

THE RELEVANCE OF EASTER HOLIDAYS CELEBRATION IN ASHANTI REGION OF GHANA: EVIDENCE FROM EJISU

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Abstract:

The study adopted explanatory research design, qualitative research approach, cross-sectional research strategy, population of the study was 8 churches which were Orthodox and Pentecostal. The names of the churches were Deeper Life, Hand of God Ministry, The Apostolic Church- Ghana, Pentecost Church, Methodist Church, Prebyterian Church of Ghana, S.D.A Church and Jehovah Witness. The sampling design was consideration of the individual members of congregation, sample size was 800. The source of data collection were primary and secondary sources, method of data collection were research and development of questionire. The problem statement of study was "The relevance of Easter Holidays Celebration in Ashanti Region of Ghana: Evidence from Ejisu". Concerning the literature review the study investigated into what other writers had written with respect to subject under study. The objectives of the study were achieved. The study found out reasons for celebration of the day Jesus die, why He died, who crucified Him, His date of death, beliefs in His burial, feelings towards Easter Celebration, how Easter was celebrated, beliefs in His crucifixion, importance of His death, beliefs in His resurrection, the day He rose from the dead and significance of His resurrection. The study generalized that Easter Holiday was important to Christians in Ejisu community. The study recommended that Christian Organizations should organize seminar and 21st century evangelists must preached about His death and His resurrection to the general public.

Keywords: Relevance, Easter, Celebration, Origin, Holidays, Crucifixion, Death, Last words, Cross, Jesus

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The word "Easter" is derived from Latin called "Pascha"; Greek "Pascha" but in Aramaic, Greek and Latin Easter is also known as "Resurrection Sunday" and is a cultural holiday. Easter is the main festival of the Christian Church which gives grounds to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on the third after His crucifixion. Easter celebration was observed in the 2nd century. The origin of "Easter" is not certain but "Easter" parallels the German word "Ostern". In the 8th century Venerable Bede declared that "Easter":was derived from "Eostre" , the Anglo-Saxon goddess

of spring and fertility. Christians who celebrate Easter regard the week before Easter as holy week. Easter is one of the vital celebration on the Christian calendar and is a holiday that celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Objectives of the study

- To find the reasons why Christians observe the day Jesus die
- To find out the reasons why Jesus die
- To find out date of death of Jesus
- To find out who crucify Jesus
- To find out if Jesus was buried
- To find out how Christians feel during Easter Holidays

To find out if Christians views on Jesus' crucifixion

To find out the importance of Jesus' death

To find out the day Jesus resurrected

To find out Christians beliefs in the resurrection of Jesus

To find out the significance of Jesus' resurrection

THE ORIGIN OF EASTER HOLIDAY

Jesus Christ was crucified, died and buried but after three days He rose from the dead. The early church never celebrated Easter Holidays until the church experienced persecution for few centuries and this brought the creation of Easter Holidays. Easter does not have pagan origin. According to International Standard Bible Encyclopedia "Easter" is not mentioned in the Bible but King Version state it in Acts 12:4 and it represents Passover. It is stated in the Revised Version both British and American. The celebration of Easter is not mentioned in the New Testament Bible. In the early church the Jewish Christians observed the Passover and respected Christ as "the true Paschal lamb". Through this, the Passover turned into celebration of death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THESIS STATEMENT: The problem statement of the study was "The relevance of Easter Holidays celebration in Ashanti Region of Ghana: Evidence from Ejisu". The study found out the reasons why Christians celebrated Jesus' death day, reasons why He died, who crucified Him, His date of death, views on His' burial, how Christians felt during Easter Holidays, how Christians celebrated Easter Holidays, Christians beliefs in His crucifixion, importance of His' death, views on His resurrection, the day He resurrected and significance of His' resurrection.

JESUS' TRIALS BEFORE CRUCIFIXION

The night Jesus was arrested He was sent to Annas, Caiaphas and a group of religious leaders invited the Sanhedrin (John 18:19-24; Matthew 26:57). From Pilate, the Roman Governor He was sent to Herod and came back to Pilate (John

18:28; Luke 23:7; 23:11-12). Pilate sentenced Him to death. The trials of Jesus were categorized into six parts. Three stages in religious court and three stages in Roman court. Annas who was high priest, Caiaphas, the present high priest and Sanhedrin tried Jesus. He was accused of "ecclesiastical" trials with blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah. The trials of Jewish authorities and religious trials proved how the leaders of the Jews hated Him. Because they disrespected their own laws and did what please them. From Jewish perspective there were many unlawful actions during the trial of Jesus: **1.** Trials should not be done on the feast time. **2.** Every member of the court ought to vote but Jesus was convicted through acclamation. **3.** When the death penalty was announced, a night should pass before sentence would be delivered but within hours Jesus was crucified. **4.** The Jews had no authority to execute. **5.** Trials ought not to be done at night but Jesus' trial was done before dawn. **6.** The accused should be given counsel but Jesus had no privilege. **7.** The accused must not be asking self-incriminating questions but Jesus was questioned if He was the Christ. Pilate began the trials of the Roman authorities after Jesus had been beaten (John 18:23). His charges differed from charges of the religious trials. He was charged with causing disturbance, not allowing people to pay taxes and claimed to be king. Pilate discover no cause to be killed and he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:7). Herod laughed at Jesus but sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:11-12). This is the last trial, Pilate should fulfill the desires of the Jews but wanted Jesus to be scourged. The scourge involved beating to eradicate the flesh from the back of the person punished. Pilate gave out the prison, Barabbas to be crucified but wished Jesus must be set free and they did not listen to him. The Jews ordered that Barabbas ought to set free and Jesus must be crucified. Pilate fulfill and their desire and betrayed Jesus to be crucified (Luke 23:25). Jesus' trials portrayed "mockery of Justice". The righteous man, Jesus in the history of the was blamed guilty and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

The crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ happened in the 1st century at Jerusalem, Judea around AD 30 or AD 33. The crucifixion and death are narrated in the canonical gospels and referred to in New Testament letters. Other ancient sources testify about Jesus' crucifixion and death and regard them as an established historical events to a lot of Christian historians. The Sanhedrin arrested and tried Him declared by the canonical gospels. Pontinus Pilates sentenced Him to flagellation and He was crucified by the Roman Empire. He was naked, given vinegar mixed with myrrh to drink. He was crucified between two thieves and the gospel of Mark confirmed that He died at the 9th hour of the day which was around 3:00pm. The Roman soldiers wrote an inscription on the top of His cross "Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews". The gospel of John indicates that the inscription was written in three languages namely, Hebrew, Latin and Greek (John 19:20). The soldiers divided and casted lot on His garment after He had died. A soldier mentioned in extra-biblical tradition as Longinus pierced His side with a spear to make sure He had died. When he pierced His side, blood and water oozed out from the wound. The Scripture talk about seven statement Jesus made when He was crucified and supper natural event that happened. Those who were eyewitnesses of His crucifixion and death were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary of Clopas and Salome. Jesus' suffering and redemptive death through crucifixion are the main aspect of Christian Theology with regards to the teachings of salvation and atonement.

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

- Father absolve them and they don't know what they are doing.
- Verily I convey to you today you will live with me in Paradise.

- Woman consider your son and to John Jesus says consider your mother.
- I am hunger
- It is completed
- Father I dedicate my spirit into your hands.
- My God, My God why have you ignored me

THE BURIAL OF JESUS CHRIST

In the evening Jesus died on the cross a rich man in the person of Joseph came from Arimathea. He was a follower of Jesus, consulted Pilate and asked for His body for burial. His body was removed from the cross and put in a new tomb which belonged to the wealthy gentleman (Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43). If nobody asked for a crucified body for burial, the body would be thrown in a common burial pit. A lot of believed that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin and secret helper of Jesus. At the time of Jesus it was common practice that a dead body was anointed with spiece and wrapped in a cloth for burial. The dead body would be put in a tomb or cave and entrance of the tomb sealed. In those days it was the custom of the Jews if the Sanhedrin sentenced anyone to death, the fellow was not allowed to be buried in his or her father's sepulchre. The council decided two burying places: Those who were killed by sword and strangled and people who were stoned, hanged and burnt. The Latin poet speaks about Jesus' crucifixion.

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS

- Darkness covered all the land (Matthew 27:25) and the sky became dark.
- When Jesus breathed His last breath, the temple veiled which covered the gate to the holy of holies torn into 2 right from top to bottom (Matthew 27:5).
- The earth shook and rocks split on the time Jesus died.
- Graves opened, saints came out and after resurrection many people saw them (Matthew 27:52-53).

