

THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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**CELL GROUP AS A STRATEGY FOR CHURCH
GROWTH IN IBADAN EAST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT

Cell group as a strategy for church growth in Ibadan East Baptist Association is a research work designed to know the impact of cell group or House fellowship to Church Growth. It is observed that many churches just adopt the cell group system without considering its' usefulness. Though many books have been written on cell group system not much research has been done in the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches to really assess the usefulness since its adoption.

Chapter one is an introduction to the work containing the problem of the essay, which is to find out the effects of cell group in church Growth. The objectives of the study, significance, delimitation and definition of some major operative terms used in the research are considered.

Chapter two is an overview of Church Growth concept and cell group in relation to the Church. The literature review covered topics like : Types of Church Growth, Reasons for Church Growth, Principles of Church Growth, Cell Group concept in the Old Testament, Reasons for Cell Group, Structure of Cell Group, Merits of Cell Group.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology adopted by the researcher which includes the Research design, research population, sample and sampling Techniques, Research instrument and procedure for Data Analyzing. Chapter four is about the analysis of the Data and the Discussion of findings. Chapter five concludes with the Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings from this study the following conclusions are reached.

- (1) Cell group/house fellowship is a determining factor in church growth.
- (2) Pastors and cell group leaders are driving force behind the actualization of the goals of cell group method.
- (3) Not many members know the importance of group evangelism.
- (4) Majority of the Baptist Churches in the Association had adopted cell group.
- (5) Church leaders exist in the cell groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made.

(1) **Church**

The churches in the Association should continue to embark on the evangelistic crusade in order to open up some areas where members Baptist Churches are not yet established. It is of the fact that cell group/house fellowship is helping to establish churches but this is only done where the members of the established churches are resident. Also every church deciding to adopt cell group should carefully read and thoroughly understand what the system is all about. Such churches should avoid imitation but allow God to lead through prayer before adopting the system. However, Baptist theology must be maintained.

(2) **Pastors**

The pastors of the churches should take effort in educating the members especially those who have not joined cell groups as regard the importance of belonging to one. Members should be enlightened as regard the spiritual, social and economic benefits of associating with cell group/house fellowship of the church.

Furthermore, the existing cordial relationship between the pastors and the cell group leaders should be properly channeled to bring cordial relationship between the pastors and the members.

(3) **Members**

The members of the churches should know that they belong to the entire body and so should belong to any existing group in the

church. Members should cooperate with the churches as well as the cell group leaders.

Furthermore, the openness that exist in the cell group should not be used to run another person down while the most vocal members should know how to curtail himself or herself in order not to dominate the group and then turn the cell group to "one man show".

Also, members recognition of one another should not be left on that bases alone but practical effort should be made to know where such members to progress into private matters of individual but that members should be concerned with one another in practical level.

Cell group/house fellowship leaders

Cell group leaders have the responsibility of educating the members of the importance of group evangelism. They should take concerted effort to demonstrate what they teach by leading the group to evangelize their localities. If a church leader is not gifted in evangelism, he or she should liaise with the church pastors in order that the latter may send someone who could help the cell group leader as well as the group in going out for evangelism. There should not be shyness or secretive in letting the pastors know the short coming of any cell group.

Association, conference and convention

In as much as many churches developed through the evangelistic crusade held in the area, Association as a body could come to help the

churches where there might be lackness either in terms of personnel or finance. Evangelistic crusades are both time and money consuming and these may not be at the disposal of each local church. So the Association could not help either, this regard. If Association could not help either, conference help could be sought. If these two bodies could not help, convention could come in to finance the project.

Finally, further research can be carried out on the conference as well as convention bases in order to be able to know the effect of cell group to authenticate widely its effect in church growth.