EFFECTS OF HOMOGENEOUS CELL GROUPS ON A LOCAL CHURCH: THE G12 MODEL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This research essay titled "Effects Of Homogeneous Cell Groups On A Local Church: The G12 Model Approach" intended to examine why amidst great harvest of souls, the local churches have neither adequately sustained the zeal of new converts nor retained old members' quest for higher spiritual development.

The study was carried out by, reading through and viewing related literature, also browsing the Internet for churches around the globe with similar interest. In addition, questionnaire was administered to the church pastor/leaders and members employing the concept, so as to examine its effects on the church ministry and the Christian life development of the members.

It was discovered that homogenous cell group model ensures thorough discipleship training for proper Spiritual growth and development such that the individual is taught and mentioned to be firmly rooted and grounded in the undiluted teachings of the word of God. The resultant effect is a life that is full of godly Characters and other Christian virtues, which are capable of being reflective and attractive to others, and may cause some to be won for the Lord.

Each Local church should recognize the importance and productive effects of homogenous cell group model in the birthing of

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genuine Christian leaders for this generation and upcoming one, in order to keep the ministry flame brightly burning.

Conclusion

The homogenous cell group model promotes communal relationship and care. It encourages sharing Christian love and freedom of interaction among believers. Members of the group are indeed a family united by Christ's love. When love and peace abound in any family, then, that community and the church can be assured same. The circumstances may influence both old and new members in

that church to be willing to stay and serve God in that local assembly, according to the grace bestowed upon each person. Eventually, opportunities to serve God in an atmosphere of love through a small group of like-minded believers emerges as the right key that closes the churches' back doors through which members formerly found exit.

While some other denominations such as: Redeemed, Deeper Life, Living Faith (Winners Chapel) etcetera, have grossly benefited and grown from the classical G5 (Jethro) cell model, the Nigeria Baptist Convention leadership is yet to fully comprehend and see the import and likely positive effects the model will have on her churches. Thus, rather than trying to learn, some of her pastor's attempt to discourage and resist the model.

Although it originated with Jesus Christ, the homogenous cell group model is now freshly fanned into flame by divine inspiration given to some gospel by pastor Paul Yongi Cho and Dr. Cesar Castellanos. It is not expected to be a new wine in an old wine skin, that is, not a new idea run like any other activity of the traditional programme-based designed churches, rather, that the model will inspire and motivate functional ministry-minded and growth-conscious gospel ministers to readily explore its operations, adopt, adapt and apply it for their own context, in order to obtain dynamic results for contemporary ministry and leadership challenges.

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Recommendations

Based on the results obtained from this research, the following recommendations are made:

1.Existing traditional churches of any denomination may transit into a cell church of homogenous units so that more people of similar characteristics, tribes or tongues can be reached, won and consolidated for appropriate Christian and ministry life.

2.Programme based churches should be more ministry focused, so that rather than using church programmes and activities to occupy the members, the passion for God and zeal for service will naturally motivate them to serve. This implies that the church leadership should resist the temptation of using the people to build the church's spirituality, rather, the existing ministry of the church should build her members.

3.It has been found that small groups of homogenous cells encourage transparency of Christian life and characters. Therefore, this model should be adopted in the NBC churches to enhance visible Christ-like spirituality among leaders, and faithful followership. Also, When homogenous groups meet according to their discretion, flexibility is introduced on time and location. This promotes zeal and relaxed mood for Christian learning and growth

4.The existing units of the Women Missionary Union (WMU), Men Missionary Union (MMU), Youth, etc. and all the organizations /societies attached to them such as the Lydia, Girls' Auxiliary (GA),

Children and Royal Ambassador (RA), be converted and adapted for cell group models since such groups are already homogenous in setting.

5.The NBC and her local churches make more research efforts into the understanding of homogenous cell groups and implement it as a means of faster, realistic and successful accomplishment of the much paraded Operation Reach All (ORA).

6.The homogenous cell group model be adopted by the Home and Foreign Missions Board, and also local churches as a means of evangelizing and reaching out to the strict Muslim communities where a foreign male/ man would not be permitted to speak with their daughters/wives.

7.New converts from similar communities described above be discipled/mentored along homogenous units by the home or foreign missionaries working in such areas. The effectiveness will be realized when a Christian woman witnesses to another woman or group of women in that community, a Christian man to a man, etcetera.

8.More sensitivity be given by the church leadership to members' physical and spiritual developmental needs. This requires that more ministry opportunities be encouraged and created in the church, so that rather than losing members due to spiritual idleness and misfit, such members are prayerfully assimilated into diverse ministries of the church, depending on area of grace, and allowed to function and serve the Lord willingly and whole-heartedly.

9.To keep the groups spiritually functional, the senior pastors or education ministers of each local church should write inspirational bible studies and discipleship training materials relevant in context for members. This should be taught by the cell shepherd during their times of fellowships. Also in churches where trained pastors are not available, some selected but relevant studies from the MMU, WMU, RA, GA, etcetera programme magazines may be utilized. If foreign study materials are available, such could be adapted by permission for local use.

10.The homogenous cell group model be adopted in churches of any denomination to keep the growth track of converts' spiritual lives as they transit or metamorphosise into capable and matured Christian leaders and ministers.

11.Since acquisition of leadership abilities is a gradual growth process, the cell shepherds and apprentices can be further trained by their churches for better proficiency and competency, in view of the fact that their ministry effort is reflected on the new converts and other group members' ways of life and overall spiritual development.

12.Each local church should recognize the importance and productive effects of the homogenous cell group model in the birthing of genuine Christian leaders for this generation, in order to keep the 21st century ministry flame brightly burning. Growth minded churches can experiment the model under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the assistance of local, but successful earlier adopters, and

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implement leadership trainings and retreats to launch a transition from the traditional programme-based church into a full homogeneous cell church.