

EFFECTIVE PASTORAL SUPERVISION AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR CHURCH
GROWTH: CASE STUDY OF W. A. AMAKIRI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

One of the causes of the retard growth of some churches in the contemporary time is the nonchalant attitude of some ministers of the Gospel to the God given assignment of shepherding His flock which is demonstrated by the lack of supervisory knowledge of some pastors. Therefore, this study was carried out to examine effective pastoral supervision as an essential tool for Church Growth, in some selected churches in W.A Amakiri Association in Rivers Conference of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. In carrying out this research, data were collected through two sources, personal interviews and questionnaires. The interview was conducted with pastors only, while the questionnaires were distributed randomly among all categories of church members and pastors within the selected churches in the Association.

The data collected were analyzed by the use of simple percentage. The results showed among others that some churches in the Convention are experiencing stagnation or have come to a plateau in growth due to the fact that the pastors are not effective in their pastoral supervision, and members have lost confidence in them. It was also found that supervision is necessary and essential in the pastoral ministry because it is all embracing. However other factors combined with effective pastoral supervision may result in the needed rapid growth in the local Baptist Churches.

The study concluded with the following recommendations, Pastors should be spiritually sensitive in applying different supervisory style considering the *environment, situation and the context they find themselves. They should be flexible enough to select the style or pattern of supervision that will fit the needs of the members in any given situation in line with scripture without compromise. For the pastor to be effective in their pastoral supervision, a training in management and*

administration will be an added advantage to theological training. The church as a matter of priority should expose their pastors to in-service training both within and outside the country and provide allowances for books for their pastors to enable them read wide.

5.2 Conclusion

The study have been very interesting and a number of findings emerged from the study. Effective Pastoral Supervision is needed in every local church; therefore the pastors must be available and committed to their pastoral assignment. Pastors who are exposed to supervision before pastoral training appreciate its importance in the ministry and try to apply it in the church to achieve the needed result. There cannot

be an effective pastoral supervision in any given church if there is no good interpersonal pastoral relationship with members. The pastor should therefore, as a matter of necessity try all he can to have a good relationship with the members, they must adhere to the admonition of Apostle Paul that says if it is possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with every one (Rm. 12:18). Finally, from the research, it is no gain saying or an overstatement to say that effective pastoral supervision is an essential tool for church growth.

5.3 Recommendations

In view of our findings, the following recommendations are considered appropriate.

- The pastors in the Local Churches must be aware that the members see them as spiritual supervisors to all the different units and committees in the church. This means the pastor must read wide to have at least knowledge in other disciplines outside theology to be able to discuss matters in the different committees of the church. They should update themselves in areas such as Law, Information Technology, Accounts, Construction especially in building, Business Administration etc. Knowledge in these disciplines will earn them the prestige and the respect as pastors and effective supervisors in their different churches. This is in agreement with table 8.
- Pastors should be spiritually sensitive in applying the different supervisory style, considering the environment, situation and the context they find themselves. They should be flexible enough to select the style or pattern of supervision that will fit the needs of the members in any given situation in line

with scripture without compromise. This is in response to the members view in table 4.

- For the pastors to be effective in their pastoral supervision, a training in management and administration will be an added advantage to theological training. The Seminary should include in her curriculum more courses in Administration and Management. Also the pastors in training should be exposed to other courses outside theology, such as Law, Accounts, Business Administration etc, probably during their Minimester. They should take supervision seriously in their various churches. They are the chief executive and must take responsibility for every lapses that occur in the different committees if not well guided. This is based on the finding from the oral interview.
- The churches as a matter of priority should expose their pastors to in-service training both within and outside the country and provide allowances for books for their pastors to enable them read wide.
- The Multi-staff ministry system should be encouraged in all the churches and be taught as a course in the Seminary, to expose pastors to good supervisory system in the pastorate, which will be translated easily to the church membership.
- For rapid growth and development in the Baptist Churches, Pastors should study closely the other factors that are needed to combine with effective pastoral supervision to achieve this objective.
- As a condition for admission into the Seminary, prospective students should be encouraged to have a secular working experience that can expose them to

personnel supervision before coming for training, to have relevant background for effective supervision in the growth of organization.

- The primary goal of the church is evangelism and mission. Pastors should avoid distractions and focus on this calling, guiding the membership to this God given assignment (Mt. 28:19-20) as to make preaching, teaching and development of character this priority in the ministry, the churches will certainly grow. All the recommendations were based on the findings from the questionnaires and the oral interviews. The reader is referred to chapter four for clarity and better understanding.

Group As A Strategy for Church Growth

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Church Administration (RUD 582) N