- Life changed, a lot of people perceived who Jesus was. He was the truth and they could doubt about the truth (Matthew 27:54).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many authors have written papers about Easter Holidays Celebration which have enlightened the general public to know and understand the need to celebrate Easter Holidays . Through this, the study investigated into "Relevance of Easter Holidays Celebration in Ashanti Region of Ghana: Evidence from Ejisu". Due to this, the study considered what other authors have written concerning the subject under study. In January 27th, 2023 BST and crosswalk staff wrote an article entitled "Crucifixion of Jesus- Bible story". Jesus'crucifixion is mentioned in the New Testament books called gospel namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This story is the main summary of the gospel of Jesus. He predicted about His death in the gospel of Matthew. He was aware that His life would be a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. During His earthly ministry, a lot of Jews accepted that He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God. The Jewish leaders were afraid of Him due to His followers. Through Judas Iscariot, the Roman soldiers arrested and tried Him. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor did not want to punish Him because He was spotless. He liked to fulfill the desires of the people but the people wished Jesus would be killed. Pontius Pilate washed his hand which meant he was not guilty of Jesus' blood. Jason Oliver Evans wrote an article in April 14,2022 and the title of the article was "Christians hold many views on Jesus'resurrection-A Theologian explains the different views among Baptist". Christian faith stand on the resurrection of Jesus after His crucifixion by the Roman governor. The four canonical gospel do not give detail information about His resurrection but report differently concerning the empty tomb and His post resurrection appearances among the disciples in Galilee and Jerusalem. His followers said that it was women who saw His tomb was empty and spread the news that He had risen from the dead.

This story was reported orally within Christians communities and ratified in the gospel 30years after Jesus' crucifixion. With respect to the views of above writers, the study found out reasons for celebrating the death of Jesus, reasons why He died, who crucified Him, His' date of death, views on His burial, how Christians felt during Easter Holidays, how Christians celebrated Easter Holidays, Christians beliefs in His crucifixion, importance of His death, Christians beliefs in His resurrection, the day He rose from the dead and significance of His resurrection.

REASONS WHY JESUS CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED

Salvation: Jesus Christ was crucified so that sinners could receive salvation through His name. As sinners, we were not able to deliver ourselves from sin. If we were to capable to save ourselves, God wouldn't have sent His Son, Jesus to the world. Our good works could not save us from the bondage of sin and God perceived it as urgent to send His Son to deliver us from Satan's custody (John 1:1,14). He died on the cross in order to take away the penalty of our sins. It was only through death that could save man from sin(John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Propitiation: The crucifixion pacified God for His wrath against sinners (1John 2:2; Leviticus 16:11-17).

Redemption: The crucifixion delivered man from being slave of sin through His blood (Ephesians 1:17; Mark 10:45).

Justification: Through His crucifixion, man can be counted as righteous in the sight of God if only we believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25;5:18-19).

Reconciliation: The crucifixion had reconciled man to God. We are no more enemies of God (Colossians 1:20; 2Corinthians 5:18-21).

To reveal God: Jesus was crucified in order to manifest the truth about God. His crucifixion portrays the nature of God such as kindness, Majesty, holiness and love (John 17:1).

Justice: The crucifixion shows that God is justice but sin goes with punishment (Romans 3:23-25).

Love: The crucifixion portrays the love of God and His concern towards humanity (1John 3:16; 1John 4:10).

Wisdom: The crucifixion educates us to understand God's will and His ways are always perfect (1Corinthians 1:23-24).

Power: The crucifixion reveals that Jesus has defeated sin, death and Satan (Romans 1:16; 1Corinthians 1:17).

THEORIES FOR JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

The moral influence theory of atonement: Jesus Christ came into the world and died so that He could create positive change in the life of man. The moral change happen through Jesus' doctrines, His examples and actions. This theory makes us to view Jesus' crucifixion as the key to transform society, men and women to follow His footsteps and to live a life of love. The Holy Spirit enables believers to procreate the moral transformation.

The ransom theory of atonement: This talks about the crucifixion of Jesus, the implications of His death and the effect on mankind. The root of this theory is derived from the early church. The theory says that Jesus was crucified as a ransom offer either to Satan or God, the Father.

Christus Victor theory of atonement: Jesus died so that He could conquer the power of evil like sin, death and Devil in order to set man from bondage. The cross of Jesus did not pay anything but conquer evil by delivering humanity.

The justification theory of atonement: The crucifixion is a death regarded as restitution of divine justice. In this case sin is an act of injustice

and Jesus died so that He could pay the injustice of man's sin.

The penal substitution theory of atonement: Jesus died to satisfy divine wrath against man's sin. Jesus was punished for sinners sake so that He could satisfy the justice of God and lawful request of God to punish sin.

