignoring or rejecting God’s word and guidance. It suggests that without knowledge of God’s laws and will, people are vulnerable to destruction and ruin. So teaching the Bible in the Churches should be of high priority.

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