

ERHIMU/ODIETE & EGHAREVBA DISCUSSION

**A Written Discussion On Whether Public Questions And
Answers In The Church Is Scriptural**

Proposition:

**The General Practice Among The Churches Of Christ
Wherein Members Ask Questions From A Teacher After The
Bible Study Session In A Church Gathering Is Unscriptural.**

Affirmative: Kenneth Erhimu/Akpobome Diffre-Odiete

Denial: Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

**IS PUBLIC
QUESTION IN
CHURCH A
NEW
TESTAMENT
PRACTICE?**

By

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AND
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ODIETE²**

February 8, 2020

TEXT: “You must follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1Co 11:1, CEV).

Introduction

In our text, the Holy Spirit through Paul refers to Jesus Christ as the focus substance that he followed and that all Christians should follow. The apostles were just arrows pointing to the real substance, Christ, and the traditions which the apostles delivered to the congregations

were the traditions of Christ. They delivered these traditions to the churches through oral teaching, and epistles, and they included the doctrine and practices

“So then, brothers, stand fast and hold to the **traditions which you were taught**, whether by word or our letter.” (2Th 2:15, EMTV)

through the traditions laid down by the apostles, so whatever we do today must be based on Biblical traditions of Christ and the early church and not on our own human traditions which stand against scriptures.

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they learnt from Christ Himself (Acts 2:47; 2 Thess. 2:15). The apostles had no doctrine, practice nor tradition of their own, but those they learnt from Christ. Today, some of the epistles and other writings of the apostles, which contain these traditions of Christ still exist to guide us. Therefore, these writings are our only authoritative sources of discussion because churches today must be the same as the churches of the first century to which the command was given: “you must follow my example as I follow the example of Christ” and “hold to the traditions which you were taught.” Churches today must follow Christ

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Prelude to the Discussion

Everyone who studies the scriptures must do so with an open mind. Preconceived biases will hinder one from knowing the truth, especially if one forms a dogmatic position about a subject before looking for supporting scripture passages.

There are 3 M's of Biblical Ministry. These are the Message of God, the Man of God, and the Method used by the Man of God to deliver the Message of God.

1. **The Message of God:** this is the eternal gospel of Christ and of the kingdom, which does not change with time.
2. **The Man of God:** this is the preacher of God's word. He may change anytime, due to either attitude, environment, age, backsliding or death, but the Message of God will still remain.
3. **The Method used by the Man of God:** God gives us freedom to use various godly methods to do His work, though He has not given us the freedom to preach various gospels. Methods may also change, but God's Message remain the same.

Confusion, chaos and divisions come into the church when brethren misunderstand the 3 M's and mistake one for the other. Most brethren think that it is a sin if the Man of God changes the Method for doing God's work because they cannot differentiate between Message and Method. Most of the subjects that cause divisions within the church are around Methods and non-essentials rather than the Message of God itself. The issue of questions asking in the church is one of such non-essential subjects of Methods.

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Discussion

1. The Traditions of Christ Concerning Asking Questions After Teaching.

Although Christ taught His followers throughout His earthly ministry, the “Sunday School” pattern is not the Biblical tradition. This shall be discussed in details later. Jesus taught those who followed Him, including His apostles and

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other disciples. It was these apostles that other believers were “added to” on the first post-resurrection Pentecost day to form the church. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the pattern of Jesus teaching His followers as a pattern for the early church and that of today. Moreover, Jesus is the head and owner of the church, and Paul calls us to follow His example. So, what was the example or tradition of Christ concerning question asking after teaching?

★★★★★★★★★ After Jesus had taught, it was not all His listeners that understood Him. Yet, the spiritual followers did not form a habit or tradition of asking Him questions in public after teaching. Rather, they would meet Him privately to ask their questions, not once, not twice, but as a tradition. Let us read some of these examples:

Mat 24:1-3: Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came to *Him* to point out to Him the buildings of the temple. But Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly I say to you, by no means will a stone be left here upon a stone, which shall not be thrown down." And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him **privately**, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (cf. Mk. 13:1-3). *Here, Jesus taught them publicly, but the apostles asked questions **privately**.*

Mat 17:14-19: And when they came to the crowd, a man approached Him, kneeling to Him, and saying, "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is moonstruck and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they were not able to heal him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O unfaithful and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out from him; and

the boy was healed from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus **privately** and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" (cf. Mk. 9:28). *Here, Jesus did and preached publicly, but the apostles asked questions privately.*

Mar 4:10: But when He was by himself, those around Him together with the twelve asked Him about the parable. *Here, Jesus had taught publicly about parables, but His spiritual followers asked Him questions **privately**.*

So, is the church today a church of the Pharisees or the church of Jesus Christ? Whose traditions are we following?

Mar 7:17: When He had entered a house *away* from the crowd, His disciples were asking Him about the parable. *Here, Jesus had taught publicly about parables, but His spiritual followers asked Him questions **privately**.*

Mar 10:10: In the house His disciples also asked Him again concerning the same *matter*. *Here, Jesus had taught publicly about marriage and the Pharisees questioned Him publicly "to test Him" (Matt. 19:3), but His spiritual followers asked Him about the matter **privately**.*

The people that asked Jesus questions publicly before and after teaching were the monitoring agents of the devil, the Herodians, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Lawyers, and the Scribes who did it to find fault (Matt. 19:3; Mk. 7:5; 10:1,2). Even Nicodemus who desired to know also went to meet Jesus privately. So, is the church today a church of the Pharisees or the church of Jesus Christ? Whose traditions are we following?

2. The Traditions of the Early Church Concerning Asking Questions After Teaching.

The New Testament does not record so many teaching sessions of the early church, however, we know for sure that the modern Sunday School pattern is not a "Thus says the Lord" method that is based on scriptures. We look at some

Bible examples of public gathering and issues of question asking in the early church.

Act 3:8, 9, 11: “So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And while the lame man who had been healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, utterly astonished.”

Here, the man who was healed danced into the meeting place of the apostles and early church that had gathered at Solomon's porch of the temple. However, nobody raised questions publicly. Either the newcomer's dancing became acceptable to them or they raised their questions after worship.