RELIGIOUS VIEWS ON JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

Isalmic Religion: According to Isalmic teachings the Qur'an indicated that Jesus was not crucified. In Isalmic Religion Jesus is regarded as prophet, messenger and Messiah. He did not die, was resurrected body and soul to heaven and met Muhammad at the time of His Night Ascent. He was just like Muhammad and other prophets who died due to natural causes. What happened to Jesus was soul-sleep but not death. He was not crucified on the cross but it was reported just to deceive people. Substitution theory assume the "implied object" to be Jesus and was not He who was crucified but someone resembled Him to the Israelites and the fellow was killed to replace Him. The Qur'an and other Islamic sources confirmed that God delivered His messenger, Jesus from the crucifixion.

Early Christian group: Some early Christian group did not accept Jesus' crucifixion in the 1st century. The first century scholar, Basillides and his disciples did not agreed that Jesus was crucified. They believed that Simon Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus. Simon Cyrene who carried His cross was mistakenly crucified. The beliefs of Basillides were important because he was staying close to the disciples. Traditions proved that he received these doctrines from one of the disciples like Peter.

Buddhism: Before Jesus came to Israel, He spent time in the Buddhist monasteries of Tibet in the Himalayas. He followed the footsteps of the Buddhist, Gautam to Nirvana. Before Jesus went

to the West, Buddhist bhikkhus of India ordered Him concerning His death. Due to this, Bhikkhus gave Jesus some medicine of the Himalayas as healing substance. He said a trusted follower should pour this medicine on Jesus' body when He died. When Jesus' dead body was taken from the cross, Mary Magdalene poured the oil on His body and He was healed and went to India.

Judaism: The Jews believed that Jesus was crucified and the Romans executed Him and His claim as the Messiah ended. He failed to be the Messiah and was the expected Messiah to the Jews. Today the Jews are still waiting for the true Messiah.

Christianity: Many Christian denominations teach that the crucifixion of Jesus occur as narrated in the Scripture. The crucifixion is vital to Christians who accept that God sacrificed Jesus to atone for the sins of mankind. The crucifixion is not important to Unitarian and Quaker who do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The Eucharist that celebrate the crucifixion is not part of the worship of such Christians.

THE REASONS WHY JESUS CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED AND NOT STONED TO DEATH

During Jesus'era, people committed crime and they were stoned to the death. The Jews did not adopt crucifixion as the means of execution. It was the Romans who executed through crucifixion. Then why Jesus was stoned to death just like what happened to Stephen? Crucifixion goes with a curse. According to the Old Testament it is a curse to be crucified (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). The Messiah should not be a curse so the religious leaders thought to crucified Him in order to end the claim of being the Messiah. A Roman citizen would not be crucified but rather would be beheaded. It was only servants, political rebels and lowest criminals who were killed through crucifixion.

The Romans regarded the cross as the symbol of shame.

EVIDENCE OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

Biblical sources: Jesus prophesied concerning His own crucifixion and death. He was ready to die (Matthew 16:21; Luke 18:31-32; John 11:30-32)

- Jesus take action to the cross (Matthew 26:53; 26:39; John 10:18).

- The description of Jesus' crucifixion (Matthew 27:32-50; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:17-30)

- Witnesses to Jesus' crucifixion (Matthew 27:54-56; John 19:26).

- Testimony about the crucifixion after Jesus' ascension (Acts 2:23; 13:29).

Historical evidence of Jesus' crucifixion

Jewish sources: The authors of the Talmud who did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah and they were not Christians but noted down His crucifixion.

Roman sources: The professional historians in the Roman era wrote about Jesus' crucifixion.

SCIENCE OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

The accepted explanation for Jesus' death are as follows: cardiac rupture, asphyxiation and shock. These medical explanation are centered on the gospel accounts and modern human understanding of traumatic injuries. The suffering of Jesus from the Roman soldiers procreated many dull and blow to His body. Excessive loss of blood could have placed Him in a bad condition during time leading to His crucifixion. Since He was nailed to the cross, there would be girdlock and pressure on the thoracic cavity which caused low asphyxiation. The agonizing action of the Roman soldiers caused fatal injury to Jesus in the form of cardiopulmonary effusion. It is accepted that the way Jesus died is termed as "multifactorial"; "multiple blunt" but penetrating blow which killed Him softly.

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian Religion. This event happened nearly two thousand years ago and it is the reliable fact in human history and experience. His resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament Bible and Jesus Himself predicted about His own resurrection. When He resurrected, He spent forty days on the earth and revealed Himself at diverse times and in a lot of places to people who told the story to others. The main message of the church from the Pentecost Day through the 21st century is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus shew that He had washed away the sins of man and was capable to assist us at this present hour. Without His resurrection, Christianity as a religion has no foundation. His resurrection was literal, physical body of Jesus from the dead. He resurrected on the third after His crucifixion which was Sunday morning. The Old and New Testaments talk about His resurrection.

