

PASTORAL CARE APPROACH TO IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS IN MULTI-STAFF MINISTRY IN BAPTIST
CHURCHES IN PORT-HARCOURT, NIGERIA

A Thesis in the Department of Pastoral Care and Counseling In the
Faculty of Theological Studies, Submitted to the School of
Postgraduate Studies the Nigerian Baptist Theological
Seminary, Ogbomoso in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of
MASTER OF THEOLOGY

HENRY FELIX NWOSU
MATRIC NO 13/ 0309

JUNE, 2015.

ABSTRACT

This study examined ways to improve interpersonal relationship in multi-staff ministry in Baptist churches in Port Harcourt of Rivers State. In a bid for more than one pastor to work together in the same local Baptist assembly, there arises poor interpersonal relationship amongst them which affect their ministries. The purpose of the study was to find out the causative factors of poor interpersonal relationship among church pastors and the associates in multi-staff ministry, identify unresolved crisis among them and examined the pastoral care approach towards the problems in multi-staff ministry. Church pastors, associate pastors and church members among Baptist churches in Port Harcourt constituted the population for this study. Out of this population, a sample of forty three church pastors and associate pastors with ninety eight church members was randomly selected. The study is descriptive in nature. The questionnaire was the only instrument for data collection. The findings showed that lack of team spirit, calling associate pastor without the full co-operation of the church pastor, lack of clear job description among other factors are the causes of interpersonal relationship. Based on the findings, it was recommended that calling of associate pastor into the church should not be the total responsibility of the Church Search Committee but they should allow the church pastor to still play a major role so that cordial relationship will be established from the beginning. Clear job description and discipleship programmes are highly imperative for all church pastors, associate pastors and all church members because these will further enhance cordial relationship in the said multi-staff church.

Conclusion

The work revealed that:

1. The issue of Multi-staff Ministry is not too common among Baptist Churches due to problems attached.
2. Lack of team spirit between the Church pastors and associates is the greatest possible cause of problem of interpersonal relationship in Multi-staff Ministry.

4. Poor interpersonal relationships in Multi-staff Ministry affect the growth of the church and adversely affect the spiritual health of the church members.

Recommendations

Multi-staff Ministry is a team ministry where each member is highly unique and important but takes instructions from the church pastor. The following useful recommendations as pertaining to the Multi-staff Ministry are:

1. Disciple programmes are highly imperative for all church pastors, associate pastors and all church members for any Multi-staff Ministry to thrive in the church.
2. Church pastors and associate pastors should see themselves as partners in progress because Jesus Christ chose the twelve disciples to be with him before he assigned them.
3. The Church members and leaders need proper orientation on what Multi-staff Ministry is all about; constant leadership training will be of help.
4. Calling of associate pastor into the church should not be the total responsibility of the church members but they should allow the Church pastor to still play a major role so that cordial relationship will be established from the beginning.
5. The Church should have job description for all her staff for smooth running of the church and each pastor should operate within the scope of their job description.
6. The provision of necessary amenities into the Pastorium should be evenly distributed among Church pastor and associates by the welfare committee of the church, there shouldn't be partiality and nepotism in the church of God.

7. The church should once in three months organize seminar for the wife/children of the church pastor and the wife/children of all other associate pastors in the same church with the focus of giving them fresh orientation towards cordial relationship in multi-staff ministry.
8. The wife of the church pastor should once in three months call for personal discussion/prayer retreat between her and wives of all other associates pastors in the church. This in view of the researcher will promote and enhance cordial relationship.
9. The church should once in a year organize a get-together for all the pastors serving in a multi-staff ministry together with their wives and children.
10. The church pastor should be down to earth in expressing his concern to his associate pastors where he is not comfortable with issues around, the same thing the associate pastors should do to the church pastor. All must be done with respect having Christ in mind.
11. The church should carefully avoid a situation where any of the associate pastors will be older in age or higher academically than the church pastor. If this happens, cordial relationship may not be attained.
12. Distinct nomenclature should be given to each ministerial staff.
13. Church pastor should coordinate the jobs of other ministers.
14. Pastors should be very careful not to pass administrative information to their family members.