

N B T S  
M. DIV. TH.  
AK - 3B

THE EFFECT OF PASTOR-MEMBERS' RELATIONSHIP ON CHURCH LIFE:  
A STUDY OF ORISUN AYO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, IBADAN

AKINWOLE BABATUNDE IDOWU

UJ/NB/ 08/0093

2013-0499

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Theology, Faculty of Theological Studies,  
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, in Affiliation with University of Jos.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of

MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY

JUNE 2011

## ABSTRACT

This research is based on finding out “The Effect of Pastor- Members’ Relationship on Church Life” among Baptist churches and other denominations as a whole especially in Nigeria using Orisun Ayo Baptist Association as a study. This study is to sensitize the church on the need and the urgency it demands in focusing on the unity of the church as a whole for the augmentation and fostering of the healthy growth of the church and the fulfillment of her purpose on earth. In carrying out the research, sampling and sampling technique was used. Questionnaires were used as an instrument to obtain information on Relationship between the pastors and church members from both church members and pastors. The research findings testify to the fact that the church finds it easier to perform his major duty, that of doing mission, in an atmosphere of love, peace and mutual understanding. Also it shows that; Church grows with the pastor’s example and members’ encouragement. Both pastors and members’ alike therefore have roles to play if the church is to grow in undiluted unity and genuine love.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

It has been established that mutual relationship between the pastor and members is a biblical based issue. It is true that local Baptist churches in Orisun Ayo Baptist Association in Ibadan have a commendable knowledge of mutual relationship and its effect on the church life. Some lack the principles that govern the whole issue. Some were aware but do not know the implication of the individual involvement in it to God, their local churches, and the universal body of Christ. Some do not know upon which foundation it was founded, whether it is traditional, cultural as some people think or biblical. Such people handle relationship with little or no attention to what the word of God says about mutual relationship and what informed the pastor-member mutual relationship.

There is the need for Baptists to pay more attention to the rudiments of this issue which is important to God because of its connective nature and relation to the success of the Great Commission, the gospel and Christian life in its entirety. The failure to do this will not only lay a bad precedence for the generation to come, but will also drastically affect the spiritual life of the Baptists as a people and the message of both the denomination and the Church before the world. If care is not taking, segregation and factions which the Church has condemned over the years will become the life pattern of the Church. This is because it has been discovered that the element of incessant conflict which is considered to be unbiblical is highly displaying his presence in Baptists denomination. There is therefore the need for Baptists to become closer to the word of God in practice or execution than theory. Baptist as a denomination should be sensitive to the wiles of the devil. We should also remember that like in the days of the Early Church Fathers, we are also writing history for generations to come. Then what type of legacy shall we live for the coming generations. Will they curse us or bless us; it is a food for thought.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

There are proposals based on the findings of the study and their implications for a healthy Baptist Church, that is, a Baptist Church where love and mutual relationships reigns. It is therefore more pertinent to make the following recommendations for the churches, Associations and conferences and as a whole the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

There is the need for proper orientation for the people in Baptist about the clear understanding of their polity. What Congregationalism supposed to be should be taught to the people, in other to stop the idea of - "this is how our forefather did it" that has become the watchword of many Baptists. Issues as this can be dealt with at the Convention, Conferences and Association levels. Apart from this, there is the need to have code of conduct for Baptist Pastors as a denomination. This would help the pastors to keep abreast with the Dos and the Don'ts of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. It should be taken to mind that this also would be reviewed from time to time, to be able to meet the ethical challenges of the contemporary Baptist Pastor.

Apart from the teaching of Ethics in Seminaries, this researcher is suggesting that a whole year be dedicated to Pastoral Ethics, Care and Counseling Practical Year in Seminary wherein, like the doctors who have their clinical year and the lawyers who attends a one year law school to learn the practicality of their job, pastors also will have a full taste of one full year practical pastoral ethics training which is not haphazardly done or handle because of the seminary's tight programme schedules, like it often happen nowadays. In the other way round, the current Student Ministry Experience should be made elaborate and more serious and businesslike. Students' money should

be paid during this year by a body or seminary and not the church to which the pastor is attached for sanity purpose.

This researcher is also of the opinion that problems and challenges faced by pastors should not be left to boomerang before the convention intervenes. Immediately the convention smell any upcoming problem in a particular church, there should be a way by which they will come in to investigate and help (remembering that pastors should be helped and not pull down) the pastor to quench the smoke of crises before it goes aflame. The convention is also advised to have a pastor/church relation department where every matter involving churches will be given adequate attention.

Now coming to the pastors and the church members, the pastor should have a measuring yardstick for themselves and the church in order to be able to frequently access both the spiritual and physical state of the health of the church. This could be done through the help of a third party, somebody outside the church who is genuinely honest. Pastors need to keep on asking questions from experience and successful leaders in ministry.

Pastors also should try always to be honest with themselves and admits when things are wrong. They should not only admit, but seek solution by seeking counsel. Ministry flows from who we are. Pastors should not be blindly fanatical about issues; they should constantly deal with issues in their lives. Pastors most especially should deal with pride in their lives.

Members have a lot to do in fulfilling the heart of the Lord for the well being of the church. Wagner, (Peter Wagner, 52) the famous church growth minister in his co authored book: *The Every Church Guide to Growth* says that the church should learn to leave the leadership of the Church to the pastor while they handle the ministry aspect.

The sheep should not struggle with the shepherd for his staff. When the sheep wants to take the position of the shepherd there will be problem. Honour and respect should be giving to the pastors even in the face of challenges. They should not be drag in the mud. They need members' prayer.

Individual members should also always look inwardly to themselves whenever there is any problem between them and other people in the church. They should always sincerely ask themselves the question "where am I wrong" and not overlook their weaknesses. They should learn to love one another, give room for mistakes and be ready to forgive having it in their mind that no one is perfect. They should put pride apart and realized that they are not better than the others; it is the measure of the grace of God upon their lives that is helping them. Members should always learn to pray for one another in love no matter what the situation may be. By this people shall know that they are truly brethren and Christian indeed.

With all the above mentioned, the church will grow prosperous, fulfilling the desire of the Master and becoming his joy. When mutual interpersonal relationship between the duo of pastors and church members becomes a way of life the church becomes a little paradise on earth. How lovely and good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.