

EVALUATION OF THE DILEMMAS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN AN
AUTONOMOUS CONGREGATION AND ITS IMPLICATION
ON PASTORAL MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

This research was done towards the evaluation of the dilemma of pastoral leadership in an autonomous congregation, and its implication on pastoral ministry. The researcher consulted books, many unpublished materials and relevant passages in the Bible. He also drew two questionnaires, many as ninety to pastors and thirty to church members in about Ten Associations in Ogbomoso Baptist Conference, so as to be able to work with sufficient facts on this research. The gathered data from the pastors and church members was to assess what the pastoral leadership face in an autonomous congregation, interpretation of autonomous and enhancement of effective pastoral leadership.

The research finds out that more pastors in an autonomous congregation had encounter leadership problem because of autonomy and at times render the pastoral ministry in effective in its responsibilities. As a result, both the pastors and church members want to strike a balance somewhere, somehow, because they believe autonomy has its benefits. Minister should give thorough teachings on autonomy and its practices.

Above it all, there should be re-interpretation of autonomy of a local church, so as to facilitate effective pastoral leadership.

Conclusion

The church was under the direct government of Christ Himself, and was governed by the apostles of our Lord. These apostles appointed deacons to relieve them of the mundane duties of watching over matters of money, property and care of widows. As the apostles died out, the pastors, they had appointed in different places had the responsibility of being overseers of the churches as “elder” or “pastors.” They are men called and gifted of God as the under-shepherds of Christ to be the spiritual overseers and rulers of his church.

The church of God is not an organization to be ruled by the democratic vote of the people, or the will of men. The church of God is a kingdom under the rule of Christ. It is to be governed by Christ’s appointed pastors through the word of God, as they are led and taught by the Spirit of God (Heb. 13:7, 17).

It is every faithful pastor’s responsibility to rule in the house of God (I Tim. 3:1-7, I Pet. 5:1-3). He must take the oversight of the church he serves. He does not rule by brute force, intimidation or legislative power, but by the Word of God. His authority is the gospel he preaches. He rules by example, leading the people of God in the way of faith and faithfulness. As God’s overseer, he rules the church in love of Christ, the truth of God and the people of God. The church is not to be ruled by the voice of the people, but by the voice of God through his messenger.

If a congregation really seeks the will of God in calling a pastor rather than

their own pleasure, following the leadership of the Holy Spirit rather than their own impressions, and judging a man's gift qualifications, and abilities by the word of God rather than by their own standard, they will not need to worry about getting an unfit pastor.

The pastor understanding of local church autonomy enhance effective pastoral leadership and a healthy church, if a lot of teaching is done. Ideally, autonomy should not usurp pastors authority in the church but rather should try to protect the religious right of every member of the church as well as the pastoral leadership.

Recommendations

The contemptible conditions of autonomous of a local church congregation on pastoral leadership must not be allowed to continue unabated certain steps must be taken to nip the problems in the bud. Based on the findings from the research, carried out, the following recommendations are made:

1. Ministers need fortified themselves academically to be able to give thorough teachings to their parishioners on the related topic; "Autonomy".
2. The Minister need to over-emphasis the stack of autonomy that is currently exiting is the local church today.
3. Minister need to teach their parishioners on the fact that the leadership of the Holy Spirit supersedes any other precedence in the church.
4. The Convention need to have a re-interpretation or modification of the autonomy of the local church with the strength and limits as it affects the pastoral leadership is hereby recommended; where in the impression of independence of the churches would be played very low and responsibilities of the churches to God and fellow brethren be highly stressed.
5. There is need for spiritual reform in the Nigerian Baptist Convention and it

should start with the leadership for any organizational restructuring to make a significant difference.

Finally, this essay can still be worked upon in future for further research work in line with the topic, knowing well that the dilemma/challenges of autonomous congregation can come in different phase at different times.