

**MENTORING: A STRATEGY FOR CHURCH
GROWTH**

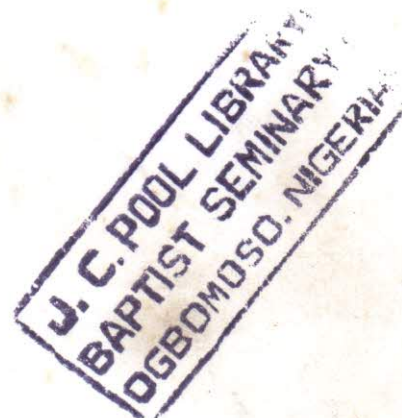
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ABSTRACT

The outcome of this work reveals that mentoring should be taken seriously if an organization or church has to grow numerically and in spiritual depth. There has to be a deliberate or conscious effort in the church by those who had had mentoring experience to put into practice what they had learnt, educate and train others, encourage them to reach out.

For good understanding, terms like mentoring, mentor, mentoree, strategy and church growth have been defined. These definitions are contained in chapter one.

Chapter two which is titled: "The Effect of Mentoring on church Growth" identifies four types of church growth. These are Internal growth (Discipleship growth), Expansion growth (through biological, or transfer or conversion growth), Extension growth (through planting daughter churches), and Bridging growth (establishment of churches across cultural and geographical barriers). The church is expected to grow in these four areas. Mentoring helps a lot in the growth of a church if a few people who have been mentored make themselves available and willing to mentor others. This chapter also deals with the characteristics of a growing church or a healthy church. These should help us to know whether our churches are growing positively or negatively or plateauing (at a stand still) and know the actions to take. Six ministers of God were interviewed. The interview concerns their practical experience on mentoring and how it has affected growth.

Understanding Resultful Mentoring' is chapter three and it deals extensively with Mentoring dynamic, Types/Functions and Networks. Five mentoring dynamics of Attraction, Relationship, Responsiveness and

Accountability, Empowerment are the kinds of underlying factors that help to explain what is happening in a relational experience between a mentor and a mentoree that empowers. *Nine mentoring types/functions are discussed- three intensive (the Discippler, Spiritual Guide, and Coach, all work best when all five dynamics are present), three Occasional (the Counselor, Teacher, and Sponsor, can empower even all the mentoring dynamics are not present. The mentoring dynamic of attraction, responsiveness and empowerment are always present while relationship and accountability may or may not be there), and three Passive (the Contemporary model, the Historical model, the Divine Contact, don't have all the five mentoring dynamic. The mentoree must supply the missing dynamics in order to tighten up the mentoring process). Three mentoring networks – Upward mentoring (establishment mentoring types relationship with mature followers of Jesus Christ who are further along than you are). Lateral mentoring (a form of co-mentoring with peers), and Downward mentoring (helping younger believers in their spiritual growth) are identified.*

Chapter four which is 'Mentoring As a Strategy for Church Growth' deals with some Biblical foundation (Christian Mentoring as Disciple making, and Adequate idea of God, others and self, Basic qualities of a mentor and a montoree). Biblical mentoring models (David and Jonathan, Priscilla and Aquila with Apollos, Jesus Christ-our Prime Model); Tools and Skills for mentoring (Prayer and Bible, Reflection, Journalling and Setting Boundaries, and Others Skills): Strategies for mentoring (mentoring and small groups, Mentoring new christians. Mentoring in ministry team, churches mentoring churches, implementing a mentoring system).

Chapter five brings us to the end of this work with Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations which are made on how mentoring can be effective in growing churches.

A. Some Conclusions

The first point is that since all ministry flows out of who we are, we need to recognize that mentoring begins with ourselves. The ministry of mentoring often begins with the experience of being mentored. Discipling is a basic foundation that every new christian needs. So one has to be disciplined to be able to disciple others effectively. It therefore follows that one cannot be a good mentor if one has not been mentored. We will never be able to give to others what we do not have ourselves.

The second point is that mentoring is not limited to only 'Spiritual' affairs. God and prayer but it includes all of life. Though discipleship is the foundation as stated above for christian mentoring, other areas that need mentoring include family, marriage, career or profession, etc.

The third point is that our mentoring efforts, especially in cross-cultural settings, can only be successful if we take time to build meaningful relationships. A mentoree is not a project but a person. Mentoring implies more than a lecturer-student connection, it is friendship. Being very much aware of the fact that relationship creates the environment conducive to effective learning, Jesus took great care to establish a deep friendship with the twelve apostles. As we are with people and really get to know them, the more intimately we relate to them, the more we can influence them-the closer the contact the stronger the impact. Spiritual mentoring depends more on mutuality, reciprocity or friendship than direction given from 'the top down' or on a relationship with someone who is supposed to have all the answers while the other passively receives such wisdom. As a contemporary form of ministry, it is much

needed. Wherever mentorees on their part notice that they are honored and loved, served, encouraged and trusted to reach their maximum in God, they will gain confidence in their own potential for his purposes.

The fourth point is that if we really trust the Holy Spirit's presence and power in our mentorees, are convinced that he will lead them into all truth (Jn 16:13), then it will not be a problem for us to see them take initiative, assume responsibility, utilize their Spiritual gifts and even make mistakes for it is God's work they are doing not ours. A mentor should be able to interact with mentoree, help him identify his Spiritual gifts and set up exercises or assignments or responsibilities that will help to maximize these gifts.

The fifth point is that all mentoring is mentoring for mission. The most important goal in raising individuals up to maturity in Christ is not so much their personal, spiritual welfare but their being equipped to spread the Gospel message, to multiply a Christ-like testimony (2Tim 2:2; 1Thess 1:6-8). It should be an integral part of our mentoring strategy to pass on the vision, dedication, character. Maturity and productivity in one's life is sustained by mentoring process. This is also key to depth of growth of a congregation where there is a chain of network of mentoring relationships with the congregation.

B. Suggestions and Recommendations

Certain insights emerge from our reflection on mentoring that can help guide us in our ministries whether in the local congregation or para-church organization. The first insight is that if we want to be effective in christian mentoring, and really in any form of ministry, our first duty is to see to our inner life and take time for prayer and meditation seriously. There is the need to have a dynamic relationship with the Lord. This is important for both the mentor and mentoree. We need to care for

