FEBRUARY, 2022

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PALACE OF PRIESTS ASSEMBLY (PPA) AND ITS SOCIAL ARM, THE PRIESTS PEACE AND JUSTICE INITIATIVE (PPJ)

Behavioural Training With PPJ

Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) Visit To PPJ

Priests Assembly Bible School Holds 5th Matriculation

PPJ in Collaboration With Catalyst For Global Peace And Justice Holds The National Summit Of General Overseers In Lagos

PPJ in Collaboration with Peace Ambassadors at The Inauguration of The Mentoring Program in Kaduna State

Special Reads Inside:

- Another Miracle In PPA!
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The Behavioural Insight Team (BIT)

The Behavioural Insights Team also known as the Nudge Unit exist to improve people's lives and communities by working in partnership with national, regional, and local governments, businesses, foundations and charity Training Team (BIT) was on a working visit to the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ) Secretariat.
The Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) Visit to The PPJ Secretariat
Priests Assembly Bible School Holds 5th Matriculation
Priests Assembly Bible School, an arm of Palace of Priests Assembly has matriculated new set of students. About 16 students participated in the Matriculation ceremony which held on Sunday, February 20th 2022 at the Church Auditorium. In a statement by the Executive Secretary, Dr. Agbaji Orinya, the school has again admitted students from other states outside the F.C.T. He further stated that the purpose of setting up the Priests Bible School is to raise and train Priests to impact this generation and to build workers for the end time. The statement further reads, that Priests Bible school have trained over 40 ministers since the inauguration of the Church in 2016 and this is the second time the school have received applications from students outside of the F.C.T. According to him, this 5th matriculation marks the beginning of a new direction for the Bible School and for the Church as part of actualizing the strategic plans for the Church in the coming years. The Vision of Palace of Priests Assembly is a World where Children of God Reign as Kings and Priests and our Mission is to empower people to live as Kings and Priests in this end time.
"Enrolling in the Priests Assembly Bible School should not be just about academic excellence. It should be about knowing the God we serve and doing His will."

Pastor (Dr.) Ejio Otuve-Igbuzor (Director Of Studies, PABS)

In her address, the Director Of Studies PABS, Pastor (Dr.) Ejio Otuve-Igbuzor recognised the presence of all in attendance, and especially appreciated the Bible School Students for enrolling in the PABS. While stating that enrolling in the Bible School is one of the best decisions a person can take, she cautioned that it should not just be about acquiring academic excellence, but about getting to know God and doing His will.

The Director of studies equally expressed shock that while people were coming from far and wide to enrol in PABS, some members of the Palace of Priests Assembly are yet to key into this, even though the PABS is at their doorstep. She thus encouraged one and all to enrol in the Bible school as it is not too late.
In his response, the Class Representative Brother Isaac Ogah on behalf of the Class Of 2022, expressed appreciation to God for the privilege to peer deeper into his Word. He also promised that the 5th would demonstrate their appreciation by striving to cooperate with the highly esteemed lecturers and staff of PABS.

"One of the many things I've learned here is that PPA is Time Conscious. At Genesis 1:1, 14, and Jeremiah 8:7, we see that our God is Time Conscious.

It is thus fitting that Christians reflect this."

Isaac Ogah
"It is crucial that Church leaders have an improved understanding of the challenges of social injustice in the country and use it as a basis for contributing to the governance process providing solutions for the vulnerable and marginalised citizens in the country."

PPJ

**PPJ IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CATALYST FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE HELD THE NATIONAL SUMMIT OF GENERAL OVERSEERS IN LAGOS**

**THE LAUNCHING OF THE PPJ RESEARCH ON DRIVERS OF CORRUPTION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**

On the 22nd of February, 2022, the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ), the social arm of the Palace of Priests Assembly, in collaboration with the Catalyst for Global Peace and Justice (CPJ) and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) South West Zones held a Summit for Pentecostal General Overseers in Lagos.

