

FACTORS FOR EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH OR REASONS FOR WIDE SPREAD OF GOOD NEWS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The role of the Holy Spirit led to expansion of the church. It gave wisdom and spiritual strength for members to preach the gospel.

It also influenced the performance of many miracles which attracted many people to join the church.

Influence of persecution contributed to rapid growth of the church. This forced many people to scatter to different places and as they scattered they continued preaching the gospel.

The expectation of the parousia influenced expansion of early church. This is because Jesus had promised to come back to judge both living and the dead. This made people repent very fast hence the growth of Christianity.

The conversion of great men who later joined the apostolic church led to the expansion. As time went on great men like Paul, Steven were converted and during the preaching.

The age of literacy also contributed to the expansion of the early church. Since any people had learnt how to read and write and this made the writing of gospel easy and interpretation.

The influence of Jesus' resurrection also contributed to the rapid growth/expansion of the church. When Jesus resurrected many non believers got attracted to Christianity and the faith of the believers was strengthened. This made them preach the gospel with confidence and one equal o Christianity.

The influence of great commission speeded up the gospel preaching and hence expansion to the church. The great commission was the final command/ instructions Jesus gave to his followers to go to the whole world to preach the gospel and baptize. This made apostles to move to different places/ parts of the world preaching good news.

The culture of practical love and sharing from members influenced wide spread of good news. This practical love attracted many people to Christianity and eventually the church expanded.

The Roman law of freedom of worship also speeded up gospel preaching and hence expansion of the church. When the Roman Empire passed the law declaring freedom of worship and legalizing worshipping, the gospel preachers preached very fast to different parts of the world.

The impact of false scriptures contributed to spread of good news. There were many false scriptures and this made the gospel preachers to preach very fast to counter fight tem.

The impact of missionary journeys made the church expand geographically and numerically as the preachers reached different parts of the country like Paul to Corinth, Galatia, philio, ephesia, Peter to Asia liner they preached the gospel and people got converted.

The presence of synagogues. These served as worshipping centres for regular worship. Fellowship and hence centres of spreading the gospel would gather there.

The performance of miracles speeded up growth Christianity. These miracles . For example healing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear attracted others to gain Christianity since they would be healed free of charge.

The modern development in the Roman Empire also contributed to expansion of the church such development included modern transport network system like the use of canoes and ships which enabled preachers travel to different parts.

The influence of Greek language helped Christianity spread very fast. The Greek language was finally made a universal language official. This simplified communication of the gospel and eliminated the hindrance of language.

The universal approach of Christianity also contributed to the expansion of the church unlike other religious which used to discriminate people . For example Judaism but Christianity never discriminated it instead it embraced anyone like the outcasts, sinners and so people joined Christianity.

The unity of the gospel preachers was a strong factor to growth of church. Apostles were united that they joined material physical and scriptural efforts to spread the gospel.

The early church expanded because of canonicity. This was a period and process when the true gospels were to be written to eliminate the false ones.

The unpopularity of other religions like Judaism gave an opportunity for Christianity to spread world wide Judaism . For example called an eye for an eye (revenge), stoning the adulterous women to death etc which became unpopular and people evaded it.

Questions

Qn. Account for the rapid spread of the gospel/good news in the apostolic church.

Examine the factors that contributed to the growth and expansion of the early church.

HOW PERSECUTION CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPREAD OF THE GOOD NEWS

It made believers to scatter to different parts of the world and so whenever they scattered they spread the good news hence expansion of the church.

It created fear that believers/ eye witnesses could all die and so they spread the good news very fast before they could die.

As the strong eyewitnesses started dying, they started to write all the information which helped in spread of the good news.

Persecution influenced Christians to live righteous lives to act as good examples and defend the good news before political leaders who thought that Christianity was against the government.

Some apostles preached the gospel even in prisons where they had been imprisoned. They preached to their fellow prisoners and prison warders.

Christians decided to baptize people very fast since they knew anytime Christians could die. Hence spreading the gospel.

Due to persecution, apostles speeded up catechism which strengthened the faith of believers and helped to guard against backsliding.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The Holy Spirit gave believers power to perform miracles and the more miracles they performed, the more people were attracted to Christianity and hence good news.

The Holy Spirit gave believers wisdom/knowledge to always answer difficult questions in public and it were the answers which satisfied people and ended up believing the good news.

The Holy Spirit guided the gospel preachers on what to preach to who and where so the holy spirit made the preachers to move to different people and in the process many were converted.

The Holy Spirit gave believers special gifts which were influential in spreading good news. Some believers were given gifts of speaking in tongues other prophesying and all these attracted many people to Christianity.

It gave sharp memories to gospel preachers to remember all what Jesus had done and they were also able to teach others hence the good news.

It was also the power of the Holy Spirit that convicted the non believers to repent their sins and when they repented they joined Christianity and the church expanded.

