

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH GROWTH:
A CASE STUDY OF SOME CHURCHES IN OWO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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ABSTRACT

The essay focused on the roles that pastor plays in church growth. It also looked into the challenges and the strategies they could use to bring about growth numerically, financially and spiritually. The study was designed in a descriptive form. Questionnaire sheets were used as instruments to collect data from respondents in three churches in Owo Baptist Association in Ondo State. It was discovered in the data collected that church cannot grow numerically without good relationship of the pastors with the church members, good administrative skills, well-planned evangelism and effective visitation; these will go a long way to cause the growth in a church. It was also established in the research work that the means through which the church members can grow are the programmes the church runs like Sunday school, Evangelism, Bible Study, Discipleship Lifestyle, Leadership Training, Prayer Meeting and Discipleship Classes. It was revealed that out of all these programmes, some churches are not paying more attention to Leadership Training and Discipleship Classes for spiritual development of their members. It was as well noted that the growth of a church is hinged on the gifts of a pastor. Deliverance and Healing gifts are not well exercised by some Baptist pastors and this could make them lose their members to other churches. The teaching of church pastor will help in a great deal to educate members on how to pay their tithes regularly which will lead to financial growth of the church. Recommendations were made to help pastors on how to proffer solutions to all these identified problems.

Conclusion

The subject of Church Growth is indeed tasking but Jesus Himself told the apostles to go and make the disciples of all nations. God loves multiplication and Christians in different part of the world must not fold their hands in this task. It is unfortunate that there are some pastors who turned themselves to maintenance officers because they do not believe in the philosophy of Church Growth rather they prefer keeping the members they met on ground. This study was used to assess the work of pastors in Owo Baptist Association to know how they are handling the matter that concerns Church Growth. God hates stagnancy; He is God of progress. Pastors must know that God has not called us to laziness instead; He invited us to add to what we met on ground. The vision and the aspiration of every pastor who is going to other church should be that he is going to help the growth of the church in all ramifications as he depends on God's help.

Recommendations

The church should always keep proper record and make sure that they orientate their members very well about some background information. Out of 63 respondents, only 7 were able to give information about the years their churches were founded.

Evangelism is not a department or unit affairs but the entire church should be carried along to set out for it. If possible, church members should be trained on how to evangelize.

Churches should not handle Discipleship Classes and Leadership Training with levity. When there is proper discipleship programmes in a church, they tend to raise soldiers for Christ that will raise another soldiers in the image of Christ.

Church should endeavour to care about the result a programmes will bring rather than just organizing it for its sake. For instance, churches of 269 average worshipers are wining 5 souls in 30days. The church needs to reach more people with new strategies to win more people.

Church must find a lasting solution to the attendance of their weekly programmes. Mid- services reflect the true colour of a church whether the members are committed or not. The church may need to put up strategies that will help her to achieve that.

Pastors should also proffer solution to their members that are parading the corridor of other denominations for other services that are available in their own denomination. They may need to check their progammes and re-organize them.

Pastors should make effort to put up a committed visitation department and make sure that they are well trained for their works. They should know that visiting or making contact with the first comer is very important.

Pastors should endeavour to excise their deliverance and healing gifts if they have because through these two gifts, other denominations are really snatching Baptist members. The members that affirmed that their pastors have these two gifts are not much.