

EFFECTIVE CHURCH MANAGEMENT:

Channel for Continual Growth and Development of Local Baptist Church

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Abstract

This study was conducted to find the effect that the application of management principles and technology has on the local Baptist churches and its relevance to pastoral ministry.

A total of 60 pastors who have put 5 years and above in the ministry work were pooled from the Baptist Building, Ibadan, Lagos State Baptist Conference, and Ogbomoso Baptist Conference, including the Seminary.

The simple tally method of data analysis and quantification was used to test the six hypothesis. The analysis of the data indicated that:

1. The pastors who had no management background could not run their churches dynamically as those who have some elements of management principles.
2. When pastors are exposed to teachings and training in management, they would be current with the dynamics of the continual changes that are inherent in the local church environments and apply the knowledge of management in articulating results-oriented approaches to running their churches.
3. The knowledge of management by the pastors would not divert their attention from their ministerial duties.
4. The various Baptist Theological schools should institutionalise the teaching of the art and science of management in their syllabi.

The study also revealed that the application of management principles could enhance the continual growth and development of the local Baptist churches.

The result of this study, therefore, recommends that the policy makers in the Baptist theological schools should seek professionals in the field of management who would design the courses and even be involved in the take-off of the implementation of the programme.

CONCLUSION

The application of the principles and techniques of modern management is a welcome phenomenon in the world history. It has not only increased human efficiency in performance and productivity, it has enlarged human analytical mind. Since it is progressive in nature, people have tended to study it progressively to adapt it to specific situations and conditions in operations.

The study revealed that in churches where the functions of modern management principles are performed smoothly, the head pastors had some elements of managerial knowledge, skill and attitude. Nwaroh (1991:13) affirm this view by saying that "... visible management commitment and leadership is vital to the success of any organizational progress."

In the process of collecting data, the author used questionnaire and interview methods. They were designed to elicit necessary information on the effect of the application of modern management by the pastors on the local Baptist churches. The simple administrative tally method was used to reduce the responses into percentages. The responses on the questionnaire revealed and confirmed many of the theoretical views expressed in the literature sourced. For example, most of the pastors expressed that lack of management knowledge had hindered their ability to move their churches forward as expected. They opined also that such knowledge would not cause them to abandon their ministerial profession for another job. This is in line with Margerison's postulation that "Managerial practices are transferable from one culture to another. ... from one country to another in term of improving relationships at work ... as the world becomes a global village, we all depend

an each other" (Margerson, 1990:17-18). This is what management provides in the church setting today, the ability to make the church pro-active, results-oriented and objectives-achieving.

A complete analysis of all the details revealed in this work would make the study unwieldy. Therefore, it is hereby concluded that the application of modern management principles and techniques by the pastors will enhance the continued growth and development of the local Baptist churches. The managerial practices are transferable from one culture to another and also from one country to another in terms of improving relationships at work. The world has become a global village and we all depend on each other (Margerson, 1990:17-18). This is what management provides in the church setting today.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this study have the following implications. The research revealed the need for the application of modern management principles in the local Baptist churches. It also showed that the pastors should be trained in the ways and means of performing the managerial functions. These, therefore, call for the attention of the convention policy makers, the heads of the theological schools and the pastors in designing, developing and implementing policy and programmes that will input the study of management in the Baptist Theological Schools. The identification of training needs of the pastors can be conducted, as this will aid results-directed decision making by the policy makers of the convention.

Since management is "active, positive, opportunity-seeking, change-oriented, aggressive and developmental concept" (Black, et al, 1977:2), the

policy makers in charge of our theological institutions should pragmatically seek help from management development trainers and organizational development practitioners. These professionals will help to design appropriately, the teaching modules for the theological schools.

Also, the experts can be asked to design short duration courses from which the current pastors in churches can benefit. This short duration courses can be designed to meet specific needs. They can encompass pure management, human relations, communication, financial management in the church, team building, electronic data processing, computer application, speech communication, meetings management and so on and so forth.

RECOMMENDATION

As a result of findings from this research work, the author recommends the following:

- * *That all the theological schools should input the study of modern management principles in their syllabi.*
- * *That management development trainers and practitioners should be involved in designing the required teaching programme appropriately.*
- * *That the experts should be involved in the maiden implementation of the programme.*
- * *That a cream of the teaching staff should be trained in the art and science of teaching the subjects in the programme after the experts shall have disengaged.*
- * *That short duration courses should be designed for those pastors on the field who may not be opportune to benefit from the regular programme.*

- * *That a department of management studies should be created in the theological schools.*
- * *That appropriate training aids – flip chart board, overhead projectors, films, transparencies, markers, flip charts, audio equipments and so on be purchased for the programme.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

1. Replication of this research with detailed questionnaire and information on the application of modern management principles in the local Baptist church.
2. Replication of this research with enlarged questionnaire that will cover more geographical areas.
3. Finally, an experimental study should be conducted on the pastors who had background in management and those who had none.

The researcher is aware that change is hard to come by. That any meaningful change is evolutionary and not revolutionary, therefore, according to Jolaoso (1991:13), "Managing change is a persistent challenge which must be met in order to promote progressive original performance." If the objectives of the church are the:

- ❖ nurturing of the Christian life and the salvation of souls;
- ❖ building up of the life of the church;
- ❖ preaching of the gospel;
- ❖ dispensation of the sacraments;
- ❖ strengthening of the life of prayer and worship;
- ❖ winning of disciples to Christian cause; and
- ❖ fulfilling of responsibility in society (Rudge, 1968:57), then, the