Acts 10:23-48: “Therefore he invited them in and received *them* as guests. Now on the next day Peter went forth with them, and some brothers from Joppa went with him... and he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to associate with or to approach a Gentile; and yet God has shown to me that I should call no man common or unclean; therefore also without objecting, I came when I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"... While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those hearing the word... And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Here, the teaching and practice of Peter that day was strange to the brethren from Joppa who accompanied him to Cornelius's house. However, none of them asked him questions there or challenged the practice. It was simply not their traditions to ask questions publicly. It was later that the other apostles called him privately to ask their questions.

Acts 18: 24-26: “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man being mighty in the Scriptures, had arrived in Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things about the Lord, although he knew only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they **took him aside** and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

Here, someone the Holy Spirit calls “eloquent and mighty in scripture” made what we would call a deadly error in public teaching. Aquila and Priscilla who were Paul's fellow missionaries who knew more than him did not stand up to correct him publicly. They did not raise public questions or comments (“let us correct the wrong impression otherwise people will go home with the wrong message” is what we use to disorganise teachings. They did not).

Acts 20: 7-11: “Now on the first *day* of the week, the disciples being assembled to break bread, Paul was discussing with them, being about to leave on the next day, and extended his message until midnight. And there were a considerable number of lamps in the upper room where we were assembled. And a certain young man named Eutychus sat in the window, being overwhelmed by a deep sleep. While Paul was speaking for a while longer, having been overwhelmed by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul, going down, fell upon him, and embracing him said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." And going up and breaking bread and eating, and talking for a considerable time, until daybreak, thus he departed.”

Here, Paul gave a teaching on the subject of the Lord’s Supper. The worship session was long, and even the death and resurrection of a brother midway did not stop the teaching. Yet, nobody asked questions. It was not the tradition of the early church to ask public questions after teaching because they were following the tradition of Jesus Christ.

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Several passages speak of various acts of worship carried out in the early church, including teaching, Lord’s Supper, fellowship, prayers, giving, etc. No scripture speaks of question and answer sessions as part of the worship activities of the early church that followed the tradition of Jesus who owns the church.

3. The Biblical Pattern for Teaching in the Early Church.

Just anyone or every baptised person did not do teaching in the early church, but only evangelists, teachers, elders, prophets and those gifted with speaking in tongues handled teaching. Moreover, the Holy Spirit warn that there should not be many teachers (Js. 3:1) and that only faithful persons should be made teachers (2 Tm. 2:2). For example, brethren whom the apostles taught after the first Pentecost came to Antioch and established a congregation. However, when a more capable teacher and an evangelist came, the brethren gave way for them, and only these two leaders taught the whole church for one full year until they groomed other teachers and prophets: “Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. He found Saul and brought him to Antioch, where they met with the church for a whole year and taught many of its people. There in Antioch the

Lord's followers were first called Christians. The church at Antioch had several prophets and teachers. They were Barnabas, Simeon, also called Niger, Lucius from Cyrene, Manaen, who was Herod's close friend, and Saul (Acts 11:25, 26; 13:1).

Teachers in the early church included those with spiritual intellectual gifts and those who had been taught but have no special spiritual gifts. Brethren with intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit (prophecy, speaking in tongues and teaching) were commanded to verify one another's revelations in order to check against false teachings (1 Cor. 12:10; 14:13). Prophecy was a gift for public ministry

Therefore, 1 Cor. 14 speaks specifically to people who had special spiritual gifts, which they were abusing, hence the directives on the proper use of these gifts. The Churches of Christ today do not believe that these gifts still exist among them, so how can they kill themselves over the use and abuse of gifts that they do not have?

(1Co 14:3-5: “On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks **to people for their upbuilding** and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies **builds up the church**. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so **that the church may be built up.**”). Women were among these prophets (Acts 21:9). However, since women were restricted from teaching in a gathering involving men, could the ministry of the female prophets have been limited only to women gathering or also to a gathering of teachers? We believe that the teachers, prophets, elders, speakers of tongues had their own gatherings in the church as well, in which they discerned one another's teaching. This does not mean that they never did this in a gathering of the whole church.

Therefore, 1 Cor. 14 speaks specifically to people who had special spiritual gifts, which they were abusing, hence the directives on the proper use of these gifts. The Churches of Christ today do not believe that these gifts still exist among them, so how can they kill themselves over the use and abuse of gifts that they do not have? Is it not ironic? Those who stick to this passage to argue against women asking question do not even follow the order of worship given in the passage. It reads: “**If any speak in a tongue** (do you have people who speak in tongues?), let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep

silent in church and speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak (do you have prophets), and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent (do you still receive revelations in your gatherings?). For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask **their own husbands** at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.” (1Co 14:27-35). Some brethren have disputed the Greek word translated “husband” to mean “man” generally. However, the Greek word translated “their own” (NKJV) or “their” (KJV) is *idios*, which means “*pertaining to self*, that is, *one's own*; by implication *private or separate*; belonging to one’s self” (Strong’s and Thayer). *Idios* qualifies what kind of “man” the context talks about. Therefore, the men they were to ask were their own private men (husbands).

4. Which Women Were Told to Keep Silent in the Church?

If you read the passage well, several brethren were told to keep silent in the church:

a. **Men with gifts of speaking in tongues** were told “let each of them keep **silent in church** and speak to himself and to God.”

b. **Male prophets** who were given a revelation were told “let the first be silent” if another male prophet sitting receives a new revelation.

c. “**The women**” were told to be “silent in the churches.” Which women were these? Were they all the women of the church or gifted women of the same class with the male prophets and speakers of tongues? Yes, these were specific women who were married and who had special gifts (cf. Acts 21:9). The speaking and question asking being discussed here were those that helped discern what the prophets and other gifted brethren were saying by revelation. Non-gifted brethren could never have asked questions or spoken to discern what these gifted people said. Moreover, it was never a tradition of the church for

The speaking and question asking being discussed here were those that helped discern what the prophets and other gifted brethren were saying by revelation. Non-gifted brethren could never have asked questions or spoken to discern what these gifted

members to ask questions publicly after teaching, so this session could never be referring to general question and answer session after Bible study. Another thing to see here is that while the gifted brethren were told to speak, discern and remain silent, those who desired to learn more were told to “ask their husbands at home” (privately), which was the tradition of Christ and the apostles.