The Holy Spirit strengthened the faith of the believers and helped them to grow hence expansion of the church.

It helped to guard against backsliding and since people became too loyal and trusting in God Christianity expanded.

It influenced unity of preachers and the more they became united physically the more they spread good news.

It empowered the preachers to endure all forms of suffering and persecution and more they endured such persecution, the more they preached the gospel with goodness.

It enabled preachers to interpret and even understand false preachers and as they interpreted the scriptures well they won many people to Christianity.

ROLE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION TO THE SPREAD OF GOOD NEWS

It made many people to join Christianity since they knew that there was life after death in following Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus provided hope and confidence to Jesus' followers which confidence made them spread good news very fast.

It became an everlasting testimony to whole world that the one crucified Jesus of Nazareth resurrected and so people accepted him and the good news was spread.

Jesus gave a great command to his disciples after resurrection which was to go to the whole world spread the gospel and baptize many who believed.

Jesus' resurrection became good news and broke the fear that disciples had and so they preached the gospel with total confidence, boldness and the good news was spread.

His resurrection became a basis of forming the New Testament canon. It was this canon which circulated widely hence expansion of the early church.

It became a foundation upon which Christianity is built up to date.

Jesus' resurrection is one of the pillars upon which Christianity bases its doctrines different from other religions.

Jesus' resurrection gave a form of trust that all whatever he had promised, whatever had been written about him were completely true and hence people joined Christianity very fast well assured that it is the true religion.

When Jesus resurrected, he promised to come back very soon to judge the living and the dead and this made very many people to repent very fast.

His resurrection raised the faith of his followers and so guarded against backsliding.

It provided assurance that there is life after death and so preachers endured all forms of suffering and in the process they preached the good news.

THE ROLE OF PAROUSIA IN THE EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Parousia means the second coming of Jesus Christ. As Jesus resurrected he later ascended to heaven however as he was living he told his followers that he will come back very soon and even told them that he

had gone to prepare for then rooms, places in his father's house and so they needed to be worried of anything (John 14:1-2). The parousia therefore to a larger extent contributed to the spread of Christianity in the following ways;

The expectation of parousia made the people to repent very fast hence expansion of the early church.

It encouraged people to live a holy life of Christianity since they were expecting judgment very soon.

It influenced believers to share the material property in wealth freely even with the non-believers since they knew that such properties would be left on earth.

Very many people accepted baptism and were baptized so as to be ready the parousia.

Due to parousia, the apostles preached the gospel very fast and tirelessly hence many people were converted.

The church members lived a very good life of examples which made non believers admire them and be converted to Christianity.

Due to parousia, oral proclamation became the method of preaching which encouraged everyone to participate in preaching the good news.

Parousia created fear among many sinners that they would be judged and so they accepted Christ as their Lord savior so as to escape judgment.

Parousia made the apostles to intensify catechism which strengthened the faith of the non believers to converts.

It influenced believers and others to love one another as brother and sisters and it was practical love that drew many people to Christianity.

Parousia meant that there is life after death and it was the influence of hoping for eternal life when Jesus comes back.

Parousia influenced believers and non believers to live a life of preparedness, alertness, readiness and eager expectation to receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

Qn . Assess the contribution of the parousia towards the spread of the gospel in the early church.

THE ROLE OF PAUL'S CONVERSION IN THE EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The spreading of the good news was quite hard during the time of Saul the persecutor. It was until his conversion to Christianity (and became Paul), that the spreading of the gospel became easier. The Lord Jesus appeared to him and converted him to become a gospel preacher and an apostle. He played a great role in the expansion of early church as seen below;

He became an apostle of the Lord and so became an apostle to the gentiles (non - jews) He therefore preached to many Gentiles.

Paul made different or several missionary journeys to different parts of the world and wherever he went, he preached and converted many people into Christianity. Hence the expansion of the church.

He used to plant or establish churches which became centres of worship and spreading of the good news. Such churches include the Corinthian church, Galatian and Roman churches.

He participated in writing Christian letters which had good news about Jesus Christ. These letters circulated to many parts of the world hence the wide spread of the good news.

Paul used to baptize those who accepted the good news and through this baptism, many people came to Christianity and the good news was spread.

He used to settle disputes among believers in different churches and by doing so, he promoted unity and peace within the church. It helped in wide spreading of the good news.

Paul's conversion became a testimony and hence an encouragement to many non believers to also believe in a forgiving God. In the process, many people joined Christianity.

St. Paul lived a committed and devoted life of teaching and preaching the good news. He also left his privileges like marriage and became a celibate for the sake of spreading the good news.

St. Paul became a tent maker and through this income - generating activities supported preaching of the gospel helped the needy which encouraged people to become Christians.

Qn. To what extent did Paul the Apostle contribute towards the spread of the gospel in the early church?