

**THE PASTOR AS THE PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER OF GOD:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH GROWTH**

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## A. Conclusion

This project was set out to explore into the advantages the well positioning of a pastor as a Public Relations Officer has on the growth of not only the local church, but also of the universal. We have been able to establish that indeed with the Public Relations tools at the disposal of a pastor he can galvanize his local church into a dynamic and proactive growing church. The effective implementation of his visitation and social plans together with the richness of his literature and the effectiveness of his publicity materials, when added to an appropriate counselling role and well-discharged and poignant teaching and preaching ministries, are indeed great resources for the pastor to realize his dream of a growing church.

All the aforementioned tools can only be effective when his own lifestyle reflects Jesus Christ and his exemplary and motivating in all respects. The personality of the pastor as a Public Relations Officer, his character traits, his ability to relate and make others relate well, his private prayer life, the harmony in his immediate family, his holiness, faithfulness and commitment are very vital if the church is to have a sustainable growth and take effective part in the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

Moreover, one thing is to have good tools and another thing is to maximize their usage in carrying out the daily duties and responsibilities. The

pastor, therefore, needs to use these tools for effective administration, organization, motivation, supervision, evaluation and for provision of care and leadership in both spiritual and physical matters to his parishioners.

Nevertheless, the fact that a pastor puts in all his best does not guarantee success in ministry. A pastor may be the best preacher and teacher who has the best visitation plan and equips and re-equips himself often and often and care adequately for the sheep under him; he may be the most dynamic administrator and have good evangelistic programme organised regularly, there are still some factors that are capable of making nonsense of his efforts. These hindrances range from church structure and policy, through financial handicaps, to environmental and other human factors.

Pastoral Public Relations efforts can be hindered by whether the church is Episcopal or congregational. That is, how tight or liberal the structure is, and how free the pastor is in carrying out his vision and plans. Procedural problems, scarcity of resources, as well as competing ministry needs can constitute financial hindrance to effective Public Relations efforts of pastors.

An antagonistic environment, in terms of cultural, religious or racial differences and also in terms of non-availability of human, material and financial resources like in the case of rural settings, can hinder church growth efforts.

## **B. Recommendations**

There is no doubt that Pastoral Public Relations can have great positive implications on church growth. In order to minimize or even eradicate the possible negative impacts which pastoral Public Relations could have on church growth, we make the following recommendations:

## **1. To the Local Church**

For church growth efforts to be fruitful, the local church needs to see the pastor as the point man, the leader, the foreman through whom the people outside see the church and Christ. There is need, therefore, for the church to cooperate with the pastor by way of providing him with the necessary financial, material, human and moral support to function effectively.

The policy of the church, notwithstanding the church needs to know that the ultimate aim is that souls be won and established in Christ. Policies and structures should therefore be made sensitive, proactive, subtle and flexible. Rigidity and blind implementation of denominational or local church policies without the leading of the Holy Spirit cannot bring about the desired growth.

## **2. To the Pastor**

Since the Public Relations practice offers the pastor so much to be effective and productive, he needs to harness all these potentials to the maximum. He needs to look into his seeming weaknesses and improve upon them. Even where they are pure character trait weaknesses, he can go to God and ask the Holy Spirit to help him out.

Moreover, a good Public Relations Officer is a good listener and a communicator. So as he listens to advices and carries people along, he is fulfilling his ministry. Even when the tide of denominational or local church policies seem to be against his public Relation moves, he needs to be calm and technical and devise means of turning unchangeable situation to advantage.

However, the Pastor who wants success and sustainable growth for his church must not rely on academic knowledge or theological training or his natural

abilities alone. He must be a man of prayer and one who receives inspiration from the word of God with all humility.

### **3. To the Laity**

Laymen and women in the church need to realize that the "Go ye" commission is for all believers. We all, clergy and laity need to work together to accomplish the task. The laity needs, therefore, to join hands with the Pastor who is team leader through whom God leads, guides and ministers to his people. The laity needs to realize that though we are all priests, the pastor stands at a vantage position before God and man and must be treated as such. Dogmatic and fanatical pursuit and defence of denominational or church policies and by-laws at the expense of the promptings of the Holy Spirit cannot result into sustainable growth. Truthfulness, submission, humility and dedication on the part of the laity are qualities that can create the atmosphere for growth in the church.

#### **d. To the Church Universal**

The church is one; it is the body of believers irrespective of race, location, and denominational identity. The church needs to come together, for the enemy has kept us apart for too long. The task of evangelising the whole world cannot be achieved by any single denomination. And there is no single denomination that can claim all round application of the word of God. So, since emphases differ and gifts also differ, there is need to harness all resources together to be able to get the whole world evangelised as Christ commanded it.

Church growth should not be a local affair. There is need for super grown churches to go into missionary work, to get out and reach out to the unreached in other parts of the world.

The church should see itself as the light of the world, which she is and come together so that the light may be brighter and reach farther; instead of remaining divided into pockets of lights, some of which has little or no impact on their community.

And by writing, the church would cleanse herself and stand firmly as a true Public relation organisation of God. In that way, the world would be drawn easily and permanently to the saving knowledge and redeeming grace of God.