Conclusion

Let us follow the divine traditions of Christ and the apostles because they are the best. Let us ask questions in private settings between the teacher and the learner as was the New Testament pattern. Today’s question and answer sessions are just like those of the Jews who opposed Jesus when He taught. This style produces no learning environment but strife and chaos. Our own traditions have created more chaos and division rather than unity. The number of years we have practiced a particular thing does not make it right, otherwise the practices of the Roman Catholic Church would be right because of the number of years they have been practicing them. All people must change their ways and turn to the traditions of Christ and the apostles. However, once the decision to change has been made, efforts to turn around may take some time.

Finally, those who are still dogmatic about their understanding of this matter should consider that methods change with time. Some years ago, there were brethren who taught that those who sang choruses would go to hell fire. Then later they began to sing choruses (will they go to hell fire? They do not think so). Then the same people began to teach that those who organised all night prayers were denominations. Later, they too began to organise all night prayers (are they

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denominations? They do not think so). Some also argued that youth seminars were denominational, but they have begun to hold youth seminars. So are they denominations? The problem is the same as what the Jews faced when Jesus came with His ministry. The standard of judgement of these brethren is not scripture but “anything that is new to us is denominational.”

We must not defend our methods as the only acceptable ones or elevate them to doctrinal level, mistaking them for the message of Christ. If we find ourselves in a situation of disagreement, we should not let it create an atmosphere of acrimony and division because it is a matter of methods.

Questions and Comments Arising

At the presentation of this paper, some questions and comments arose to indicate either why questions were not asked publicly in the New Testament times or to suggest that “questions were asked.”

1. Do you not suppose that questions were not asked publicly in those days because the teachers were inspired?

The inspired nature of the teachers, prophets and others would have been an added reason why all brethren would want to know and be allowed to ask public questions. This is so because the members would expect the inspired leaders to know everything. The Corinthians, Thessalonians and other churches frequently wrote or sent to ask Paul questions, expecting his inspired answers. He often answered them when he wrote back. However, there was no case where public questions were asked when Paul met with these churches, e.g. the case at Troas (Acts 20:7-11). Therefore, the absence of public questioning after teaching in the early churches was not because of inspiration. It was because this practice was not the tradition of Jesus and the apostles.

2. Many things the apostles and early church did were not written down. The Bible is a summary of the events of Christ and the early church, therefore they could have asked questions publicly but these were not written.

When we preach against doctrines and practices of other churches that are not scriptural, we say, let us “speak where the Bible speak and be silent where the Bible is silent,” or let us “go back to the Bible.” Why do we say these? Is the Bible a guide only to other churches and not to us? We too must follow what is written and not assumptions (1 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:11).

3. Some scriptures indicate that public questions were allowed in the New Testament, for example John 4 (Jesus and the Samaritan woman), Acts 19 (Paul and those who received John’s baptism), and Acts 8 (the Ethiopian Eunuch and Philip). So public questions were part of the early church.

All these scriptures refer to discussions in private settings, not to church settings where a teacher taught and is being asked questions.

4. In 2 Timothy 2:23, we read, “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.” (KJV). Therefore, questions were being asked publicly in the church hence this warning to avoid some types of questions.

The Greek word translated “questions” in the KJV is *zētēsis* and Strong interpretes it thus: “a *searching* (properly the act), that is, a *dispute* or its *theme*: - question.” Thayer defines it thus: “1) a seeking, 2) enquiry, 3) a questioning, debate, 4) a subject of questioning or debate, matter of controversy. Timothy was an evangelist and a teacher, one of the few leaders who handled teaching. Just like the way prophets, prophetess and other inspired brethren in Corinth were told to avoid public rancour, Timothy was told to avoid argument and debates with other teachers (cf. 1 Tim. 1: 3, 4). There is nothing in the passage to indicate that public questions were asked by members and this instruction classified what kind of questions all members should ask or not.

5. What if a preacher today is invited to a public lecture at another town and if he does not receive questions to his teaching publicly, how does he handle them privately if he is leaving soon?

The case of Paul at Troas answers this question. “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as

Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed." (Acts 20:7-11). This is the apostolic example for distance travelling teachers. No public questions followed the teaching of Paul at Toas because it was not their tradition.

Further discussion can be had with the authors via phone, Ken Erhimu (08036639563) and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete (08053688999) or Facebook and WhatsApp.

Is Asking of Questions in the Church a New Testament Practice? A Review of Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete's Article

Introduction

On February 9th, 2020, a 13-page article was released to the public which generated some controversy among brethren especially on the social media. The title of the article reads; ***"IS PUBLIC QUESTION IN CHURCH A NEW TESTAMENT PRACTICE?"*** It was written by Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete (both preachers of the Gospel in Delta State, Nigeria). The thrust of the discussion is that public asking of questions as is done in the church today is not a New Testament tradition. In other words, the writers affirm that the general practice among the churches of Christ wherein members ask questions from a teacher after the Bible study session in a church gathering is strange to the New Testament.

While the article was being disseminated, a note was written alongside the article by one of the authors (Akpobome Diffre-Odiete) which states:

"We have spent years to debate whether women should ask questions in church or not. However, new studies show **that not even men were asking questions publicly in the NT church**. The attached document was accepted by most preachers and teachers present when it was presented at the Delta State Preachers' and Teachers' forum on February 8, 2020 in Effurun. The paper indicates that **neither men nor women asked questions publicly after teaching in the New Testament church**." (Emphasis L.E.)

In a follow up discussion on the same issue in a WhatsApp group, Akpobome unequivocally affirmed that "the Question/Answer session in our worship today is a recent invention, **started by Anglicans in England, taken to USA, brought into the church by influence of the Baptists**...Whoever says it is a NT tradition has to provide NT scriptures to prove it." (Emphasis L.E.)

