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ROLE OF PASTORAL CARE IN CHURCH GROWTH

A THESIS PRESENTED

BY

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ABSTRACT

The research reveals the role of the pastoral care on the progress of the church. This research work also shows that the pastoral care as “All the helping acts of the church” is not the work of the pastor alone. Rather it is the work of the whole congregation carried out by the pastor and/or whosoever is delegated by the church to do it.

Pastoral visitation, pastoral counselling, pastoral preaching and house caring fellowships are identified as some of the ways by which a church can express her care for the people. It is discovered that the effective pastoral care ministry which demands the involvement of lay person and how they can work together as a pastoral team to bring out geometric progression to the growth of the church.

This research considered church as a living organism that is needed to grow no matter the location and culture on ground. Four types of church growth were identified, namely internal, expansion, extension and bridging growths. Pastoral care has great impact on all the four dimensions of church growth.

Recommendations are made on how pastors and delegates can effectively carry out the role of pastoral care.

5.2 CONCLUSION

While the efforts of church growth movement in bringing about a great awareness of the need to grow churches should be commended, at the same time, however, church and pastoral care are not merely complementary, but are also inseparably consistent. Some overlapping can be seen in their approaches and demand of lay persons' involvement and training. In other words to refer to church growth is to imply effective pastoral care ministry.

If the Nigerian Baptist Convention, almost one and a half centuries old, could boast of five thousand and two churches, while Deeper Life Bible Church has gotten four thousand, seven hundred and thirty-three churches in Nigeria within three decades (See Appendix), this could suggest a failure in the area of pastoral care in the Nigerian Baptist Convention

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The calls of church growth movement should not be seen as an additional load for the pastor, but as a call for more effective pastoral care. Effective performance of the role of pastoral care could be used of God to bring growth unto our churches. It is high time Baptist pastors accept the fact that pastoral ministry is a 'player-coach' ministry and stop attempting to do the work of the ministry alone.

- (1) Pastoral care ministry will not be effective if laymen are not involved, therefore, laymen should be involved. Some involve few deacons, but the work, especially in churches that count a thousand or two in their worship services is more than the work deacons alone can do. Everybody should be involved.
- (2) The lay people that are involved in pastoral care ministry of the church should be trained formally or informally so that they may not perform amateur pastoral care. When laymen are involved in any of the ways by which the church carries out her pastoral care, there should be a good communication system that would enhance feeding the pastor with information about anyone who would need the pastor's personal attention.
- (3) When laymen are involved and trained to carry out pastoral care then they would always be a person to attend to the needs of the people. It is then the busy pastors could be less busy, and it is

then our pastoral care ministry could be effective and results in church growth.