

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SELECTED CHURCHES IN THE LAGOS STATE
BAPTIST CONFERENCE

N.B.T.S.
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M. DIV

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ABSTRACT

This study is titled, "Conflict Resolution in Selected Churches in Lagos State Baptist Conference". It was aimed at discovering the role of the Conference leadership in resolving conflict within Baptist churches in Lagos State. The study was carried out in three churches from three different Associations in Lagos Baptist Conference: – Irepodun, Goodnews and Unity Associations. Questionnaire and Interview were used as research instruments to gather information on conflict resolution in these three churches and Associations.

The study revealed that conflict exists in Baptist Churches in Lagos State. It highlighted the fact that a leader's integrity and skillfulness in handling conflict, influences the resolution of the conflict to a great extent. Also, the negative effects of conflict such as division and splitting of churches, physical, emotional drain and damage of relationships, and physical death in extreme cases were also discovered. The research further revealed that conflict can have positive effects if it is handled properly, such effects as: multiplication of churches arising from splitting of churches, increase in commitment of members to the church and the ultimate change and improvement in church.

The study recommended that Pastors and leaders should upgrade and improve themselves by attending refresher courses, workshops and seminars on people and conflict management. This is to expose them to better and contemporary methods of handling issues, which otherwise may result into conflict. It further recommended that Pastors and leaders should properly nurture (teach) and disciple the church members to maturity. This would reduce the influence of carnality on church conflict. It is discovered from the study that power tussle and personality clash are the prominent causes of conflict within the churches in Lagos State Baptist Conference.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Pastors and denominational leaders need to go for refresher courses on people management and they should be open to training that is people oriented how to manage public and resolve conflict. They should attend seminars and workshops to improve their skills in handling conflicts.
2. Pastors and denominational leaders should learn more about the dynamics of leadership and administrative styles. This will help them adopt effective styles and method of leadership at different settings and instances.
3. Pastors and leaders should maintain their integrity as ministers of the Gospel; avoid relationships that can stir up carnality in the members. Their personality and spirituality should be above board, emulatable and commendable.
4. Sensitivity is essential to the leaders in quenching conflict at the early stage before it escalates. Also sensitivity in proper time of intervention is important in conflict resolution.
5. Pastors and denominational leaders should nurture (teach) and disciple the flock well, so as to uphold the spiritual maturity of the members, thereby reducing the influence of carnality on church conflict.

The researcher is of the view that if the above recommendations are implemented by the church members and the denominational leaders, proper handling of church conflict would be achieved and the church would be more effective in her witness of Christ to the world. The church would then be a good example to the world on how to live in harmony and how to handle conflicts.