Indeed, the efforts of these men in carrying out this "new" research are appreciated. The Bible enjoins us prove all things and hold fast to that which is good (I Thessalonians 5:21). Similarly, we are to hold fast to the traditions which we have been taught, whether by word, or letter (II Thessalonians 2:15). If the pattern of questioning a teacher in a Bible class, (and the teacher in turn, answering their questions), is not found in the Bible, then these men are justified in their "new" research work and in the position they have taken. If however, such practice can be traced to the New Testament, ardent students of the scriptures need to diligently study the scriptures and prove beyond reasonable doubt that such practice existed in the first century church.

Consequently, this begs the need for this review to be written. Without an iota of doubt, I can safely say that, when subjected to proper scriptural and intellectual scrutiny, the position which these men have taken is totally unfounded. With abundant evidence, I believe (and shall prove) that such

did not originate with the Anglican Church but from the Bible. Hence, this paper attempts a review of the work by taking note of the statements made therein.

The Alleged Pattern “Found in the New Testament”

First, we need to look at the alleged pattern of teaching in the New Testament as advanced by Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete. In their work, the writers emphasized on a particular pattern found in the New Testament. However, it is surprising, if not amusing to find out that while the authors kept disproving the method of questioning and answering in *a church setting* after a teaching is done, **not a single Bible passage was cited** by them from the beginning to the end of their dissertation **to prove or support the particular method (pattern) that they advocate**. The method they advocate is that questions must be asked privately (in the house) by members after listening to a teacher *at a church gathering*. If there are questions after a teaching, they must not be asked at the church gathering. Yet, we did not find just a single Bible passage for this method that they advance. The traditions of the early church concerning asking questions after teaching is discussed on pages 5 – 7 of the work and the following passages were cited to supposedly prove their pattern: Acts 3:8,9,11; Acts 10:23-48; Acts 18:24-26; and Acts 20:7-11. Let us take each of the passages one after the other and examine them critically.

First, Acts 3:8-11 talks about the healing of the man at the beautiful gate. It gives no hint of a teaching done by Peter or John. It only tells of a miracle done and the man walking into the temple praising God. As people (non-Christians) saw the erstwhile lame man walking, they ran to them in amazement and Peter seized the opportunity to preach the gospel to them (verses 12-26). Afterwards, this led to the conversion of many people who heard the word and the number of the disciples increased to five thousand (Acts 4:4). When a similar preaching was done in Acts 2 by the same man (Peter), he was asked a question to which he gave a response publicly (Acts 2:37-38). How does this prove the method that they advocate? On this incident, the authors claimed that “...*nobody raised questions publicly. Either the newcomer’s dancing became acceptable to them or they raised their questions after worship.*” It seems they have forgotten that the focus of their write-up is on questioning and answering **after a message (teaching or sermon) has been done or presented!** The setting of the incident clearly shows that the focus is on the unbelieving audience who were captured by the great miracle of healing and not even believers! Why then must a question be raised by brethren when a teaching was not carried out in Acts 3:8-11? The teaching done afterwards was particularly to the unbelieving onlookers and many of such believed. Besides, if a question was asked in Acts 2 by the recipients after hearing Peter’s teaching, then, Peter would have answered again if he was asked in Acts 3. Meanwhile, according to these modern preachers’ reasoning, we must be forced to conclude that there were no prayers made, no songs rendered and no teaching done on that day by the brethren since we have no record of such in the text.

Second, Acts 10:23-48 is a record of the preaching of Peter done in the house of Cornelius. This was not a church setting but an evangelism which can even be term “a personal evangelism” of Peter himself (10:23). How does that prove their point? Suppose I visit a prospect with some other brethren and the preaching is done, the brethren with me are not expected to query my teaching for they are not the recipient. Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete wrongly asserted that “*the **teaching and practice of Peter that day was strange to the brethren from Joppa** who accompanied him to Cornelius’s house. However, none of them asked him questions there or challenged the practice.*” This is an assumption for the scripture hinted no such thing! Why on earth should the teaching be strange to them when Peter already said on the day of Pentecost that the promise is to them (the Jews) and the Gentiles (Acts 2:39)? What was astonishing was the incident (the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles and their miraculous speaking in tongues -10:45-46). Perhaps, even Peter himself was surprised at the incident for he had argued with God earlier (10:13-16) and he even posed a rhetorical question at the house of Cornelius (10:47). Acts 10 does not represent a church setting but an evangelism scene which has absolutely nothing to do with the pattern or position that is being advocated by these men. In page 12 of their work, the writers enjoined that “We too must follow what is written and not assumptions” but even their own work is filled with assumptions.

Also, the writers of this article affirmed that “*It was simply not their traditions to ask questions publicly. It was later that **the other apostles called him privately** to ask their questions.* It is an error to say that it was the other apostles that called Peter to ask him questions. That is an addition to the text for the scripture did not in anywhere hinted such (Acts 11:2). The Bible tells us that the **apostles and brethren** who were in Judea were aware of the preaching of Peter (Acts 11:1) and it was those of the circumcision who queried him! Why limit such to the apostles? Why must passages be forced to support a dogma? Besides, if the meeting of Peter with the brethren (at least 11 apostles according to them) is termed “private” by Erhimu and Akpobome (wherein Peter was the teacher and other brethren asked question); how come a meeting of the brethren with their teacher in a Bible study today is termed “public”?

