

IMPACTS OF BAPTIST STUDENT FELLOWSHIP ON CHURCH GROWTH
IN OGBOMOSO REDEEMER'S BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

AN ESSAY
SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
OGBOMOSO.

IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINTY IN THEOLOGY

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12/0120

JUNE, 2015

ABSTRACT

This research work titled “the impacts of Baptist Student Fellowship (BSF) on church growth, in Ogbomosho Redeemer’s Baptist Association (OBRA)” focused on the impacts the BSF has made in influencing church growth and on developing leaders for growth of the church in the local Baptist Churches. The study was motivated by the growth experienced in churches that encourages the activities of BSF, and or are led by the BSF Alumni. Having reviewed the dimensions, strategies, tools of church growth with the impact of BSF on mission and revival together with leader’s development for church growth, a descriptive research design was used to find out BSF’s impact on church growth. Questionnaires were administered to obtain information from one hundred people of the seven selected churches in the association. The ninety seven questionnaires retrieved were analyzed using version 15 of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the analysis were clearly presented, using tables. They revealed the aggregate response of respondents to show the general opinion of Baptist churches about the position of BSF in church growth. It is established that the characteristics of students and the objective or philosophy of BSF enhances church growth. It is also established that BSF as one of the tools for growing churches engage the use of church growth strategies in carrying out their philosophy. These include creating good worship atmosphere, evangelism, visitation and follow-up. Moreover BSF encourages the work of the Holy Spirit among them, the members are committed to prayer, vigil with demonstrations of the power of Holy Spirit, and they are skillful in ICT, in handling media and musical gadgets of the church, mission and revivals of the church. BSF participate in choir, drama, G.A, R.A and Lydia. Likewise BSF raises leaders through annual leadership retreats and Leadership Training Conferences for her executives. These produced more mission conscious Pastors, Deacons, and church workers. In general BSF has improved leadership quality and style in the Nigeria Baptist Convention; therefore, it is obvious through the study to conclude that BSF has a positive impact on church growth having considered her present activities in Ogbomosho Baptist Redeemer’s Association. Based on this finding of the researcher, the church should engage BSF members in carrying out the church mission activities and use qualified members to head the church organizations.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Church is an assembly of the Christians, who share the gift of the Spirit for the work of the ministries in order to meet the needs of the people and bring them to the saving knowledge of Christ. Those that are saved are trained to maturity and in turn bring more people; the church is engaged in this cycle to fulfill her great commission. The commission of the church primarily for the growth of the church is God's mandate to the church. The growth of the church is noticed in different dimensions as considered in this work. The dimensions emanate from employing the difference strategies for the church growth, some of which were discussed in this work. The operative agents that include material and human resources like Information and Communication Technology, Prayer, Holy Spirit. Pastors, Youth, and Students and others are considered in this study as tools for church growth.

Baptist Students and non-Baptist Students who are organized into a fellowship that is called Baptist Student Fellowship (BSF) are affirmed to have positive impacts on church growth through the members commitments to BSF objectives which reflect church growth strategies; salvation, discipleship, churchmanship and academic excellence,BSF members actively participate in different organizations of the church which are mobilized for church mission works. BSF members do leading mission departments of the church; they serve as home cell leaders, acting pastors of churches' preaching station, and pastors of Baptist churches. All these are possible because BSF engages annually on Leadership Training Conference (LTC) at all levels. BSF enhances church growth because the fellowship goes for evangelistic outreaches. BSF members are skillful in operating the modern worship gadget which includes; musical gadgets, Public Address System (PAS) Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Therefore it obvious through the study to concludes that BSF has a positive impact on the church growth having considered her present activities in Ogbomoso Baptist Redeemer's Association.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the researcher recommends the following;

1. The church should encourage all the students to join the membership of BSF in order to encounter Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and be trained to become tools for church growth.
2. Church pastors should provide guidance in the form of advisers to check the excesses of BSF and direct their focus to fulfilling the objectives of BSF.

3. Church Pastors should engage the skillful BSF members to handle their musical gadgets and create a conducive atmosphere for those who are interesting in learning how to handle them.
4. The church should support the BSF evangelistic outreach and Leadership Training Conference (LTC) financially.
5. Church pastors should create good relational atmosphere with the students and encourage BSF member to actively participate in R.A, G.A, Lydia, and Youth, and mission department of the church.
6. The church should engage the BSF Alumni in leading the church preaching station and encourage those who are called to be trained in the Baptist Seminaries for better and efficient performance in church growth and administration.