

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR CHURCH GROWTH IN A LOCAL
BAPTIST CHURCH

AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO
FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OGBOMOSO NIGERIA

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY

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MATRIC NUMBER 12/0146
JUNE, 2015

ABSTRACT

This research work looked into how Christian education has been and can be a great tool for church growth in a local Baptist Church. The researcher looked into how various divisions under the Christian Education Department of a church contribute to the growth of the church. Abundant Life Baptist Church, Oke-Omosin, Ogbomoso was used as a case study. Interviews were conducted with various people who have been or are still working with the education department of the church since its establishment. Literatures were also consulted and the reports of the interviews were discussed alongside the facts established from the literature. The result of the research shows that if Christian Education will lead to church growth, the teachers must make adequate planning, organize small and effective groups, and make sure that their teaching is Bible-based. It also ascertained that Christian education contributes to the growth of any local church in various ways. Some of the ways include: Numerical increase, increase in the church income, members living godly life, continuous production of effective workers for the church and many more. Meaningful recommendations are made. These are what must be ensured to make sure that *Christian education yields the target of making believers become mature, having discovered that it is paramount for church growth.*

5.2 CONCLUSION

With the outcome of this research, one can say that Christian education is a means of having financial, numerical, internal, external, spiritual, and structural growth in the church. It allows the church to experience a total growth, and be a balanced church. Therefore, it is truly a tool to church growth in a local Baptist church. To this effect, every local church should pay a good attention to it. If this done, the church will experience the total growth expected of it.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the research conducted, the researcher recommends the following as what any local church should strongly do as regards its Christian education if such desires a total growth:

Prayer should be taken as an important factor. Thus, the Christian education workers should give it a good time just as he gives studying the Sunday school booklet. Prayer is something that enables the teaching to be with authority and power.

Christian education workers should lay emphasis on the Bible, the Word of God, not just on the method of teaching. This is because the Word of God is what makes the difference in man's life. However, this does not mean that method too is not necessary.

Adequate method of day to day events in the Christian education needs to be adequately taken so as to have accurate record of how it enables growth in every local church. This is very important also for research purpose. If any church will truly measure its growth adequately, appropriate record is needed. Abundant Life Baptist Church Christian education's contribution to church growth could have been better measured if accurate record is kept since day one of her establishment till now. Each worker should therefore be told to always submit every record of importance to the superintendent or the coordinator of each arm.

Goal setting is something that has been found as an important factor that contributes to church growth in the course of the research. Thus, each unit of the education department should have definite written goals per year which their effort and programmes will gear toward. Many churches could have performed better if an actual goal is being set for each year.

Small groups should be made of as much as possible. The use of small groups at all level of Christian education enables better interaction and this allows the members to know, and be able to care better for one another. As seen in the case of Abundant Life Baptist Church, it enables the teacher to be able to oversee the members more adequately. In this sense, visitation becomes easier, and any weak member can easily be helped in whatever aspects of his or her weakness. Through this, the church grows the more. Besides, the use of small groups makes targeting a particular category of people possible even outside the four walls of the church.

The pastor setting a standard is another issue. As seen in the church considered, the new members' class handled by the pastor serves as a means to let the new members get baptized into the spirit of taking Christian education as something very important. This standard set by the pastor should be borne by the coordinator of each arm of the Christian education, and this should be passed to every other worker in the education department. And the pastor should make sure he has constant meeting with education department coordinator.

Appeal for verdict is something every teacher in the department must be told to always do. This simply means that the teachers should always remember to give invitation for people to make specific decision as per each day lesson. If possible a particular book should be chosen by the teacher to record every decision made by the members. This will enable the teacher to remember who and who to follow up and for him to strategize how to guide the person, until the decision is made and achieved.