Third, Acts 18:24-26 records the ministry of Apollos and how he was corrected by Pricilla and Aquila. This also does not prove their pattern for they cannot show from the text that this incident was in a church setting. Prior to this time, Paul had preached in the synagogue in Ephesus **reasoning with the Jews** (18:19). He did the same thing when he came back to Ephesus on his third Missionary Journey (Acts 19:8). The synagogue is a Jewish place of worship and Paul’s manner was to visit the synagogue whenever he enters a city (Acts 13:14; 17:1-2, 17; 18:4). However, some cities do not have a Synagogue especially if there are little or no Jews there (e.g. Philippi; cf. Acts 16:11-15). Just like Paul, Apollos also preached in the synagogue. For anyone to use this to justify a church worship would have to prove that Apollos was actually teaching the brethren and he taught them what was wrong. Paul not only reasoned but the passages also showed that the Jews were always **disputing** with him! That connote queries were flying around because of disagreements. Now after Apollos took correction, what happened? He kept preaching publicly and “*mightily convinced the Jews.*”

Fourth, Acts 20:7-11 gives a record of the church at Troas meeting upon the first day of the week and we see no record of anyone asking question, though there was a teaching recorded. Thus, Erhimu and Akpobome opined; “*Here, Paul gave a teaching on the subject of the Lord’s Supper. The*

worship session was long, and even the death and resurrection of a brother midway did not stop the teaching. **Yet, nobody asked questions. It was not the tradition of the early church to ask public questions after teaching** because they were following the tradition of Jesus Christ. Just as we have no record of people asking Paul question in the church from this text, we also do not have a record of people asking him **privately**. What then is the relevance of this verse to their proposition? If the passage proves that questions were not asked publicly simply because we have no record of anyone asking questions, it will also prove that questions were not asked privately by meeting the teacher after the service for we have no record of anyone asking Paul (the teacher) questions privately afterwards. Therefore, according to them, just as asking the teacher in the church setting would be wrong (using this passage), meeting the preacher privately and asking him questions is wrong also. The passage does not prove their position.

The Tradition of Christ Concerning Asking Question after Teaching

In their work, Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odieta stated on Pg. 4:

“After Jesus had taught, it was not all His listeners that understood Him. Yet, the spiritual followers did not form a habit or tradition of asking Him questions in public after teaching. Rather, they would meet Him privately to ask their questions, not once, not twice, but as a tradition... **The people that asked Jesus questions publicly before and after teaching were the monitoring agents of the devil, the Herodians, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Lawyers, and the Scribes who did it to find fault** (Matt. 19:3; Mk. 7:5;10:1,2).” (Emphasis L.E.)

The above statement is a complete falsehood. It is a fatuous claim that could be misleading. But any serious Bible student would detect it at first glance. Without mincing words, there are several individuals who asked Jesus questions in the public place **with good intention** and not to find fault. The rich young ruler asked Jesus a question publicly without any intention to find fault and Jesus loved him more (Mark 10:17-21; Matthew 19:16). The disciples of John asked Jesus a question publicly without an evil intention (Matthew 11:3; Luke 7:19-20). After Christ taught publicly that He is the bread from heaven, the Jews queried Him, many disciples went away and Peter in his response openly posed a question to Jesus in John 6: 68.

[For a list of questions that Jesus was asked and the intentions of those who asked, please see <https://byustudies.byu.edu/system/files/pdfs/Charts/NT/9-17.pdf>].

The Mosaic Law required the people to approach the Levites who were ordained teachers in God’s sanctuary and ask for clarification on any issue whether it be a civil or religious matter – Deuteronomy 17:8-11. No wonder, we saw Jesus receiving teaching and asking questions in the temple when He was a boy (Luke 2:41-50). “Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, **both listening to them and asking them questions**” (vs. 46). Jesus was listening to the teachers and He was asking them questions. Note that this activity took place **in the temple!** The teachers were the instructors of the people in matters of religion. No reference is made to the fact that Jesus took them aside separately one by one and began to question them or that he followed each home to ask a question. He simply listened to them and asked His

questions. This should not be surprising for Acts 13:15-16 clearly shows that questions may be asked in the Jewish gathering. From this example, Jesus recognized and endorsed questioning and answering after a teaching as a good method for He referred to that as “My Father’s business” (vs. 49). If the meeting here is termed “private,” by these authors, then the meeting of a teacher with his brethren in a church setting is also “private.”

Indeed, whenever Jesus was with His disciples alone, such is termed a private discussion and questions were always asked to which Jesus gave answers (See Matthew 24:3; 17:10; 18:1; John 14:5). During the last supper, they all asked him a similar question (Matthew 26:22,25). After the transfiguration, the disciples asked him a question to which Jesus gave an answer (Matthew 17:10-13). Similarly, when a teacher meets with the brethren in the church, such may be described as a private setting and not really public. In other words, the church’s Bible class in the church hall is a **private gathering** of the brethren and their teacher, it is when the church organizes an open-air lecture by the roadside, market, etc. (in the midst of unbelievers or at a location owned and filled with outsiders) that one may describe such teaching as “**public**,” wherein Christians may not necessarily query the minister openly. And that was exactly the situation **in all the germane instances** cited by Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete. Jesus had taught in an open-air (public) gathering which included both His disciples and other multitudes and the disciples rarely question Him publicly but often did that in another gathering which included them alone. Let us consider the passages cited in the article in support of Jesus being asked questions privately (pages 4-5):

First, in Matthew 24:1-3, Jesus has taught a mixed audience publicly (see 23:1) and not the disciples alone. Hence, they chose to ask him privately. Second, Matthew 17:14-19 is not relevant to the discussion for Jesus did not give any teaching and the question asked by the disciples was not as a result of a teaching done by Jesus Christ. It has to do with a situation where the disciples could not heal an epileptic boy. It would only be wise for them to ask their master privately why they could not do so for it has to do with their failure before others. Third, Mark 4:10 is injurious to their position for it was **not only** the apostles that were there when the question was asked. There were others around Him too. Besides, it was a public preaching as well and the disciples and those with them, chose to ask what they do not know in a private gathering. The disciples were not the only recipient of the message. Also, the people did not ask Him the question to find fault as they simply wanted to know. Finally, in Mark 10:10, the disciples had to ask him privately for he had taught a mixed audience which included the multitude and the Pharisee. Likewise, members of the church of Christ hardly ever query their teachers in an open-air gathering wherein members and large group of non-members are gathered together. Whatever questions and reviews that may be available are mostly reserved for discussions during the church private meeting.