OLD TESTAMENT RESURRECTION PROPHECIES

- Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus' resurrection (Isaiah 26:19).
- Daniel predicted about His resurrection (Daniel 12:2).
- King David prophesied concerning His resurrection (Psalms 16:9-11).

JESUS' CLAIMS ABOUT HIS RESURRECTION

The following Bible texts speak about Jesus prophesying concerning His own resurrection: Mark 8:31; Matthew 17:22; Luke 9:22; John 2:19; Mark 14:58; Matthew 26:61; 12:39; 16:4; 21:42; 27:63).

EVIDENCE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION

The gospel accounts: The tomb of Jesus Christ was empty and where He was buried was known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Jerusalem would have rejected the apostles declaration about His resurrection if the tomb was

not empty. According to the gospel women were the main witnesses of the empty tomb (Matthew 28:11).

Post resurrection appearance: In 1Corinthians an epistle written by Paul confirms that exodus of people saw Him raisen from the dead (1Corinthians 1:1). The New Testament critics in the person of Bart Ehrman accepted that Jesus' followers saw Him raisen from the dead. All the gospels talk about Him raise from the body with physical body.

The existence of Christianity: Christianity began and developed proved the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The origin of Christianity is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

SUBSTITUTE ASSUMPTION TO JESUS' RESURRECTION

The conspiracy hypothesis: This confirms that the dead body of Jesus was stolen by His followers and lied to the public that He had resurrected.

The apparent death hypothesis: This view declares that Jesus was totally dead when He taken from the cross. While He was in tomb, He came back to life and fled.

The tomb hypothesis: This view says that the women visited somebody's tomb and not the tomb of Jesus Christ.

The displaced body hypothesis: Joseph of Arimathea put Jesus' dead body in his own tomb but later eradicated His body and placed it among criminals' dead bodies for mass burial.

THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION

Justification: The word "justification" imples "be put with". Sin separated man from God (Romans 6:28; Isaiah 59:2). The Bible declares man as an "object of wrath because His wrath is upon the law breakers (Ephesians 2:3). Through

the death of Jesus, God atoned for the sins of man in order for us to become justified (2Corinthians 5:21). His resurrection shows that God has accepted His sacrifice and enables us to have relationship with God.

Death: The enemy of man is death and the punishment of our sins (Romans 6:23). Notwithstanding medical treatment, the mortality rate will always be 100 percent. Christ resurrected because death could sustain Him (Acts 2:24). Since He has conquered death, we don't have to be afraid of death (1Corinthians 15:55-57).

United: If we put our confidence in Christ, we become one with Him (2Corinthians 4:14). Unity with Him implies God does not regard as unrighteous. The union means we died and rose with Him (Romans 6:8). We are capable to live new life in Christ because we are linked with Him by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:4).

The truth: The following books of the Bible predicted about the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Job 19:25; Isaiah 53:10-12; Psalms 16:10-11).

The gospel: Jesus Christ is alive so He is able to save at this current times. According to Paul the whole Christian gospel is based on Jesus' resurrection (1Corinthians 15:14-17,19). Every aspect of the gospel stands on the resurrection. Without the resurrection, Christians have no hope in the future salvation.

The son of God: Jesus' claims about Himself are useless if He does not raise from the dead. When He rose from the dead, He demonstrated to be the only begotten Son of God (Romans 1:4).

Holy Spirit: After Jesus' resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to help His followers to continue to do His ministry on earth (Acts 2:35). The earthly ministry of Christ is in progress in this modern times due to the power of the Spirit.

Living hope: As believers, God has forgiven us of our sins and we are justified before Him. We are no more enemies of God but have promise of everlasting inheritance in Heaven.

Future resurrection: The first fruit of resurrection from the dead is Jesus Christ. Believers will experience life resurrection like what happens to Jesus (1Corinthians 15:42-44).