In a statement issued in Abuja, the Executive Secretary of Palace of Priests Assembly, Dr. Aghaji Orinya said "The Summit is aimed at deepening and broadening the understanding of Church leaders on the need to operationalize the social dimension of the church and to promote the establishment of the social arm of the church as an instrument for fighting corruption and adopting accountability framework for Pentecostal churches."
According to him, “it is crucial that Church leaders have an improved understanding of the challenges of social injustice in the country and use it as a basis for contributing to the governance process providing solutions for the vulnerable and marginalised citizens in the country. Dr. Agbaji explained that the Summit would provide Church leaders with the opportunity of identifying and familiarizing themselves with national, regional, and international instruments and mechanisms that can be deployed to ensure that structures or human actions within society that result in people being treated unfairly or unjustly are challenged by the Church. He said the content of the summit is part of the dual mandate of Christ to which the Pentecostal Church must subscribe and uphold in propagating the gospel of salvation to a nation in need of relief from inequity, inequality, and unjust government policies that contribute to the oppression of some people in the country.

The summit will also highlight the most effective approaches in the establishment of the social dimension of the church, how a local church can establish and operationalize the social arm and indicate the role of PFN and PPJ in operationalizing the social arm of the church.

Agbaji said that the time has come for the Pentecostal Church to amplify the social dimension of the church among its members. He also invited other Pentecostal Church leaders and members who are interested in building a formidable social arm of their Church to follow the conversation through the PPJ social media handles on Twitter: #PeacePriests, Instagram: #Priestspeaceandjustice and on Facebook: #PPJInitiative and on the website: www.priestsassembly.org.

Dr. Aghaji Orinya
Executive Secretary
Palace Of Priests Assembly
One key area of service the church has not paid adequate attention to is the area of politics and governance. This negligence is perhaps, the Church’s greatest disservice to God and humanity. The abandonment of politics as an unholy sphere is in every way distasteful. Hardly can anybody argue the truism that next to God’s power on earth is political power. The church made a great mistake by labeling politics dirty and shunning it. This gave room for the enemy to move in and take over the government of many nations. When we examine the prevailing attitude of the church in the light of the teaching of the Bible, it becomes obvious that we got it wrong.
Bishop John Osa-Oni delivering his goodwill message

Rev Abraham Sam Aiyedogbon, giving the welcome address

Delta state PFN chairman, Bishop Kingsley E.
Photo Story from the National Summit of General Overseers in Lagos
PPJ in collaboration with Peace Ambassadors inaugurated the mentoring program in Kaduna state and trained over 50 Pentecostal Leaders on the social arm and development of strategic plan.

One of the objectives of the Shun Corruption Project 2.0 is to enhance the capacity and capabilities of the Pentecostal community in Nigeria to adopt social arm of the church and accountability framework within the church and champion the fight against Corruption outside the church (in communities, towns, unions, workplaces, academic institutions, market places, etc)
Photo Story from the Inauguration in Kaduna
PPJ DEPLOYS CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND WORKERS AS ELECTION OBSERVERS IN JOS, ONDO, CROSS RIVERS BYE ELECTION

The Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ), the social arm of The Palace Of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY, on Saturday the 26th of February, 2022, observed the bye election with Christian Leaders and Workers in three states in Nigeria: Akure South and North, Pankshin, Jos North Bassa, Ogoja/Ayala and Akpabuyo in Ondo, Plateau and Cross River States. Election observation is part of activities in the implementation of the SHUN CORRUPTION project by PPJ/PPA geared towards mobilizing and empowering Christian leaders and workers, especially Pentecostals, to contribute to credible, free and fair elections in Nigeria. The election observation is being supported by the Catherine T and John D MacArthur Foundation.

A press statement by Ms. Ojonugwa Ngedu, the Program Officer of PPJ said that, "it is crucial to engage the electoral process in the run up to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, and to prepare Pentecostals for their role in contributing to strengthening the general electoral and democratic infrastructure. The programme will include training on Election Observation: Legal Basis, Principles and Practice, An overview of Local and International Election Observation Agencies, Reporting Election Observation: Checklists and Observation Reports". She disclosed that, the aim of the forum is to encourage and empower Christian leaders and workers in Nigeria to wake up to their responsibility, work together with their government to make electoral processes and election credible, free and fair so as to rid the country of its record of post-election violence and the elimination of voters’ apathy in Nigeria.

