OBAFEMI AWOLOWO
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A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CHURCHES' LOGOS AND MOTTOS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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2016

CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Almighty God, my greatest Teacher, Friend, Companion and Comforter, without whom this work would have been a total impossibility and failure.

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ABSTRACT

The study identified and classified the modes of communication in the logos. It also analysed the linguistic features of the mottos. It further discussed the functional relations of the visual and linguistic modes to their contextual issues. This was done to appreciate the communicative potency of church logos and mottos in conveying messages in the competitive world of church establishment in Nigeria.

The study employed both primary and secondary data. The primary data comprised forty selected Pentecostal church logos and their respective mottos in Southwest Nigeria. This region was selected because most of the churches have their headquarters there. Also, the Pentecostal churches were selected because they are at the centre-stage of Christian movement and ideology in contemporary times. The church logos and mottos were randomly selected and their multimodal features such as colour, shape, image(s), font and text were subjected to descriptive analysis in relation to the underlying ideological issues. The secondary data comprised books, journal articles and the Internet. The analysis was done using Kress and Van Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Analytical Framework, with insights from Halliday's model of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG).

The results of this study showed that Pentecostal churches used visual and linguistic items in the logos and mottos in promoting Christian values. In line with objective one, the visual devices such as pictures, colours, symbols and postures are used in arresting the attention of the audience. Linguistic features such as nominal groups, non-finite clause, mood, graphological elements and ellipsis are used in convincing and enticing the audience in line with

the underlain objectivesof the Christian body. Furthermore, there is functional relationship between the visual and verbal modes of communication in the selected data in expressing the ideology of the church.

The study concluded that the discursive implications of visual resources and linguistic features in communicating the ideology of Pentecostal churches served as instruments for advertising Christian values and shaping the minds of people.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background to the Study

The word church in the Bible comes from the Greek word *ecclesia*, which means a 'called out company or assembly' (Williams, 2014). Wherever it is used in the Bible, it refers to people. With insight from The Authorised King James Version of the Bible (1916), there are three distinct groups of people in the Bible: The Jews, the Gentiles and the church (1 Corinthians 10: 31-33). The Jews are all born as descendants of Abraham through Isaac. The Gentiles are all other people born who are not Jews (David, 2001). Then, what is a church?

Robert and Thomas, (1994) opine that the term church is intended to be synonymous with the term denomination or sect rather than being used in the universal sense. They went further to say a church must have a definite and distinct legal existence, recognise creed and form of worship, a definite and distinct ecclesiastic government, a formal code of doctrine and discipline, a distinct religious history, a membership not associated with any other sect, regular religious services among other beliefs.A church is a body of people or an individual who believe(s) in and accept Jesus as Lord and saviour. When a Jew or a Gentile trusts Christ as their saviour, they are born again into God's family, become a child of God, and are part of the church. They are no longer a Jew or a Gentile. The wall of separation between the Jew and the Gentile is torn down and they become one body-church (Kyle, 2010).

In a nutshell, this body of Christ (i.e. the church) comprises two aspects: first, the universal church which consists of all those who have personal relationship with Jesus, and secondly, the local church which is the gathering of members of the universal church in a given

environment or location (Kyle, 2010). So, the church is not a building or a denomination as it is understood in our contemporary society. According to the Bible, the church is the body of Christ –all those who have placed their faith in Jesus for salvation (John 3:16). The local church is where the members of the universal church can fully encourage, teach and build up one another in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ through the coming and help of the Holy Spirit in them (Wellman, 2014).

Today as the church seeks to form and direct her assemblies; an important source of guidance is the example and practice of the early church. The forms and practices of the early church are culturally bound and there are large differences between the cultures of the early church and today's church (Pascal, 2001). One of the peculiarities of the early church was to meet to partake of the Lord's Supper Meal. It was Jesus' intention that whenever the Lord's Supper meal was observed among His followers they should think of Him in a special way when they come to the bread and to the wine. The Lord's Supper connotes unity; for such a meal was a guarantee of peace, trust and brotherhood (Piper, 2006). For the early church, the Lord's Supper Meal was practised to strengthen and celebrate the unity among believers without any form of denominational and tribal syndrome (Derwin, 2013). It also strengthens the faith of the believers.

According to the book of Acts, another peculiarity of the early church was to respond to some situation that presented itself to the church. For example, the believers assembled to pray for boldness after the arrest and release of Peter and John (Acts 4: 23-31). This was in response to the dangerous situation facing the church as she pursued her mission. Also, Warner (2014) says regardless of theopposition, preaching the gospel of Jesus was the supreme task of the early church without any intention of monetary gain, self-popularity, self-imposition and establishing

denominations as it is obtained today in the Christian body. The gospel message was not just preached in words but in actions and deeds. Letters were written in form of epistles and verbally, the message of love, healing, salvation, among others was communicated to brethren and the public at large.

However, the above trend has greatly changed considering the growth of contemporary churches in Nigeria. The love of money is said to be the root of all evils, and it is the major reason for the current trend in the Christian community; that is, it has been drawing the attentionof 'Christians and Christian leaders' away from God andfrom practising and preaching thetrue Christian values and ideologies (Fakoya, 2008).

In the early church days, Christian missionaries were renowned for their simple lifestyle. They would leave the comfort of their homes, often in western countries, to live in Africa (Anderson, 2004). They endured the hardship the native suffered in a bid to impart in them the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Christian values and virtues as well as education that would improve their lives. The early pastors were always there for their congregation by attending to their needs and this was passed across to their successors who were Africans, but the legacy of the likes of Reverend Ajayi Crowther who spent their entire lives ministering to the spiritual needs of members of their faith and widening the knowledge scope of Nigerians generally has since dissipated to a more self-centred doctrine which the pastors of this generation now preach (Gaiya, 2002).

From the words of Diara (2014), churches were once ministering to the spiritual, educational and even economic needs of the people, but now the new generation churches expect the members, even the poverty-stricken ones, to provide copiously for the church (as an

institution). Offering which in the past was voluntary and meant for the sustenance and propagation of the Christian mission and ideology, is now made compulsory and hardly ever used for any positive humanitarian work. The new generation churches advertise tithing as a condition for enjoying material blessings from God. Rather than use the tithe money collected for the growth of the work of God and meeting the needs of the members; church leaders use it to sponsor themselves against the practice of the early church (Fakoya, 2008).

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