RELIGIOUS VIEWS ON JESUS' RESURRECTION

Islamic religion: According to Qur'an Jesus Christ was not crucified and Muslims believed that He did not raise from the dead. They do not accept the New Testament doctrines about Jesus' resurrection and have rejected the main doctrines of Christianity such as Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

Christian religion: The resurrection of Jesus is the main belief in Christian religion. We believe He rose from the dead three after death. We accept God will raise every man from the dead on the judgement day. He will judge us according to our works. Paul declares that Jesus' resurrection implies that sincere believers will raise from the dead (1Corinthians 15:16). We believe that Jesus' resurrection has paved way for us to receive everlasting life after death. A lot of believers accept that those who deserve to receive eternal life will be resurrected.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter covers research design, approach, strategy, population of the study, sampling design, source of data collection, method of data collection and method of data analysis. The research design used was explanatory because it was the best means to examine and explain the data collected. The approach to the study was qualitative since the study was interested in the significance of celebrating Easter Holidays. The research strategy used was cross-sectional survey where a number of churches were chosen as a case study. The population of the study, sampling

design, source of data collection, method of data collection, method of data analysis and sample size were thoroughly investigated.

SAMPLING DESIGN: The individual members of the congregation were considered.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY: The study considered 8 churches and the names of the churches were Pentecost church, Jehovah Witness, Prebyterian Church of Ghana, The Apostolic Church, Hand of God ministry, Deeper Life Church, Methodist Church and S.D.A Church.

SAMPLE SIZE: The sample size of the study was 800 samples.

SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION: The source of collecting data for the study were primary and secondary sources.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION: The study used questionire as data collection instrument. The questionire were given to the church leaders, explained to the congregation and answers were provided.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS: The views of the individual members of the congregation were critically examined.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter dealt with analysis of data collected from the field but qualitative techniques were used to analyze the data and the results were as follows:

Response from congregation

Name of Denomination: Orthodox

Reasons for Easter Holidays Celebration

"To remember the Lord whom came to save our sins": He accepted that Jesus died on Easter Holidays.

"I think we should celebrate Jesus death not the day Jesus die": She believed His death should be

celebrated on a different day and not on Easter Holidays".

"To remember the love God for us": He understood His death demonstrated divine love.

"To remember me of my sin": He regarded Him as his personal savior and Lord.

The reason for Jesus' death

"He die because of our sin": He believed Jesus was the savior of the word.

"He died for our sins": She believed He did not commit any sin.

"For our sin": He accepted the penalty of the sins of man was laid upon Him.

"Jesus die because of our sin": He believed He did not commit any sin.

Who crucified Jesus

"The Romans crucified Jesus Christ": He accepted Jesus was crucified by man.

"He Roman empire at that time, but I think Satan was behind it": She believed Satan caused the Roman Empire to crucify Him.

"Roman": This could be Roman citizens.

"Judas Iscariot": He believed Judas Iscariot betrayal caused His crucifixion.

Date of death of Jesus Christ

"I don't know the exact date, but nearly 2000years ago": She was not certain about the actual date of His death.

"Around first century between AD 34 and 35: He was certain about the day He died on the cross.

"Friday April 3, AD 33": He was certain about the day He died on the cross.

Views on Jesus' burial

"Yes, I believed": He accepted Jesus was buried like the way man was buried.

"Yes he was buried by joseph dematius": She accepted He was buried like normal human burial.

"Yes": He accepted that He buried.

"No he was not buried": He believed He could be thrown into mass burial pit.

How Christians felt during Easter Holidays

"Very happy and excited because our lord Jesus Christ has died for our sin": He believed Jesus Christ redeemed man from the bondage of sin.

"I don't celebrate Easter": She regarded Easter Holidays as the normal days.

"So happy": He had recalled the day God redeemed man from the bondage of sin.

"I feel happy because it is the resurrection day Jesus wake up from death": He accepted hell could not hold Him.

How Christians Celebrated Easter Holidays

"By going to church to worship and also going out with my friends and family for enjoyment: He valued the salvation work of God and felt happy for being delivered from bondage of sin.

"none": She did not do anything special on the Easter Holidays

"We attend church": They worshipped God for saving them from the bondage of sin.

"We the Seventh Day Adventist celebrate Easter holiday": That is, the whole congregation worshipped for delivering man from sin.

Christians views on Jesus'crucifixion

"Yes, I believed": He accepted Jesus' crucifixion as a truth.

"Yes he did nothing wrong": She believed He was crucified without committing any sin.

"Yes": He believed He was crucified.

"Yes they crucified Jesus Christ": He accepted He died to save man through crucifixion.

Importance of Jesus' death

"To clear all our sins and to be reborn again of his death": He believed Jesus had bought man with His blood.

"Through the death of Jesus can lead to everlasting life": She accepted His crucifixion paved way for man to enjoy endless life.

"Unity between God and man": He accepted that His death brought peace between God and humanity.

"He voluntarily laid down his life for us because it was the will of his father": He believed man was totally delivered from the bondage of sin.

