

THE CRITIQUE OF THE ROLE OF PASTORS' WIVES
IN NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION LOCAL CHURCHES

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BY

ERELA ABARIYOUGH A JIM-ODOI
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ABSTRACT

This essay is titled "A Critique of the Role of Pastors' Wives in Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches." The aim was to engage in a critical analysis of the role pastors' wives play in the local church ministry within our Convention. The study was carried out in twenty (20) local Baptist churches within Ogbomoso town. The instrument of this research was the questionnaire.

Two questionnaires A and B were designed for the purpose of the research. The Questionnaire A comprising of sixteen (16) questions was designed for Pastors' Wives while Questionnaire B comprising of fifteen (15) questions was designed for WMU Presidents of local Baptist Churches aimed at providing comparative analyses. From the findings, most pastors' wives within my research area were less than a decade old in terms of experience. However, majority of them had relevant Christian Educational training for their role-expectations. The WMU Presidents confirmed that although most pastors' wives were knowledgeable about their roles in the local church, they did not actively involve themselves in the local church ministry. They were more of observers and advisers than participants.

It was also discovered that while most of the pastors' wives tended to view their roles in line with modern trend, the presidents' role expectations tended towards traditional lines. Hence, there is the need for Pastors' Wives' Association to address this conflicting perception of their roles in their annual conferences and retreats and present their recommendations at the annual General Session of the Convention.

enable them assess the role of their pastors' wives in terms of their involvement in local church ministry. Again the free response questions helped to find out the trend of their personal understanding of the pastors' wives' role in the church. It was discovered that majority of the pastors' wives are knowledgeable in W.M.U. work and wish to serve in other capacities in the church. However, their knowledge is not a participatory one because the presidents expect them to be more involved in ministering to women, children and youths. They seem not to be content with pastors' wives advisory roles.

Conclusion

From the findings, the following conclusions are reached. Experience and exposure to Christian Education have enhanced the knowledge of pastors' wives regarding their roles in the church. Only a negligible percentage are totally unexposed to any form of training for their roles in the church. However, most pastors' wives indicate that their roles in the church should be determined by the Holy Spirit and this reveals a mild protest against the traditionally laid down role-expectations of the church. On the part of the congregation their idea of pastors' wives role is a projection of the old time tradition of using pastors' wives without any fees.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Pastors' Wives Associations should address the conflicting perception of their roles in their annual conferences and retreats and present their recommendations at the annual General Session of the Convention.
2. The relevant bodies should review pastors' wives' training programmes regularly to have a good blend of traditional and modern views of pastors' wives' role.
3. Local churches need to encourage pastors' wives who have theological training to use their acquired knowledge in building the ministry by extending calls to them in the local church.
4. Local churches should encourage pastors' wives to use their gifts in the ministry by nominating them to offices they are gifted to function in.
5. Pastors' wives need to recognize their individual gifts and apply them in the ministry without waiting for official appointment.
6. Those gifted in writing within our Convention should encourage experienced pastors' wives to document their experiences in books for the younger generation to benefit from.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Conflict in role expectations between pastors' wives and the laity requires urgent attention because it affects the pastors' wives' relationship to their husbands' ministries in the local churches thereby bringing disharmony in the Church of God. Therefore, people who are interested in solving this problem should carry out research on the following areas: