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M. Div

IBARA BAPTIST CHURCH:

A MODEL OF CHURCH GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

This study of Project is based mainly on the impact of Church growth .This study has been thoroughly carried out making use of Ibara Baptist Church as a model. However sources of information from other quarters have also been carefully studied and used.

The purpose of this Research Project is to show the positive impact of Church growth in our churches today.The methods used are basically interview, Library, History of the Church, Seminars on Church growth.

However with Church growth, the results have been tremendous in term of having more churches. house cells leading to establishment of more souls, winning of souls to the church, and giving room for the training of willing and able church members as effective workers in the vineyard.

RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, there is no guarantee that when the principle mentioned in this essay are followed hundreds will come to Christ. This essay also, does not intend that all Baptist Churches must pattern their activities and outreach programmes like that of IBC. But there is the certainty that where such principles of church growth mentioned above are practiced, the way of the Lord will be cleared of a great deal of rubbish, leaving Him, through the Holy Spirit to move when and where He wills.¹² The greatest need in Church Growth and Evangelism among Nigerian Baptist Churches today is a definite personal programme of evangelism. There is the need for every church to seek out the lost and tell them the story of Jesus and his power to save. The best way, then, for the church to develop in this vision is to return to their 'first love', that is, the purpose in which the church exists. Every group in the church should work side with the Pastor of the church to achieve the divine goal of the local church.

Therefore, Pastors should have a high quality of persistence.¹³ The Pastors of the NBC should have what Robert H. Schuller call "keys" to certain success. These include: inspiring preaching, exciting human-need – feeling programmes, enthusiastic advertisements and publicity. These are the three miracle working keys that can unlock the doorways unto a fantastic future of a church.¹⁴ Every

¹² Cotterall, Church Alive, p.10.

¹³ J. Truman Brown Jr. Visionary Leadership For Church Growth (Nashville: Convention Press, 1991), p. 33

¹⁴ Robert H. Schuller, Your Church Has Real Possibilities (Glendale: Regal Books, 1974), p. 120

church has the potential to grow and the Pastor is the key for making it happen.¹⁵ A church must receive from its pulpit messages that will remind them of the purpose for which they exist. This purpose must be the purpose of every group in the church, "no church is large enough to claim it has done all it can towards fulfilling the Great Commission."¹⁶ It is advisable that every church studies its own resources to see how big she is, how fast she is growing and what her effective and ineffective methods are. Churches should study other growing churches and denominations to find good ideas for their own programme.¹⁷ We should have a heartbeat for reaching people, and we know that we just cannot keep doing the same things and continue to reach this fast moving, and constantly changing world.

In his article "Can Your Church Learn anything from Mickey Mouse?" Bobby Huguley said:

"God has given us the ability to do things in a quality way. Laziness or complacency cannot be covered-up by excuses to give Him less than our best. Granted, we may not have the financial resources to be plush in every way. However, buildings can be clean, freshly painted, and communicated clearly that we care about doing things right. Our communication can be warm, friendly, and clear so that people who never have been in a church will feel comfortable."¹⁸

¹⁵ James T. Draper Jo., "Assisting Churches To fulfil Their Calling Under God" Growing Churches, January-March, 1993, p.7.

¹⁶ Bill O'Connor, "A Church Growth Mythology" Growing Churches, January-March, 1994, p. 28.

¹⁷ James H. Montgomery "Thirteen Steps To A Successful Growth Program" No. 2, April-June, 1990, p.1.

¹⁸ Bobby Huguley, Jr. "Can Your Church Learn Anything From Mickey Mouse?" Growing Churches (Nashville: April-June, 1993, p.15.

There is no doubt that God wants every church to grow both numerically and spiritually. The principles stated in this essay and the model (IBC) studied have given vital information for any church today. Leadership needs a vision from the Lord for the purpose of its existence and situation which allows for adjustment and expansion as required.

People need to receive loving and consistent care and sound teaching (shepherding). Disciples need to be made (not just believers) and the law of spiritual reproduction will surely begin to take effect. No church is large enough to claim it has done all it can toward fulfilling the "Great Commission."¹⁹

¹⁹ O'Connor, "A Church Growth Mythology," p. 28