Evidently, none of the above passages describes a church setting. And **none of the above passages shows that the disciples went individually (at different moments without the awareness of others), to ask their questions.** Thus, the passages cited by the authors have no relevance to the position that both are clamoring for. The disciples **did not** go one after the other to Jesus to ask their questions, they simply asked their teacher in a group. But Kenneth Erhimu and Akpobome Diffre-Odiete advocates for members to ask their questions individually by meeting the teacher after the church Bible study. Yet, these Bible passages do not teach so. Undoubtedly, if there are examples to be

used for our church setting, it is those instances where Jesus met with His disciples. If Jesus could address questions posed by his disciples after His speech when they gathered together (e.g. during the Last's supper), then it follows that today, a teacher can accept questions from the disciples (Christians) when the church gather together. These modern-day ministers should not confuse themselves with the words "private" and "public." When brethren meet together, it is a "private gathering" and not "public" but when they organize an open-air evangelism programme wherein unbelievers aggregate even without invitation in an open or public space, then such is a public gathering. Even in Media and Communications Studies, a distinction is made between a group communication and a public communication.

However, if a church setting is termed "public" as posited in the article under review, then that would contradict their own illustration about Jesus, because when Jesus taught the multitude in the open, they called it "public" but when he was alone with His apostles and he received questions (see Matthew 24:3), that is termed private. If they insist on calling it a public gathering, then they would have to see the meeting of Jesus with his apostles as a public gathering. Interestingly, they admitted that Peter's meeting with the brethren in Acts 11:1-2 was a private gathering (p.6). Yet, they maintain that a preacher's meeting with the members is a public gathering. That is **inconsistent**. In modern parlance, when one individual visits another at home for discourse without others present, that is a private meeting but when one approaches others in a place accessible to visitors; it may be deemed as public. Hence, a Christian going alone to meet a teacher at home could be private whereas questioning such at a corporate gathering of the saints could be seen as public.

Whichever definition of "private or public" is adopted, Christ was asked questions by some disciples in the presence of other followers/outsideers (Luke 9:54). Likewise the ordinary people did question Jesus in the presence of His disciples (John 12:34). Men were neither rebuffed nor forbidden from querying the Messiah. **These are incontrovertible facts!** Christ always responded even unto His detractors. Jesus admonished those who asked with impute motives because He could read minds (Luke 20:20-23) unlike us, He knew what was in man (John 2:25). There is no passage in the New Covenant prohibiting men from raising questions in the church, after a teaching.

What About Acts 15:1-2?

In the book of Acts 15:1-2, we read;

"And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question."

Indeed, Acts 15 completely destroys the argument of Erhimu and Akpobome. Could it be they are aware that the passage would do their new doctrine a lot of havoc hence they intentionally refused to mention it in their article? This is a passage that is relevant to their discussion but they were supposedly oblivious of it. Rather, they devoted their time to address passages that have no direct bearing with their claim on the subject matter.

In this passage, some believers came from Judea to Antioch to teach a strange doctrine. At least two of the brethren in Antioch queried the doctrine. Sending Paul and Barnabas with other members of the Church to Jerusalem to inquire about the question shows that the whole church was involved. Verse 3 shows it was the church that sent them to Jerusalem. There was a teaching, there was a disagreement and there was a question; all in a church setting. This would prove to an honest person that teachings were always queried in the New Testament church if it is strange to the assembly. Here we have members of the church in Antioch questioning some teachers after they had taught, yet someone says this practice originated from the Anglican Church in England. It is laughable. Paul told the Galatians that if anyone comes to them and teaches another gospel than that which they have received, such a person should be accused (Galatians 1:8-9).

When Acts 15 was pointed to Akpobome in a WhatsApp group, below is a quote of his defense:

“In Acts 15, this discernment of the brethren’s teaching was done by only the leaders. It was these leaders with spirit of discernment that the church also delegated to take the matter to Jerusalem...the church **MUST** have teachers and leaders who **MUST** do discernment of teachings in the church, **and this must not be left to the public.** Anyone in the public (men or women) who want to inquire of anything more should meet the teachers in private (cf. 1 Cor. 14)”

The thrust of their argument is that no one is expected to query a teaching as it must be done privately. When boxed to the corner with an inspired text (Acts 15:1-2), they recounted and said it must only be done by the leaders of a church. In the first place, the claim that it was only leaders that were delegated to go to Jerusalem to investigate the matter is a straw man. It cannot be proven from the inspired text that **only the leaders** in the church at Antioch made up that delegation. From the record, we only know the debating parties and some neutral members were selected for the trip. If in fact, all the leaders went to Jerusalem on that issue, then the sheep were left exposed unguarded back home. However, we know that some of the other leaders (teachers and prophets) remained while they went on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1).

Second, if this activity was done so privately as they want to make us believe, there would be no reason for the church to be involved. It would have been a business between Paul, Barnabas and the false teachers from Judea without anyone as a witness. The leaders according to Akpobome, are the evangelist/teachers in the church (Paul and Barnabas). What he is indirectly saying is that if the

false teachers from Judea had come when Paul and Barnabas were on their missionary journey, they would have been successful in teaching their error and no one would question them! That is untenable because the apostles had trained Christians and a man who desires the office of a Bishop must be apt to teach (I Timothy 3:2), must hold fast the faithful word so he would be able to exhort and convict those who contradict (Titus 1:9-11). All these attributes must be seen in a man prior to his appointment. Now, suppose a church has no preacher and has not appointed elders, who would be seen as the leaders and what are the qualities of these leaders in the church who would be able to question a teaching in the church? Honesty demands that these brethren tell us!

Other Passages Teach That Questioning And Answering Are Necessary

I Corinthians 14:29 permits public scrutiny of a teaching by inspired prophets. How much more an uninspired person? "Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what is said." (NLT) "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said." (NIV). If inspired persons were questioned, (some of whom could have their messages authenticated by performing miracles) how could any uninspired minister today posit he should not be scrutinized with the scriptures?

