

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE UNCALLED PASTOR IN THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST  
CONVENTION

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## ABSTRACT

The uncalled pastors denote those who claim that they were divinely called by God into pastoral ministry, but remain unemployed and are not performing any pastoral duty. Amongst Baptist denomination in Nigeria there is a growing number of these pastors who after training are not engaged by any church. Many of them remain as ordinary members of churches without fulfilling their professed divine mandates. This army of jobless pastors that is on the increase is the challenge of this study. Literature on this phenomenon is scarce. The research evaluated how God calls an individual for his purpose and see the nexus between this divine call and its actualization practical term. Through the use of literature, interviews, questionnaires and observation, it was discovered that when God calls any individual he equips, guides and provides for whoever is called. Before 1956 pastors were posted to churches and church organizations after graduation. This method became unpopular and many Baptist felt it was more scriptural for a local church to invite her pastor after prayers. This method was accepted in 1956. The present glut is, however, caused by multifarious factors. Everyone in the seminary claims they were called by God, but there are many who want to be pastors due to unemployment in other sectors. Bi-vocational pastors are on the increase, this affects the demand and vacancy for vocational pastors. Many churches in the semi-urban and rural areas cannot eke out the salaries / allowance of the pastors. Multiple pastoral ministry are not encouraged mostly by senior pastors in churches that have the capacity to do. The seminary curriculum is not skewed towards preparing the pastor for church planting and to render socio-religious services to his/her immediate community. It is expedient based on present realities for churches to screen and ascertain the veracity behind the claim of divine call by their members before electing to sponsor or recommend them for pastoral training. The churches should undertake to employ such individuals after graduation when no call is forth coming. The seminaries should review their curriculum to be in tandem with prevailing pastoral challenges.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Churches recommending pastors for training must give an undertaking that on completion of the training programme the church would extend a call to the sponsored person in his/her area of divine call which should have been noticed by the sponsoring church, this must be the last resort when other calls are not extended to the pastor. This writer is of the view that the nature/purpose of the divine call is more paramount than the training in the seminary. The seminary training is only to equip the called to perform his/her duty adequately.

The seminary / college should review their curriculum to accommodate post training service. The training as it is presently, is geared towards preparing a perfect pastor; not a missionary evangelist, social worker, self reliant worker etc. when the trained pastor is not called, he /she feels inadequate and not relevant to his/her community. However, the training that is required now is to make the trained pastor relevant to his/her community whether a call is extended to the pastor or not. By so

doing the college / seminaries should be able to identify and guide students in his/her area of call and he/she is enlightened of the envisaged challenges ahead.

Churches without pastors should not exist in the convention pastors should be sponsored by the associations/conferences/convention to those churches, sixty percent of the pastors salaries /allowances should be borne by the mother church/association/conference/convention on a percentage (i.e. 30% – 10% - 10% - 10%) this should be done for five years. During this period the pastor is mandated and expected to have grown in his/her ministry. The balance forty percent of the pastor salary should come from the host church.

Churches before appending their signature on the form of any person /member going to the seminary, must identify the person's area of gift / call. Most churches approve candidates that they do not know for training in the seminary.

Finally the seminary /convention should only approve training for people who already have a vocation / professional training. Bi-vocational training is the most appropriate in terms of the New Testament antecedent. The person called is sure because he/she already has a vocation. God, call's those who are willing and ready to respond to the call. Pastoral training should be a second vocation.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

As practiced by the Baptist denomination, the call system has scriptural antecedent. Cognizance should however, be taken that calls in apostolic times were to serve believers after the one called, has had an initial divine call to ministry. Other calls that came were for the apostles to function to the needs of others; believers and unbelievers. The first call and witnessing for all pastors is "... Go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28: 19) also Acts 1:8. "But you will receive power when the Holy

Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” This signifies that every pastor is first-called to preach the gospel. Even with persecution staring at them, the early apostles even though scattered they “preached the word wherever they went (Acts 8: 4). God also called Phillip specifically to minister to the Ethiopian, on the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza (Act 8: 28). This happened during his general ministration in Samaria. The encounter between Peter and Cornelius household supports the Baptist call system holistically. God revealed to Cornelius who and where the person that was to be called. God also revealed to Peter to go to the house of Cornelius to proclaim the gospel message to Cornelius’s household (Acts 10). Ordinarily Peter would not have gone to the house of a Gentile, but through divine revelation, he had to go and God displayed His glory in the house of Cornelius. This is a pointer to the fact that wherever God sends his servant (Pastor) He/she must go, without hesitation or consideration.

The issue of an uncalled (jobless) disciple or apostle is not recorded in scripture, it has no theological foundation all those who had divine calls, had responsibilities. That a person is called to pastoral ministry and the person is jobless is not recorded in scripture. Everyone had something to do. The church in Antioch had “prophets and teachers” (Acts 13:1). Some of the prophets and teachers were Barnabas, Simeon called Niger Lucius, Manaen and Saul. While they worshiped God and fasting Bible states that “set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them “Acts 13:3. This implies that even though, there were many prophets and teachers in the Antiochean church, they were not jobless Barnabas and Saul were only given a fresh mandate for a specific assignment. Multi staff ministry was common in the early church, as exemplified in the works of Paul who had

