

N.B.T.S.
M. DIV TH
AK-313

RELATIONSHIPS IN MULTIPLE PASTORAL STAFF MINISTRY AND THEIR
IMPACTS ON THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH: A STUDY OF
GOOD NEWS BAPTIST CHURCH

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(MATRIC NO. UJ/07/NB/013)

An Essay in the Department of Theology
Faculty of Theological Studies

Submitted to the Faculty of Theological Studies
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
In Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of
MASTER OF DIVINITY (Theology)
UNIVERSITY OF JOS

2013 - 0573

JUNE, 2012

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, most churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention have been pastored by only one pastor at a time. Children service pastors in most places were not even regarded to be pastors of the whole church. So to a very large extent, it is correct to say that the Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry is a relatively new development in the denomination. The commencement however is a happy one. Unfortunately, many churches have started to practice it without adequate exposure, understanding and resources to make a success of the ministry, especially in a congregational polity like that of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. This research work therefore digs into issues of Multiple Pastoral staff Ministry in order to make lasting recommendations for the practice of the system by churches in the Nigerian Baptist convention. This research sought to discover principles necessary for the implementation of the system. It also sought to know the impact of various levels of relationships in Multiple Pastoral Ministry and their impacts on church growth. Attempts was made to discover how good relationship can be achieved among Pastors and between Pastors and Church members in a Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry. This was done through the review of relevant literatures in the subject matter and a study of Good News Baptist Church, Surulere, Lagos. A church that has practiced the system for over fifteen years and at some point of the history of the church had nine serving pastors. Questionnaires were distributed to all the Pastors of the church and sample members of the church to elicit information on the subject matter. Some selected pastors and members were also interviewed to further clarify issues. The outcome of this work confirmed that there is a direct relationship between the practice of Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry and Church growth. It also confirmed the need for good relationship in the system for the said growth to be achieved. Some salient recommendations were stated at the end of the work for our Convention, Theological Institution, and Churches.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This research has been able to ascertain through the experience of Good News Baptist Church that the Multiple Pastoral staff Ministry can be a workable system of church administration in the churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. We can also safely conclude from the same experience that relational problems frequently associated with the practice of the system can be overcome by our churches. That if our churches will follow strictly the principles of Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry,

they will be able to deal with relationship challenges and turn our churches to what God expected it to be.

It is also clear from the research that spiritual and numerical growths are the by-products of good relationship management in a Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry. What is expected of our churches to achieve this is to seek to be knowledgeable about the system, put all machinery in motion for it, and adhere to the principles of the system. Above all trust in God for the increase of His Church. The outcome of this research has therefore presented the Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry as the most effective system of church administration for all round growth.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this essay, the researcher hereby wishes to make some recommendations that will be remarkable in helping Local Baptist Churches, theological institutions, pastors and the Nigerian Baptist Convention on the implementation of the Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry. This recommendation is given with the intention that the concerned bodies will respond positively in appropriate ways to the system thus leading to the extension of God's kingdom on earth to achieve church growth thereby fulfilling the Great Commission. The recommendations are as follows:

- (1.) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should intensify efforts by devoting sessions during the Convention- in- session to educate the Baptist people on Multiple Pastoral Staff ministry.
- (2.) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should also consider other avenues for continuous education of the Convention family. This can be done through the use of seminars, colloquiums, paper presentations at specially organized programme for the implementation of the system.

(3.) All of the Nigerian Baptist Convention's theological schools should add a course in multiple Pastoral staff ministry to their course content. This course on Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry should be introduced as a full course that will be compulsory for all students in our theological schools. It is not enough to introduce a course on Multiple Pastoral staff Ministry; theological schools should also look for competent instructors to teach the course. The researcher wishes to recommend the following as the contents of the course.

- i. Principles and practice of Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry.
- ii. Conflict and conflict resolution in Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry.
- iii. Job description in Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry.
- iv. Organization of Pastoral Staff Ministry.
- v. Issue of team work in Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry.
- vi. Relationship management in Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry.
- vii. Roles in Multiple Pastoral staff ministry
- viii. Multiple Pastoral Care
- ix. Consequences of Multiple Pastoral Staff Ministry.

(4) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should approve the Multiple Pastoral staff Ministry as the official practical training ground for fresh graduates from theological schools. This will be in line with the practice in most professional bodies where fresh graduates are expected to undergo practical training under a senior colleague before being qualified to stand alone. For example no lawyer will be allowed to open a chamber immediately after being called to the bar. Likewise, no doctor will be qualified to open a private hospital immediately after leaving the university. The Nigerian Baptist Convention can professionalize the pastoral ministry in that manner by making it mandatory for all fresh graduates from theological institutions to spend

some years being associate pastors under an experienced Pastor before they can be qualified to lead a church. This will not only reduce the level of immaturity and unprofessional attitudes being noticed in pastors today, it will also reduce the number of pastors that are without churches.

(5.) The Nigerian Baptist Convention should show case churches and pastors that are excelling in the practice by appreciating them annually during the Nigerian Baptist Convention- in- session.

If the listed recommendations are responded to positively by the various stakeholders in the Baptist denomination, it is obvious that the Convention will be better for it and local churches will experience growth.