

DECLARATION

PASTORAL COUNSELLING APPROACH TO MINISTRY TO WIDOWS IN
CHRIST LOVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, IBADAN.

A Thesis in The Department Of Theology Submitted To The Faculty Of
Theological Studies Of The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary,
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ABSTRACT

The research dealt with the ministry to the widows: a pastoral care and counseling approach. The researcher decided to work on this topic because of his experience with widows in the course of his pastorate. The purpose is to help the people who are still passing through widowhood crisis turn their life to trust in God; for it is Him only that can help them and that this situation is not the end of their lives. The instrument used by the researcher is a self-designed questionnaire. The widows and pastors in some selected churches in Christ Love Baptist Association in Ibadan Conference of the Nigerian Baptist Convention were used as sample. In this study according to the research it is affirmed that there are reasonable number of widows in the church passing through the trauma of widowhood. The factors that cause this trauma were also discovered in the research like emotional, spiritual, physical, moral and psychological which reduced the victims to the barest minimum. Those who have passed through it and how they cope with life were discussed too. Therefore, on the basis of findings, recommendations were raised of how the people should be helped by pastors and churches because widowhood crisis is a serious problem in our community of faith. In the light of this, full attention should be given in finding solution to mitigate the effects of the trauma being experienced by widows in our churches as it does not lead to the proper development of the church.

as being better off in terms of having more freedom and independence, and better opportunity to serve God. This is a plus and a challenge for pastoral care and counseling ministry to utilise this advantage.

In this study, ten basic challenges of widowhood are identified and investigated. The results indicated that the widows and pastors in Christ Love Baptist Association, Ibadan perceived eight of them as more challenging. Two of them (family rituals and sexual problems) were perceived as less challenging, while their views about the others were equal. The study also investigated the perception of pastoral care and counseling to the widows. The results indicated that a greater percentage of the widows and pastors affirmed the existence of pastoral care and counseling to the widows in their churches while others said there is no such programme for widows. In the face of the challenges, what the church can do was also investigated. The results revealed a high expectation on the part of pastoral care and counseling ministry to the widows as to what the church can do to help the widows. Finally, attempt was made to find out the general perception of the church to the needs of taking care of the widows financially and spiritually. There was an overwhelming response that the church should provide specialised programmes (financially and spiritually) for widows to cope with challenges of widowhood and individual Christians should support Christians.

CONCLUSION

From the data analysis and discussion of findings, it is concluded that the expectation of pastoral care and counseling to the widows has made the people to consider some widowhood practices which hitherto they had held on to, to be considered as unacceptable as such should be changed. The practice of abandonment, lack of care of

children, denial of inheritance, fear, frustration, health problems, loneliness, and problems from in-laws are no more acceptable because they are contrary to the christian faith and therefore constitute challenge to christian living and practice.

That widows are still being denied some basic rights and maltreated in the community. This is a big challenge to the church which should be a defender of widows and fatherless. Despite the maltreatment of widows, there are still recognised areas in which the widows have better opportunity which could be utilised by the church to the glory of God.

In some churches, there is affirmation of the existence of special programmes for widows but the result makes it difficult to say conclusively the state of special programmes for widows in the association. It could however be said that the awareness of special programmes for widows is not well spread in the association. It could be concluded that there is great expectation from the church and the pastoral care and counseling ministry that she will help those passing through widowhood to cope with the challenges widowhood brings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The church and the pastoral care and counseling ministry should intensify the campaign, and lead widows who are still young to remarry.
2. The study revealed that there were widows living as concubines in most of the churches. The pastoral care and counseling ministry should therefore, take strong stand against the issue of concubinage and the existence of people living as concubines in the church.

3. The expectation is high on what the church and the pastoral care and counseling ministry can do to help the widows. The church and the pastoral care and counseling ministry should therefore rise to take her proper place as the defender of widows and orphans, by caring for and defending them.
4. Although the awareness of specialised programme for widows is high but the church in the association especially the leadership are encouraged to intensify effort to implement their pastoral care and counseling ministry programmes relating to widows in the church so that those challenges facing widows will be reduced to minimal.
5. It is also recommended that churches should embark on those programmes that has been expressed in this study as what the pastoral care and counseling ministry can do as it is hoped that such can help integrate and stabilise those experiencing widowhood especially prematurely.