Christians views on Jesus' resurrection

"Yes, I believe": He agreed that death could not hold Jesus.

"Yes": She accepted He death could not hold Him.

"Yes": He believed He had conquered death.

"I do believe Jesus resurrection from the death": He accepted He had conquered death and hell.

Christians views on the day Jesus resurrected

"It's a must that our Lord Jesus Christ will resurrected on 3days of crucified": He believed Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning.

"nearly 2000 years ago":She did not know the actual day He resurrected.

"Three days after his death": He believed death could not hold Him.

"Jesus resurrect from the dead on the third day": He believed hell could not hold Him.

Significance of Jesus' resurrection

"How powerful and miracles shows to mankind on earth and was crucified to death then resurrected on 3days": He accepted that God was the most powerful spiritual being.

" Through the death of Jesus can lead to everlasting life": She believed His resurrection created endless life after death.

"To show us that God has power to raise the dead": He accepted that He had absolute control over death.

"It helps us to know our sin, good: He recognized Him as savior of the world.

Congregation response

Name of Denomination: Pentecostal

Reasons for Easter Holidays Celebration

"This is because the death of Christ to memorialize what He did for us": She accepted Jesus Christ delivered man from the bondage of sin.

"I don't celebrate Jesus death": She did not regard Easter Holidays as special".

"It is written that Jesus said we should do this in remembrance of him": He celebrated Easter Holidays because the Bible commands it.

"To remember him": She had accepted that He was a savior of the world.

Christians views on Jesus' death

"He died so that Humans could have their sins forgiven and receives endless life": She believed Jesus' death paved way to receive forgiveness of sin and everlasting life.

"For mankind to gain salvation and have everlasting life after our death": She accepted His death save man from the bondage of sin and would help us to enjoy endless life in the world to come".

"It is written he died to reconcile us back to God": He believed His death had brought unity between God and man.

"For our sins to be forgiving": She believed His death atone for sins of man.

Who crucified Jesus

"Pontius Pilate crucify Jesus": She believed Pontius Pilate crucified Jesus.

"Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate": She believed He was crucified by man.

"Jesus was crucified by Pilate and the roman soldiers": He believed He was crucified by man.

"No idea": She had not been taught by her religious teacher.

Date of death of Jesus

"Jesus died on April 3, AD 33": She was certain about the day Jesus died.

"It is said, Jesus died on Friday": She was certain about the day He died.

"There is no date in the Bible in which Jesus died": He accepted His date of death was unknown.

"No idea": Her pastor had not educated her about His date of death.

Views on Jesus' burial

"Yes, Jesus was buried": She did not accept the view of mass burial for Jesus.

"Yes I do, after he died on the cross, he was buried in a tomb": She accepted He was buried like normal human burial.

"Yes Jesus was buried in tomb": He believed He was buried like the way the Jews buried any man.

"Yes": She accepted that He was buried

How Christians felt towards Easter Holidays Celebration

"I feel so cited during Easter Holiday": She felt happy that Christ had forgiven all her sins.

"I believe in Jesus resurrection but I don't celebrate Easter Holiday": She accepted He rose from the dead but did not see anything special on Easter Holiday.

"Happy and Hossena": He was pleased with the salvation of the Lord.

"Happy": She was pleased with redemption of the Lord

How Christians celebrated Easter Holiday

"I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead": She took pleasure in Jesus' resurrection.

"I don't celebrate Easter Holidays": She did not see the need to celebrate Easter Holidays.

"I celebrate according to what the Lord Jesus told us to do it: He followed guidelines to celebrate Easter Holidays.

"Go to church and pray: She worshipped God for saving her from the bondage of sin.

Views on Jesus' crucifixion

"Yes, Jesus Christ was crucified": She accepted Jesus was not stoned to death.

"Yes I do believe our lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross": She accepted His crucifixion as true story.

"It is written every word of God prove true, so I believe he was crucified": He accepted He was crucified because of the Bible.

"Yes": She admitted that He was crucified

Importance of Jesus' death

"For enjoying Christ's love": She had accepted that God was love.

"For mankind to be closer to God again and also have everlasting life": She believed His death had reconciled man to God and helped us to enjoy endless life after death.

"his death reconcile us back to God, he died to forgive our sins, To save us into his kingdom and to redeem us from the curse of the law": He believed He set man free the bondage of sin.

"To save us for our sins to be forgiving": She accepted God delivered man from sin through Jesus' crucifixion.

