

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR INVOLVING
MEMBERS OF GOOD NEWS BAPTIST CHURCH
IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

OLUYEMI AYANKAYODE ILUPEJU
B.Sc; BTh; MATS
(Matric. No. UJ/03/NB/0123)

A Project Report in the
Department of CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES in the
Faculty of Divinity Studies

Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies,
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the award of the degree of
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY of the
UNIVERSITY OF JOS

June 2007

Abstract

The aim of the project was to address and correct the situation in which not all members of Good News Baptist Church, Surulere, Lagos are involved in Christian ministry in the church. This situation had weakened the church and was preventing it from being able to fulfill the Great Commission. Several efforts made to encourage members to get involved in serving God through the ministries of the church did not achieve any meaningful result. It was therefore clear that a strategic plan should be developed to address this unacceptable situation.

The project began with the establishment of a theological foundation for the project and the review of literature that were related to the project. Two questionnaires were employed in this project as instruments for research. The first was used to measure the pre-project degree of involvement of church members in Christian ministries, thereby establishing an objective basis for the claim that members demonstrated a lack of interest in serving. It also served to find out the quality of each participant's understanding of what God had done to equip him or her for service.

The result obtained, after a statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire, indicated that although almost all of the respondents believed that all Christians are expected to serve God in Christian ministries, only three out of five had ever served in the church. The result also revealed that if more church members would be involved in Christian ministries, there was a need to lay a solid spiritual foundation through preaching and Bible studies on Christian service as well as a spiritual gifts discovery exercise. These were expected to address the situation of those said that they did not have time to serve and those who did not know the spiritual resources that God has provided for their service.

After the series of messages, Bible studies, and the spiritual gifts discovery exercise, a second questionnaire was administered to measure the degree of openness on the part of the church membership about Christian service. The result from this second questionnaire indicated that an overwhelming majority of members had a better understanding of spiritual gifts and believed that every Christian is expected to serve God. The result from the second questionnaire also revealed that the church had a responsibility to review its method of involving members in service if all who had indicated a willingness to serve would be engaged in service. It was discovered that the church only had a mechanism for enlisting leaders, and not every Christian, in the service of God through the church.

It was, therefore, evident that the strategic plan to adopt is the establishment of a Church Ministries Enlistment Team. The team will be made up of the Membership Committee, the Nominating Committee and the Church Training Council. It will have the responsibility of involving all members of the church in Christian ministry.

Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the project:

First, from the review of literature related to the project, it can be concluded that the problem of lack of involvement of church members in Christian ministries is widespread, and that it is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to deal with the problem and to solve it.

Second, it can be concluded, on the basis of this project, that the observation that many church members are not involved in Christian ministries is only one side of the story. The other side is that the church leadership had also failed in its responsibility to get everyone involved. It is wrong to jump into conclusions about problems that are perceived in the church before taking steps to identify what could be responsible for them. Through this project we have found that efforts must always be made to identify properly the underlying reasons for an unacceptable situation.

A third conclusion that can be drawn from the project is that about forty percent of the church seemed not to know how a person can join the membership of the church. This is why they could not answer correctly the question about how they became members of the church.

In the fourth place, the fact that 65 percent of respondents had been members of the church for more than four years can lead to the conclusion that the church had been largely successful in retaining its membership. It should be a strong basis for wanting to engage all of such persons in Christian ministry.

It was observed that 82 percent of those who had been around for between 1 and 12 months had, 52 percent of those who had been around for between 1 and 3 years, 29 percent of those who had been around for between 4 and 10 years, and 15

percent of those who had been around for more than ten years had never served in the church. The fifth conclusion that can be drawn from this statistical record is that it takes too long for new members of the church to be enlisted into service.

In the light of the willingness to serve, indicated by those who had never served in the church, after the Bible studies, sermons, and the spiritual gifts discovery exercise, it can be concluded that these activities were viable and helpful methods of equipping believers for service in Christian ministries.

Finally, it can be concluded that the objective of the project, namely, to develop a strategic plan to involve members of Good News Baptist Church in Christian ministry has been achieved. The strategic plan is the establishment of a Church Ministries Enlistment Team, comprising the Membership Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Church Training Council. Good News Baptist Church now has a Church Ministries Enlistment Team as a result of this project. The team is currently working on compiling a new church membership roll and the enlistment of the entire church membership in Christian ministries through which they can utilize the spiritual gifts given to them by God.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are as a result of the observations made in the course of carrying out this project and the conclusions drawn from the entire project: It was observed that even though the research instruments were administered at the time when majority of the church members were present, not everyone participated in the exercise. One of the reasons for this could be that some persons in the congregation that morning could not understand the language in which the research

instrument was prepared. A number of church members do not communicate very well in English, even though they preferred to be part of the church where the medium of communication is English. Such persons may therefore not feel confident about participating in the exercise.

It is, therefore, recommended that efforts should be made to write the research instruments used in the languages that the respondents communicate very well in. In the alternative, such instruments should be translated at the same time as the respondents are answering the questions in the questionnaire. It is also important for church leaders to assist their members to gain the ability to read and write in English through the establishment of an Adult Literacy class. While there is nothing wrong with communicating in the local or vernacular language of the people, most of the spiritual resources that can strengthen the faith of Christians, use English language as medium of communication.

It was observed that the time allowed for the completion of the questionnaires during the Sunday morning worship service was considered to be too short by many people. This was considered to be one of the reasons why many of the people who collected the questionnaires failed to submit them. They simply could not cope with the speed at which they were expected to complete it. It must be admitted that no consideration was given to the time that would be sufficient to complete such a form before they were distributed. It is therefore recommended that more careful planning should precede the administration of these research instruments.

Factors like the educational level of the respondents should be considered in determining how much time should be allowed for completion of survey form. It is better to err on the side of giving too much time than on the side of not allowing

