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PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS ON CHURCH GROWTH: A
STUDY OF SOME SELECTED BAPTIST CHURCHES IN IWO BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION

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IDOGBE OLUWAFEMI AYOADE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated pastoral leadership and its effects on church growth, with a particular reference to Baptist Churches in Iwo Baptist Association of Osun Conference, Osun State, Nigeria. The study examined ways by which pastoral leadership can be improved in order to stimulate meaningful church growth. The study raised some hypotheses to arouse the interest of respondents in order to collect information from them to ascertain the relevance of pastoral leadership to church growth. A set of questionnaire was designed and administered to collect relevant information from the respondents. Simple percentage was used to analyze information supplied by the respondents. The population of this study consisted samples of ministers, church workers and members of Baptists churches in Iwo Baptist Association. Hundred questionnaires were distributed but ninety-one questionnaires were returned and these formed the population used in this study. The views of pastors, church workers and church members were critically examined, and it was revealed that for a meaningful biblical church growth to come to pass, ministers, especially local church pastors, have a great role to play. The church required pastors who are well-equipped with the word of God, have passion for the Great Commission, have caring attitude toward church members and people in the community, and be able to motivate people toward God's agenda. Also, discipleship programme should not be neglected by the church. If all these are in place, by the grace of God biblical church growth will be an easy task. Summarily, ministers of God as undershepherds should endeavour to emulate the chief and great shepherd: Jesus Christ, who has done everything to save the church.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The main purpose of this study is to identify the effects of pastoral leadership on church growth with particular reference to Baptist Churches in Iwo Association of Osun Conference. Having carried out the research and the analysis made on the findings, it is necessary to give a brief summary of the work.

The findings from the study showed that pastoral leadership of any local church will go a long way in determining the growth of such local church. It was discovered in the process of this study that church growth in all ramification is a factor of effectiveness of a local church pastor. In other words if the pastor of a local church is highly sensitive to his responsibility as a "growth factor" in a local church he can easily effect positive change in a local church.

The writer identifies the main responsibilities of leadership in leading the church to grow. These include: proclamation of the truth Word of God; passion for evangelism; caring for souls etc. In addition, the church growth pastor must be a growing person, he must know the basic fundamentals of church growth, he must have a positive life - style, he must set priorities and be willing to take higher risks.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Pastoral leadership has been the main focus of this study. The church rises or falls on its leadership. The analysis has established that pastoral leadership has much influence on the growth of a local church and the body of Christ in general.

Also, the pastor as the spiritual leader of the church is expected to move the congregation to God's agenda, which include the Great Commission. The study

revealed that people are ready to follow spiritual leaders who understand God's agenda and who know how to move them toward it. In addition, the pastor is responsible for the overall actions and results in the work of the church.

However, from the research work it was discovered that there are some "ministers of God" who are not really called of God and this may be the reason why they are less concerned about the growth of the body of Christ. At any rate, the pastoral leadership priority must not be on things like church buildings, committee meetings and other internal projects rather than on the Great Commission which can enhance church growth. In other words the Great Commission must not be neglected at expense of church buildings, committee meetings and so on.

Furthermore, the research revealed that every church has real possibilities for growth but the major task rests on pastoral leadership. Therefore, a pastor could play a role of catalyst in the church growth by sharing his vision with the church, linking it with the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ. This truth is expected to spur every minister of God to embark on meaningful church planting and growth strategies. In addition, the church members is also expected to support the minister of God in this mission and cultivate the habit exhibiting love within the church members and towards the community members.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this research and need to improve the effectiveness of pastoral leadership in church growth, the writer hereby recommends the following suggestions to the pastors and the church as a whole.

1. Every would-be and serving minister that is called of God should have meaningful and sound biblical training by attending a accredited Seminary or Bible College where sound biblical training is being offered. This will afford such minister

to be well equipped for the ministry. Example of such seminary is the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso.

2. Every minister of God is enjoined to attend Ministers' Conference, Seminar and Workshop regularly in order to be well equipped for the ministry and to be relevant in God's programme.

3. The Minister of God in charge of a local church should vigorously pursue the Great Commission, aggressive evangelism and church planting.

4. Soul winning, welfare of church members and people of the community should be of paramount importance to every minister of God.

5. Every minister as the spiritual leader of the church should focus his attention on sound teaching and preaching of the Word of God.

6. Pastor of a local church must involve the church members in decision making process and encourage them to participate in programmes and activities of the church.

7. Every minister of God is expected to be a student of the Bible: constantly meditating in the word of God. He must give himself to constant prayer, and above all he must be filled with the Holy Spirit. In line with this he should also encourage church members to discover and make use of their spiritual gifts.