Views on Jesus' resurrection

"Yes, I believe in Jesus resurrection": She accepted that death could not hold Jesus.

"Yes I do believe in the resurrection of our lord Jesus Christ": She accepted death could not hold Him.

"Yes Jesus resurrected according to the Scriptures": He accepted His resurrection was true story.

"Yes": She believed He overcame death.

Views on the day Jesus resurrected

"Jesus came back to life three days after he died on the cross": She believed Jesus had defeated death and Satan.

"After three days of his death, he resurrected from his death": She believed He had defeated death.

"he resurrected on Sunday First day of the week: He accepted death could not hold Him.

"No idea": She did not have acknowledge about the particular day He rose from the dead

Significance of Jesus' resurrection

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that Jesus defeated death": She accepted that Jesus had absolute control over life.

"For salvation for our soul and have everlasting life": She accepted His resurrection delivered the soul of man from the custody of Satan and paved way for us to receive endless life.

"his resurrection has raised us from dead to life, he brought us joy and happiness and we have been seated with Christ Jesus in the heavenly

places": He believed His resurrection had raised man spiritually back to God.

"To save us": She accepted that His resurrection grantee the salvation of mankind.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study found out that Easter Holiday was the main festival of the Christian Church which gave grounds to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after His crucifixion. Easter Celebration was observed in the 2nd century. The early church did not celebrate Easter Holidays until the church experienced persecution for few centuries and this brought the creation of Easter Holidays. The night Jesus was arrested He was sent to Annas, Caiaphas and a group of religious leaders invited the Sanhedrin. The crucifixion and death of Jesus happened in the 1st century at Jerusalem, Judea around AD30 or AD33. Jesus said Father forgive them and they did not what they were doing, in the evening Jesus died on the cross, a rich man in the person of Joseph of Arimathea consulted Pilate and asked for His body for burial, when Jesus died darkness covered the whole land and the sky became dark, He was crucified so that sinners could receive salvation through His name, various theories of Jesus' crucifixion were examined such moral influence theory of atonement, rasom theory of atonement, according to the Qur'an Jesus was not crucified, some early Christians group did not believe in Jesus' crucifixion, before Jesus went to the West, Buddhist, Bhikkhus of India ordered Him about His death, the Jews accepted that Jesus was crucified to end His claims as the Messiah, the crucifixion was vital to Christians who believed that God sacrificed Jesus to atone for the sins of mankind, the religious leaders decided to crucified Him in order that He could be a curse, Jesus prophesied concerning His own crucifixion and death, Since Jesus was nailed to the cross, there was girdlock and pressure in the thoracic cavity which caused low asphyxiation, the resurrection of Jesus was the foundation of

Christian Religion, Isaiah and Daniel predicted about Jesus' resurrection, Jesus prophesied concerning His own resurrection, the tomb of Jesus was empty and where He was buried was known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, substitute assumption to Jesus' resurrection were investigated like conspiracy hypothesis, apparent death hypothesis and Jesus' resurrection proved that God had accepted His sacrifice and enabled us to have relationship with Him. Base on the data collected from the field the study researched into two religious denominations' views on the importance of Easter Celebration. The names of the denominations were Orthodox and Pentecostal. The study found out that both of the religious denominations expressed their views on the reasons to celebrate the day Jesus died, why He died, who crucified Him, His date of death, beliefs in His burial, how the denominations felt during Easter Holidays, how they celebrated Easter Holidays, beliefs in His crucifixion, significance of His death, beliefs in His resurrection, the day He rose from the dead and importance His resurrection.

CONCLUSION

The Orthodox Churches stated that Jesus Christ died to redeem man from sin and celebrated the day He died to recall the love of God. His death reconciled man to God and His resurrection proved that God had power to raise the dead. The Pentecostal Churches declared that they celebrated the day Jesus died to remember what He did for mankind and stated that He died so that human race could receive forgiveness of sin and everlasting life. He died in order for man to experience the love of God. The resurrection of Jesus Christ portrayed that He had conquered death. With regards to the above mentioned views, the study generalized that the celebration of Easter Holidays was important to Christians in the Ejisu community.

RECOMMENDATION

Seminar: Christian Organizations should organize seminar on the theme: "The significance

of Jesus' death and resurrection". Christians leaders must take time and educate the disciples of Christ to understand the reason for His death, relevance of His death and resurrection.

Evangelists: 21st century evangelists ought preach about Jesus' death and resurrection revealing to the public the reason why He died and significance of His resurrection.

Films: Actors and Actresses should act films to teach the public to know the reason why Jesus die and to understand the importance of His resurrection.

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