According to her, the deployment of Christian leaders and workers will also be replicated in the six geo-political zones of the
country in 25 states in Nigeria. The specific objectives of this activity are to enhance ‘voice’ and ‘agency’ of Pentecostal leaders and workers as active citizens performing their civic duties, participating in politics, elections, and governance in Nigeria and to promote behavior change among Pentecostal Churches regarding accountability within and outside the church.

Ngedu said the deployment of election observers was also done in 2019 general election where 420 election observers were deployed in fourteen states including the FCT. It was an eye-opening event for the Christian leaders and workers drawn across board from different churches and all the fourteen states in Nigeria. This has enhanced the Christian leaders and workers effectiveness in contributing to credible, free and fair elections in Nigeria; thus, increasing the engagement of Christian leaders and workers on anti – corruption activities. This activity has also boosted Christian participation in national development in Nigeria and increased the social responsibility component of the church for the benefit of the members and the society at large.

She urged all the election observers deployed to make useful contributions and be committed to the exercise; so as to make the implementation of the project effective. The statement further enjoined all Christians to join hands together to ensure that elections in Nigeria are free, fair and credible and assist to add the voice of Pentecostals to the electoral process in Nigeria.

Ms. Ojonugwa Ngedu  
Program Officer  
Priests Peace & Justice Initiative (PPJ), Abuja  
Tel: 09028117971 & Email: ojonugwa2001@yahoo.com

Introduction

This is the interim report of the bye-elections held on February 26, 2022 in Cross River state; Akpabuyo State Constituency and Ogoja/Yala Federal Constituency, Ondo State; Akure North/Akure South Federal Constituency and Plateau State; Jos North/Bassa Federal Constituency and Pankshin South State Constituency. The elections followed the declaration of vacancies by the Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Honourable Speaker of those State Houses of Assembly.

Although elections were also held in the Ngor-Okpala, the Palace of Priests Assembly (PPA), one of the accredited observer organisations based in Abuja, observed the elections in collaboration with the Priests Peace and Justice Initiative (PPJ)- the social arm of PPA in only the three states of Cross River, Ondo and Plateau. The organization deployed 19 observers in the three states. The general impression about the observation is as captured below:

a) INEC logistics and arrival of materials:

Apparently, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has taken these bye-elections as preparatory for the forthcoming general elections in 2023. INEC staff and election materials arrived at polling units across the country promptly. They were there in majority of the polling stations before 8.00 am. Setup in several polling stations started immediately and was closely followed by accreditation and voting. In Cross River State, at the Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku, in the Ogoja/Yala Federal Constituency, Ward 6/18, PU0148, INEC officials and materials arrived before 8.00 am. At the same Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku, PU003, INEC staff and materials arrived at 8.05 am. At Okuku Ward 06, PU007, INEC staff and materials arrived before 8.00 am. In Akpabuyo at the Ikot Nakanda Primary School Ward 10, PU001, materials and INEC officials arrived 7.10am. At Ward 1, PU006, Ikot Offiong Ambai INEC staff and materials arrived at 8.00 am. At Atimbo East Ward 2, PU 005, materials arrived at 9.09

In Plateau State, at the Plateau Hospital, Jenta Adamu Ward, PU001, INEC staff and materials arrived at 7.30am. In Chip Ward, Kwalu PU 001, INEC staff and materials arrived before 8.00 am. In Bassa-Farin Lamba, PU 004 INEC staff and materials arrived before 8.00 am.

In Ondo State, at Akure South in Lisa Ward 5, PU 005, INEC staff and materials arrived before 8.00 am. In the same Akure at Lisa Ward 5, NEPA Office, PU 013, INEC staff and materials arrived before 8.00 am also. In Akure North at Oba Ile, PU 009 and also in Akure South, Obayole Post Office, PU 006 materials and staff arrive before 8.00 am.

b) Turnout of voters:

