

**PREMARITAL PASTORAL COUNSELLING  
AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE STABILITY:  
A CASE STUDY OF  
GIDEON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF  
LAGOS BAPTIST CONFERENCE**

An Eassay  
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*by*

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## ABSTRACT

Premarital Pastoral Counselling and Christian Marriage Stability: A case Study of Gideon Baptist Association of Lagos Baptist Conference is an attempt to examine the effect of premarital pastoral counselling on marital stability in Churches of Gideon Baptist Association of Lagos State. The study attempted to identify the effect of some variables on marital stability which are premarital pastoral counselling, marital fidelity, marital adjustment and marital compatibility.

The study involved one hundred and forty married people from churches of Gideon Baptist Association. The people responded to a 30-item questionnaire; each five of the 30-item related to each of the variables indicated above. The  $\chi^2$  square statistical analysis was applied at 0.05 level of significance to the data collected from the application of the instrument. The major finding on the thesis indicated that Premarital Pastoral Counselling is essential for marital stability among Christians with particular reference to the context in which this research was conducted.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. CONCLUSION

Premarital Pastoral Counselling helps the intending couple to lay a firm foundation in form of adequate preparation towards a stable Christian Marriage. The motivation to research on Premarital Counselling led to the discovery of some variables that are essential for marital stability. The variables include marital fidelity, adjustment, compatibility, and stability. The findings Centred around the variables which are reflected in the hypothesis that guided the study. The hypothesis thus states that there is no significant difference between couples who attended premarital Pastoral Counselling and those who did not. A five scale likert type of questionnaire of seven sections and thirty items was administered to collect relevant data for the testing of the hypotheses. One hundred and forty married people from Gideon Baptist Association Churches of Lagos State provided the data for the research. They were the married couples who attended premarital Pastoral Counselling. The  $X^2$  statistical analysis was used and four of the hypotheses show significant difference between the variables contained in the questionnaire and marital stability while there is no significant difference in couples who attended Premarital Pastoral Counselling and those who did not on cultural Counselling. This shows that marital compatibility, adjustment and fidelity are essential for marital stability while Cultural Counselling is not wholistic and thus cannot be regarded as adequate preparation for marital stability.

### B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to take full cognisance of variables like premarital Pastoral Counselling marital adjustment, marital Compatibility and Marital fidelity which are predictive of Marriage stability in this study. Thus, the Pastoral Counsellors need to include in their priority the effects of these variables as indicated in this study. Theological Seminaries and colleges are strongly encouraged to emphasize Premarital Pastoral Counselling in their courses and also organize workshops on the subject for Pastors on the field. Pastors are encouraged to put the services of Premarital Counselling on their busy schedule while the intending couples must be made to attend the Counselling sessions as a prerequisite for marriage in the Church. (Not clear)

The Churches with Multiple-staff Ministry are encouraged to engage the Services of a full-time Pastoral Counsellor who will devote his/her time towards this Ministry and other Counselling Services. There is need to encourage Counselling Clinics to be opened by Professional Pastoral Counsellors to compliment the efforts of Church based Pastoral Counsellors in meeting Challenges of this age in the area of marriage. I recommend that the research be conducted in other parts of Nigerian Baptist Convention for broader view and generalization of the findings. There is also a need for a long term follow-up studies of couples who went through Premarital Counselling and those who did not with Pre and Post testing. The effects of different approaches and instructional materials to Premarital Pastoral Counselling and its attendant results on marital stability is suggestive for further research from this work. Finally, I recommend that a comprehensive study of Premarital Pastoral Counselling Process be undertaken from African Worldview.