In Revelation 2:2, when speaking of the church in Ephesus, the Lord said "I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars" This is an example of a congregation identifying errors and heretic men. This was not a single individual doing it, but the church.

1 John 4:1-3 reads;

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

The Bible tells us to test or try the spirits whether they are of God. And John says we could know them by their confession. For us to know such, we must ask questions. When Paul got to Ephesus, it was through questioning that he heard the report from the twelve men that they were baptized into John's baptism (Acts 19:2). It was through questioning that Philip got the confession of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:37). For us to really know the mind of any visitor or teacher, we must ask such questions! Paul requested a congregation to "*beware of the concision*" (Philippians 3:2) and also warned against "*false brethren unawares brought in*" (Galatians 2:4). Thus, every local church should query strangers and strange doctrines.

The church is to reject a man that is heretic after the first and second admonition (Titus 3:10). Could a man be rejected without questions being asked? How would an heretic man be warned by the church without questioning him on what he has taught? Even the elders that sinned are to be rebuked in the presence of all (I Timothy 5:20). That would include heresy because it is a sin.

And then, I Peter 3:15 tells us to “always be ready to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” Would Erhimu and Akpobome aver that this passage is not applicable in a church gathering? One would have to read into that text to say that questions must only be asked privately and answers must be given privately too. In fact, I Corinthians 14:23 recognizes that unbelievers may come in to our gathering and may have something to say. I Peter 3:15 permits one to give an answer to anyone who ask us questions about our hope, which is actually based on our faith.

Furthermore, the church in Corinth sent Paul series of questions (I Corinthians 7:1; 8:1). Paul, in turn replied the church and answered their questions in his epistles. And in I Corinthians 11:34, He says “*And the rest will I set in order when I come.*” It is supposed that when Paul gets to Corinth, and if there are other issues, he will answer them. It is illogical to conclude that Paul will be receiving questions from individuals privately in his own apartment and answering them accordingly on issues that affect the church and which the whole church ought to benefit from. In Acts 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira were asked questions in the open. While this is not a question asked by a listener to a teacher, the point is: if asking questions in the open was a taboo, Peter would not have done this but would have called them privately to his house to ask them.

Also, it was in the manner of Paul to reason in the synagogues with the Jews (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 18:4; 19:8-9). Reasoning and persuading men is a two-way communication process and it is almost impossible for Paul to have reasoned with these people in the synagogues without entertaining questions. If it was wrong for questions to be asked in such setting (cf. Acts 2:37), Paul would have discouraged it. One thing we should realize is that questions and answers are part of the teaching process and in some cases, it may not be hinted that questions were asked. In Acts 14:1-4, it was reported that Paul and Barnabas spoke in the synagogue and a great multitude of the Jews and Gentiles believed. Though the record does not explicitly state that people queried the apostles teaching, it also does not state that they were not questioned either. What is evident was that a controversy later arose when some Jews stirred up opposition and the apostles had to flee. At Caesarea, after Agabus delivered an inspired message and some brethren offered their suggestion, Paul asked a question at that gathering of saints in Acts 21:8-13.

Coming to II Timothy 2:23 which reads; “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife.” Here, the evangelist is told to avoid foolish questions. And these brethren read into the text that “Timothy was told to avoid argument and debates **with other teachers**”

(Kenneth and Akpobome, 2020, p. 12). Nothing of such is hinted in the text. The whole context shows that the preacher's relationship is with all members in God's house (see verses 20-26) and not a selected few which they called teachers. Today, how shall those who would correct errors in the church be known since they did not state the scriptural qualifications for a teacher? After all, the Judaizers who tried to indoctrinate Antioch came and taught yet were denounced as subverts who acted without the authorization of the Jerusalem church. Paul was not telling Timothy not to engage anyone in an assembly as he himself did in Acts 15, rather he informed the youthful preacher to **patiently** teach all men. In essence, Timothy was to guide people including those who oppose the truth and to ultimately reject an argumentative heretic after *repeated* efforts at persuasion. The preacher is not to evade all queries under the guise of deeming every question as foolish but he is to avoid someone who has a habit of contesting truth by rehashing issues or queries that were patiently addressed. Simon, the erring new convert took correction from Peter and did not argue in Acts 8:18-24.

Is Questioning and Answering in the Church a Bad Method?

In one of the comments on the WhatsApp group, Akpobome Diffre-Odiete referred to the method of questioning and answering in a church gathering as a bad method when he wrote:

Non-essentials are methods which God did not explicitly command. When he said "Go and preach" a man can stay at home 24 hours and preach online. That is his method. Another man may stand in the sun preaching 24 hours. That is his method. Methods are good only when they are useful to carrying out God's command. What if a brother who is a body builder goes to the gym to share tracts? That is his method. What if he uses his body size to force people to accept the gospel or he beats them? That is a bad method for doing the command of God. Bad methods **MUST** be dropped, especially if they stand against God's general message. Public questioning in the Churches of Christ have only produced church "lawyers", contention and "I know it all" spirit. It should be dropped and the tradition of Jesus and the apostles adopted for HIS church. The church belongs to Christ, not the Pharisees.

Also, in page 7 of the article, the following words are found therein:

Several passages speak of various acts of worship carried out in the early church, including teaching, Lord's Supper, fellowship, prayers, giving, etc. No scripture speaks of question and answer sessions as part of the worship activities of the early church that followed the tradition of Jesus who owns the church.

In the first quote above, they called it "**a method**" and in the second quote from the article, it is called an "**act of worship**" and a "worship activity." **It appears they are not even sure what exactly it is** and they cannot help but contradict themselves. If questioning and answering is a method of teaching (of which it is), then it should not be separated from teaching. Teaching is the act which encompasses all activities including talking, demonstrating, questioning and answering, etc. For

example, we are told in Acts 11:26 that Paul and Barnabas assembled with the church in Antioch for a whole year and they taught many people. This sums up all the activities involved in the teaching process. Shall we then conclude that throughout the whole year, questions were not asked by anyone at the church's study sessions; by a teacher or by a listener? That is exactly what Erhimu and Akpobome would want to make us believe. Teaching is an act of worship (I Corinthians 12:26; Acts 2:42) while questioning and answering is an expedient method of teaching with numerous advantages. As stated earlier, the Corinthian church wrote to ask questions from Paul and he replied them with an epistle in which he also posed (rhetorical) questions to buttress his answers e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:1-7. Indeed, public questioning in many churches when handled aright has led to enlightenment, baptisms, restorations, spiritual growth, etc. thus producing sound Christians. None ought to follow modern human personal experience but should allow the word of God to guide.