In the three states, there was a recurring voters apathy. Voters’ turnout was abysmally low everywhere. In Ikot Offiong Ambai, there were 820 registered voters with only 128 votes. At the Saint Joseph Primary School, Ward 6/18, PU0148, out of 947 registered voters, only 113 voted. At the same the Saint Joseph Primary School, PU003, there were 710 registered voters with just 79 people voting. At Okuku Ward 06, there were 541 voters registered while 117 voting. In Akpabuyo, Ikot Offiong Ambai where there were a total of 820 voters, only 131 voted. At Atimbo East Ward 2, PU 005, the number of registered were 1011 but only 153 people voted. Voters were deferred from coming out to vote largely because of the intimidating presence of security personnel driving with mounted rifles in large convoys.
In Ondo and Plateau states, the turnout of voters was at the same poor level. In Akure South Lisa Ward, the number of registered voters was 890 and only 108 voted. At the NEPA office, 637 registered while only 77 voted.

c) Secrecy of the ballot:
Secrecy of the ballot was observed as spelt out by the law. In all the polling stations observed, there were voting cubicles positioned to ensure secrecy.
In Cross River State, voting cubicles were provided in all the polling units observed, including Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku, in PU014B, PU003, and Okuku Ward 06, PU007, in Akpabuyo at the Ikot Nakanda Primary School Ward 10, PU001, PU006, Ikot Offiong Ambai and Atimbo East Ward 2, PU 005 to ensure secrecy of the ballot. Cubicles were also provided in Plateau State at the Plateau Hospital, Jenta Adamu Ward, PU001, Chip Ward, Kwala PU 001, and Bassa-Farin Lamba, PU 004.
In Ondo State, at Akure South in Lisa Ward 5, PU 005, Lisa Ward 5, NEPA Office, PU 013, and in Akure North at Oba Ile, PU 009, Akure South, Obayele Post Office, PU 006 there was adequate secrecy maintained for voters.

d) Security of the election:
There was a very impressive presence at all the polling units in all the three states. In the different units observed, in Ogoja/Yala it was only a police affair with at least three police officers. In the Akpabuyo area of the state, there was also adequate police presence. In Ondo State, at Akure South in Lisa Ward 5, PU 005, Lisa Ward 5, NEPA Office, PU 013, and in Akure North at Oba Ile, PU 009, Akure South, Obayele Post Office, PU 006 there were adequate police officers to provide security for voters. There was also a good presence of security operatives in Jenta Adamu Ward, PU001, Chip Ward, Kwala PU 001, and Bassa-Farin Lamba, PU 004.

e) Location of polling units:
The location of the polling station was where INEC scored very high in arranging for the elections. The locations were accessible even to Persons Living with disabilities (PLWD). The majority of the polling units, and indeed the voting environment, were in open areas like primary schools, open compounds, corporations and town squares. In Ogoja/Yala it was at the Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku. In Akpabuyo, the health centre was used as a polling station. In Akure South, in Lisa Ward 5, PU 005, Lisa Ward 5 polling stations were situated at the NEPA Office, PU 013, and in Akure North at Oba Ile, PU 009. In Akure South, it was the Obayele Post Office. The Plateau State polling station was also located in the hospital premises.

f) Capability of INEC staff:
INEC staff were courteous and professional in attending to the few voters that turned out, and to party agents. Given the low turnout, their capacity, competence and staying power were therefore not truly tested to determine their mastery of the processes in terms of conducting free, fair and credible elections under pressure. There was no delay with accreditation and they were able to deploy the Biometric Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) appropriately in capturing the photos of voters in place of the card readers. The ballot boxes were displayed to ensure nothing was inside, so also were the number of ballot papers. Before accreditation and voting began, at the Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku, in the Ogoja/Yala Federal Constituency, Ward 6/18, PU014B, INEC officials took time to explain the process for accreditation using the BVAS in place of the Card Reader. The same procedure was adopted at the same Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku, PU003, as well as Okuku Ward 06, PU007.
In Akpabuyo, at the Ward 1, PU006, Ikot Offiong Ambai and Atimbo East Ward 2, PU 005 the calm disposition of the INEC staff may have helped in the calmness of the voting process.

9) Vote Buying:
The buying of votes seems to have become an integral but ugly part of the electoral process. At Saint Joseph Primary School, Okuku, Yala, a party member was spraying money for voters to scramble for. The man was alleged to be a member of the All Progressive Congress (APC) as party members were heard telling those who were members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that they should not benefit from the money being shared by the APC. In Akpabuyo, vote-buying was done openly in the presence of security officials.

