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Ad 31-p  
NBTS  
MTh

**PASTORAL COUNSELLING WITH PASTORS  
IN A MULTI-STAFF LOCAL  
CHURCH SETTING**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE  
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
OGBOMOSO NIGERIA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

**BY**

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JUNE 2002**

## ABSTRACT

The concept of multi-staff ministry is relatively new to the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) Churches. New models such as multi staff ministry aimed at boosting the growth of the Baptist churches in Nigeria. For ministers to work in the same local church setting towards the same goal with little or no rift needs some counselling or guidelines. However, the two concepts; multi staff ministry and counselling guide are biblically based and are necessary for the growth of the churches in Nigeria. The ministers working within the same church needs pastoral counselling to be able to achieve the aim and because of the problems associated with the concept. Some of the problems include problem of leadership style, relational problem and burnout syndrome among Baptist Pastors.

Goals of multi-staff ministry are among others to enable pastors to minister effectively to the need to the people, to use various spiritual gifts given to individual minister and to fully utilise his potentials in a particular area of the ministry. The leadership style chosen by the team leader will depend on many factors and will go a long way to determine the workability of the concept in NBC churches. Servant leadership will be suitable for both the church pastor and his associates. Another problem is the relational problem among the pastoral team. Relational problem arose, out of jealousy, unclear defined job description among the team members and lack of regular communication. Experiences show that clear job descriptions should be given at the beginning of the relationships. Regular pastoral staff meeting will also

heal wounds and make projections to the future much more easier. If members of the pastoral team properly understand the concept, unhealthy rivalry will also be prevented from members of the congregation and the pastoral staff. Another problem discussed in this study is the issue of burnout syndrome among pastors. Burnout can easily set in through overcrowded programmes for pastors within the pastoral team. Some guidelines are hence provided in the study to prevent burnout in the ministry and maintain maximum productivity level among pastors of the NBC churches.

# CONCLUSION

## SUMMARY

The concepts of multi-staff ministry and pastoral counselling are relevant to the ministry of the churches in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. Church members and worshippers have various problems that need the attention of the church. These problems do not exclude the pastors ministering in the local churches. The relational problems should be looked into from a pastoral care and counselling perspective so that multiple staff ministering can be a viable tool to build stronger churches.

There are many reasons why multi-staff ministry is needed in Nigeria. The first is the multi-dimensional and stressful nature of the pastorate. Second, the training of pastors in specialized areas in seminaries also calls for it. Hence, every discipline in the church demands specialized training and personnel. Third, church members are becoming increasingly aware of the pastoral role in specialized areas like music, outreach and education to mention a few. A pastor cannot effectively minister in all these specialized areas.

However the concept of multi staff ministry is not without problem. These problems range from the choice of leadership style by the

church pastor and his subordinates. Among the factors to be considered are the personality traits of the staff that composed the team, personal philosophy of each individuals, the relationship that exist between the pastoral staff and so on. While autocratic, and especially democratic leadership styles that promotes congregational polity are seen as the two extreme styles for pastors servant-leadership is been promoted. Servant leadership role will help the subordinate pastors to see themselves as “a helper to the head, because you cannot have two heads of department at a time”<sup>1</sup> If the senior pastor sees subordinates as co-workers working towards the same goal will be possible since he will be leading by example, hence servant leadership concept will be workable.

Relational problem is also evident in multi staff ministry system. The problem does arise out of jealousy, undefined role of pastoral staff and lack of communication among pastoral staff. Churches that have successfully practised multi staff ministry emphasize the meeting of pastors once in a week. The meeting, among other things, will open wounds, heals some wounds, solve some problems and project new ideas for future development. The meeting will “smoothen the rough edges and deal with sensitive issues”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the relational problem can be tackled by handling criticism from the church jointly. The pastoral team

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with M.K.. Muyi, Iwo Road Baptist Church, Ibadan, 11 March, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Ibadan and District Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, p. 7.

should act like one entity in the church especially in relation to criticism. Relational problem can also be tackled if clear job description is openly discussed and accepted before the call. From time to time each pastoral staff must refer to it.

The multi-staff ministry aims at reducing workload of the senior pastor. However the members that are used to one pastoral leadership system may insist on the church pastor attending to their problem alone. Hence the burnout syndrome concept been prevented will come up again. This means that burnout can be prevented if multi-staff ministry is promoted, with a clear job description, especially among pastoral staff as quickly as possible. Working on one's priorities too can prevent ministerial burnout.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations can serve as a guide to operate multi-staff ministry as evident from the research.

First, the concept must mature in the mind of the church pastor before he recommends such to the church for consideration. The pastor must educate the congregation about the goals and aims of the concept. The congregation before implementation must accept the concept. However, congregation should not initiate the concept to displace the church pastor. Both the church pastor and the associate pastors need