Questioning And Answering Is An Expedient Method Of Teaching

Albert Barnes, while commenting on I Corinthians 14:29 offered the following statements;

“No minister who has just views of his office, and a proper acquaintance with the truth, and confidence in it, would desire to prohibit the people from the most full and free examination of all that he utters”

It is typical of so-called “General-Overseers” and others who seek to control local congregations to abhor any public scrutiny of their teachings and practices. Peter did not take offense but rather took correction when Paul openly challenged his error (Galatians 2:11-17, 2 Peter 3:15). Questioning and Answering (Q & A) in a Bible class setting is an expedient method of teaching but an arrogant or a false teacher would prevent people from querying his teachings after the presentation. When either an unlearned or a discerning person ask for scriptural clarification over a teacher's assertion, an answer should be given. It should be indicated from scripture or otherwise admitted to be the teacher's personal opinion. Some of the advantages of Q & A include;

1. It shows our obedience to God's word (I Peter 3:15)
2. It checks the excesses of false teachers (Acts 15:1-2)
3. It would facilitate or help to stop the mouth of the gainsayers (Titus 1:9)
4. It would help individuals to know when they err to quickly repent (II Timothy 2:25-26)
5. It would help the brethren to better understand the subject discussed, thereby leading to the edification of members (I Corinthians 14:26).
6. It makes the teacher to be ready to defend the truth (I Peter 3:15, I Corinthians 9:3)
7. It would make both teachers and members to study more on a subject and even seek other faithful brethren's view (Acts 15).

Some Unavoidable Contradictions

Reading through the work including several comments of one of the authors, it is difficult for one to know exactly what their position is. The main thrust of the work is that nobody should ask the teacher questions in a church gathering as they must go and ask privately by meeting the teacher individually in his house or office. At the same time, in one of the WhatsApp conversations, Akpobome posits that;

The material was prepared mainly in response to the debate of whether **women should ask questions or not**. The material is our reply: **is there a portion of scripture that even commanded men to ask questions in church? Why pick women only?** But as we discuss here, more matters are arising.

From the above, it is implied that the remote but sole purpose of writing their article is to silence those who teach that women should not ask questions in the church. Inadvertently, they are against the position of the women not asking questions but favours women asking questions. It was because they could not use scriptures to support the notion of women asking questions in the whole church that prompted them to aver that nobody should ask questions in church after a teaching. Later, when some passages (such as Acts 15:1-2) are shown to them, they adjust their stand to posit that only leaders should ask questions in church since (according to their shifting gospel) these are the only ones who can discern! These are THREE DIFFERENT POSITIONS by the same authors on the issue of Q & A! They profess that nobody should ask questions in church, at the same time, they believe that women can ask questions in church and still, they purport that only the leaders should ask questions in church. What exactly is their position? Little wonder why they could not prove their doctrine from the scriptures, as they do not really have a position. The reader is encouraged to study Asaolu's 2019 article [\(Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection\)](http://www.lainosint.com/download/faith) available at www.lainosint.com/download/faith. On pages 8-9, that brother anticipatorily addressed the shifting arguments identified above. That men could speak or raise questions in the whole church is evident since only women are prohibited from doing such. There are many abiding principles from the apostolic era. The cessation of miraculous spiritual gifts does not mean things should no longer be done decently and in order.

As earlier shown, Erhimu and Akpobome's attempt to use Acts 20:7-11 to posit that a visiting minister is not to be asked any question amounted to reading into the text. That passage indicates Paul essentially preached and delivered a speech of truth that was well understood and received by the disciples at Troas. When Eutychus fell from the third loft and died, it was obvious that questions arose in the saints' minds that were at least expressed in body language if not verbally spoken! That was why Paul could say: "*Trouble not yourselves,*" as he restored the young man to life.

If (according to the article), it was not the tradition of the early church to ask questions after hearing a teaching, and the right thing to do is for each listener to later present questions to the teacher privately, **it would be wrong for the leaders or anybody at all to query a teaching in the church service.** Why must the leaders violate the supposed tradition of asking “privately”? Acts 15 shows that some publicly dissented to a false teaching presented in a church. When the matter was taken by the Antioch delegation to Jerusalem for further scrutiny or discussion, Peter spoke at length and posed a question openly to which James gave an answer in vs 10,13. It is indeed very difficult for people to interpret the scriptures objectively when they already have something in mind which they want to defend.

Conclusion

It is amazing that Erhimu and Akpobome’s doctrine about Q & A in church was reportedly “accepted by most preachers and teachers at the Delta State Preachers’ and Teachers’ forum held in Effurun on February 8, 2020.” If it is true, then most ministers and Bible teachers in Delta state need to be properly trained to identify errors. The claim about majority acceptance is doubtful since the authors wrote on Pg. 11: “*At the presentation of this paper, some questions and comments arose...*”

The writers of that so-called research work could not give a single Bible passage to support the proposition that they advocate and several Bible passages were misconstrued to support what they have conjured up for themselves. I would still like for Erhimu and Akpobome or their supporters to show us just a single passage that supports what they are teaching. The 13-page article they have released shows no single Bible passage for their doctrine. It is not just enough to hammer on a supposed “pattern” without clearly showing us the pattern from the scriptures. The church events recorded in Acts 15 and 1 Corinthians will forever rebut their postulations and summersaults. If their respective congregations have become acrimonious in Q & A, it might be because of what and how they teach. Let local churches structure their Bible classes well, groom and utilize those who are faithful and able to teach, motivate brethren to correct one another in love when necessary and remain prayerful at all times.

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