Although there was no record of vote-buying in Jos North/Bassa, the current Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly was around with his entourage and as he was leaving the premises, he was seen doling out money to voters resulting in a momentary chaotic situation at the polling centre.

In Akure South Ward 5 at NEPA Office, vote-buying was carried out with impunity. APC agents stood close to the ballot boxes to ask for voters to show where they thumb printed and were given money if it is the correct and required vote. In Akure North, both parties (APC and PDP) were involved in the commercialization of the voting process.

Challenges
The challenges that are fast becoming the nature and character of elections in Nigeria were recurring issues in the three states and they include the following;

1. Voter apathy
2. Vote buying
3. Poor communication procedures that delayed some security personnel in locating their polling units.
4. The absence of a law to addresses the menace of vote buying.

Recommendations
Following from the above observation, the underlisted recommendations are critical for urgent consideration;

1) INEC should improve on the credibility and outcome of elections in order to restore the confidence of Nigerians in the electoral process.

2) INEC should collaborate with the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Political Parties and Civil Society Organizations to intensify and deepen civic and voter education to improve voter turnout and participation of citizens in the electoral process.

3) INEC should work with critical stakeholders, including party officials, to find a way to deter politicians from the brazen act of vote buying.

4) INEC should ensure ways of identifying and sanctioning party officials that threaten the staff that are on election duties. This will help to shore up the confidence of INEC staff and reduce intimidation.

Conclusion
Although there were few incidents of violence far from where the observation took place, the bye-elections were generally peaceful and orderly. The major flaw in the ointment was the high level of voter apathy displayed by registered voters. Unless there are deliberate measures to stop the dwindling numbers of Nigerians who are interested in the electoral process, the integrity of the system would soon be totally compromised. The absence of a law to deal with the challenge of vote-buying is also worrisome. INEC need to look at these recommendations in order to get Nigerians back to be favourably disposed to the electoral process.

Mr. Tive Denedo
Palace of Priests Assembly, Abuja.
Photo story from the election monitoring
Another Miracle In PPA!

After 15 years of Marriage,
God blessed our Brother and Sister
Ikubese Sylvanus with not ONE but
TWO lovely babies!
And guess what is more!
A boy and a girl!
Our God is Faithful!

What is that Red Sea in your life?
Our God is mightier than that mountain!
"Stagnation is a state of not moving; no growth; no progress; no development."

Pastor Otive Igbuzor

Tips On Overcoming Stagnation
- By Pastor Otive Igbuzor

Every human being is faced with some sort of limitation. The limitation can be natural (Genetic disorders, parental background, character flaws, temperament, etc.) or self-imposed/self-limiting behaviours (engaging in blame game, wishful thinking, negative speech, looking for easy way out, etc)

Anyone who does not live above limitations by the power of God will experience stagnation.
How To Overcome Stagnation:

- Change your mindset-avoid the Blame Game- take responsibility.

- Fight against the forces of stagnation.

- Resist the devil. James 4:7B "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (KJV).

- Go forward. Exodus 14:15 "And the Lord said unto Moses 'wherwfore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they may go forward". (KJV)
"The Plan of God for His Children is that They Experience Continuous Change and Progress"

Pastor Otive Igbuzor

The conclusion is this:

Give your life to Christ. Have a continuous walk with God and you will have continuous progress and advancements even in the midst of challenges.

It is just as Proverbs 4:18 puts it: "But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day". (KJV).
UPCOMING

PPJ

ACTIVITIES

• Christian Women Against Corruption National Summit
  March 2022
• Youth Vanguard Against Corruption National Summit
  March 2022
• Ministers Against Corruption Meeting
  April 2022
Headquarter:
Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY: Ebenezer Place, on the road beside Gwagwalada Park, Area 1, Abuja

Lagos Address:
Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY: No. 1, Balogun Street by Balogun Bus-Stop off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Ikeja - Lagos State

Delta Address:
Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY: Odeyovwi Villa, Umuabi Street, Ugonio Orogun, Ughelli North LGA, Delta State

Palace of PRIESTS ASSEMBLY: Emonu - Orogun, Ughelli North LGA, Delta State

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